



The Wolfe Pack

*The Nero Wolfe
Literary Society*

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

—of the

Wolfe Corpus

by

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This is a chronological order of the Wolfe Corpus, compared with other authorities and derived from the original source of Archie Goodwin's writings from the period of 1933 to 1947 A. D. done in this year of our Lord 1983.

There are three ways one could organize the seventy-two accounts and three other writings of Archie Goodwin in which he tells us of his life with Nero Wolfe in the old brownstone residence on West Thirty-fifth Street: Nero the famous sedentary sleuth and Archie his leg man, as well as his eyes and ears man.

One way is to list them alphabetically by title; another, is to list them as published and finally, to list them chronologically as they happen. This is an ordering of the events as they happened.

William S. Baring-Gould in *NERO WOLFE OF WEST THIRTY-FIFTH STREET* (published posthumously in 1969) had a section in his book, *A Chronology of Nero Wolfe*. This was a pioneering effort of setting dates for the events of the Wolfe saga. The weakness of some of his dates comes from three sources. 1. Errors in conjecture that have been overturned by new evidence developed since his time. 2. Not having a consistent principle as to when the event occurs. Sometimes, he uses a triggering event; sometimes, it is when Archie begins his narrative; and sometimes when Wolfe accepts a client. 3. There are simple errors of careless editing by the editor for this posthumous publication.

A decade later, Stephen F. Schultheis and Patricia A. Dreyfus in *A Chronology of Crimes*, published in *THE GAZETTE*:

Journal of the Wolfe Pack (Winter 1979) also worked on establishing the month and year of each account. Their chronology also contains faults. They make conjectures which do not appreciate the difference between facts and phenomena. As Wolfe said to Archie in *FER-DE-LANCE*, "You know a fact when you see it, Archie, but you have no feeling for phenomena." So, Schultheis and Dreyfus (S&D) stumble because they do not distinguish between times when Archie means to be taken literally, and times when, speaking casually in round numbers, he would be amused to be taken literally.

Archie has a trait that could be deceiving if one took everything he reports literally. The trait is his rebellion at times against his incredible memory: a memory that can recall verbatim two hour conversations by several persons. Burdened by this gift, he often in a mood of whimsey or irony, gives statement in which he couldn't care less about being accurate. At these times, his round numbers may exaggerate and be grossly inaccurate.

An instant of his accuracy is when Archie in *THE BLACK MOUNTAIN* reports the exact moment when the story begins. It is on a Thursday evening in March when he planned to leave the house at ten minutes to eight but was 6 minutes behind schedule when he receives a fateful telephone call from Sargent Purley Stebbins. Sargent Stebbins reports the shooting death of Marko Vukcic,

Wolfe's best friend. Even as people can recall where they were when they heard of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, he remembers the moment of hearing of Vukcic's death down to the minute of its occurrence.

When Archie is being casual about things, he is apt to use round numbers. In the account of TOO MANY WOMEN (1947), he says "Since I have been in the detective business for over ten years and have done a lot of leg work..." Actually, from other evidence, we know that Archie has been with Wolfe since 1927. His "ten years or more" is really more like twenty years in the detective business. Obviously, in discussing his career with a young lady, he is not trying to be exact but showing off and yet not showing up his age. At other times, in a whimsical mood, he grossly exaggerates his facts.

In the art of detecting one needs to sense the phenomena behind the facts to get to the truth. This does not detract from Archie's veracity but gets closer to the truth because it is closer to what he means us to understand. A parallel can be seen in interpreting the events in the Bible. Some feel they are nearer the truth by accepting each "fact" as literally true. Others feel that the truth is to be found in finding out what the ancient narrator desires to communicate.

Thus, some say that the 40 years the people of Israel spent wandering in the wilderness was 14,610 days. Others say that the intent of the narrator was to suggest in round number a period of time during which a new generation would be born. A generation to be hardened by nomadic life and freed from a slave mentality. A generation that would have the courage to claim the Promised Land. The exact length of time is unimportant. The interval of time enough for a change of generations is the significant truth, say 40 years, give or take a year or two. So with setting the dates of Archie's accounts one must search for his intent, to be literal or to be casual about his statements.

As Schultheis and Dreyfus have observed, the pinpointing of the time of death is a routine part of any murder investigation. It is natural to want to know when things happened. From the internal evidence of Archie's novels

it is fairly easy to set the date of the adventure. The short stories are another problem. They provide fewer clues. One must make conjectures from hints and references to public events, even from remarks about the weather or what day in the week it is.

In their Chronology of Crimes, Schultheis and Dreyfus have set a tradition of explaining the basis of their conjectures. It enables others to test the logic of their guesses. I applaud them for doing this. In the ten places where my chronology differs from their's, I will also give an explanation of my reasoning. Our common goal is to get as close to the truth as we can.

To understand my dating, one must understand my assumptions. These are:

1) The starting date of an account is when Archie begins to tell us about it. The ending will be with the denouement of the case. Archie says in THE SECOND CONFESSION, "Every murder case, like a kite, has a tail. The "tail" will not be counted.

2) ~~Different weight is given to evidence.~~ Specific dates mentioned or those that can be deduced from a perpetual calendar are of prime importance. Remember, however, that Archie can be casual about the number of years.

3) Helpful sources are references to world events and from the publishing dates of his stories in books and magazines. This is secondary evidence.

4) And finally, there is the hearsay evidence from Archie's literary agent, Mr. Rex Stout reported in REX STOUT, a Biography by John J. McAleer, 1977.

It would not do to spoil the fun of detecting for those who would work the dates out for themselves, so I will not explain my reasoning for those accounts where I agree with Baring-Gould or Schultheis and Dreyfus.

A note is necessary about the meaning of CODES and numbers given. In the following pages Archie's title for his accounts as given in his hard-cover books will be used. This will be followed by two numbers

divided by a period. The first number is the chronological number and the second is that of the order in which the book was published. Individual stories under a collective title are given an alphabetic identity.

Next there will be an abbreviation CODE with alternative abbreviations by Richard Oldberg and Lawrence Brooks where they differ.

Next there will be my dating in the first column, followed by that of Baring-Gould, then followed by the dating proposed by Schultheis and Dreyfus.

Finally, there will be an indented paragraph of any explanations given for the choice of date. The Baring-Gould dates are from the corrected version in the PENGUIN BOOKS edition of 1982 by John McAleer.

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE NERO WOLFE CORPUS

FER-DE-LANCE 1.1 FERD		
Wed. June 7 to	Wed. June 7 -	June 1933
Wed. June 21, 1933 (15 days)	Wed. June 21, 1933	
THE LEAGUE OF FRIGHTENED MEN 2.2 LEAG		
Fri. Nov. 2 to	Fri. Nov. 2 -	Nov. 1934
Mon. Nov. 12, 1934 (11 days)	Mon. Nov. 12, 1934	
THE RUBBER BAND 3.3 BAND		
Sun. Oct. 6 to	Mon. Oct. 7 -	Oct. 1935
Wed. Oct. 9, 1935 (4 days)	Wed. Oct. 9, 1935	
THE RED BOX 4.4 RBOX		
Mon. Mar. 30 to	Mon. Mar. 30 -	Mar/Apr
Sat. Apr. 4, 1936 (6 days)	Sat. Apr. 4, 1936	1936
TOO MANY COOKS 5.5 COOK		
Mon. Apr. 5 to	Mon. Apr. 5 -	Apr. 1937
Fri. Apr. 9, 1937 (4 days 7 hrs)	Fri. Apr. 9, 1937	
SOME BURIED CAESAR 6.6 CAES		
Mon. Sep. 12 to	Mon. Sep. 12 -	Sep. 1937
Thur. Sep. 15, 1938 (4 days)	Thur. Sep. 15, 1938	

B-G and Gotwald base their dating on the date given for the Minimum Basic Demands of the Crowfield County Prisoners Union, Signed this 15th day of September, 1938. Archie Goodwin, President. S&D base their date on the casual remark by Archie to Wolfe, "You realize that I have been studying your face for 10 years..." With six references to Archie having gone to work for Wolfe in 1927, this is one of the firmest dates in the saga. S&D's "literalness" leads them to challenge the internal evidence in two other stories, namely, INSTEAD OF EVIDENCE and BULLET FOR ONE. The solution is to recognize the casualness of Archie's comment and his "round numbers" reference that wasn't meant to be taken literally. This argument will be expanded when we come to the notes for those other events.

OVER MY DEAD BODY 7.7 BODY (OVER)

November 1938 (49 hours)

November 1938

Nov. 1938

The American Magazine published Archie's account in their September 1939 issue thus placing the event in 1938.

WHERE THERE'S A WILL 8.8 WILL

Fri. July 14, to
Sun. July 16, 1939 (3 days)

Fri. July 14 -
Sun. July 16, 1939

July 1939

BITTER END 9.8X BITR (bitt)

Tues. Nov. 14 to
Wed. Nov. 15, 1939

November 1940

Nov. 1939

This account never appeared in hard-cover but only in The American Magazine in November 1940.

BLACK ORCHIDS 10.9A ORCH (orch)

Wed. March 19 to
Fri. March 21, 1941 (3 days)

Thur. & Fri.
March 1941

Mar. 1941

Income tax day that year was Saturday, March 15th with a grace period to Monday, March 17th. Wolfe's tax was \$11,412.83.

CORDIALLY INVITED TO MEET DEATH 11.9B CORD (cord)

Mon. Aug. 18, to
Fri. Aug. 29, 1941 (11 days)

Mon. Aug. 18 -
Wed. Aug. 27, 1941

Aug. 1941

NOT QUITE DEAD ENOUGH 12.10A NOTQ (notq)

Mon. to Wed.
March 1942 (2½ days)

Mon. - Wed. early
in March 1942

Mar. 1942

BOOBY TRAP 13.10B TRAP (trap)

Mon. Aug. 9 to
Tues. Aug. 10, 1943 (2 days)

Mon. Aug. 9 -
Tues. Aug. 10, 1943

Aug. 1943

HELP WANTED: MALE 14.14B HELP (help)

Tues. to Friday
in May of 1944 (3½ days)

Tues. - Friday
in May of 1944

May 1944

INSTEAD OF EVIDENCE 15.14C EVID (inst)

Tues. to Sat.
October 1945 (5 days)

Thur. - Sat.
in October 1945

Oct. 1944

B-G unaccountably starts with Thursday, when Archie says quite clearly that Mr. and Mrs. Eugene R. Poor were sitting in Wolfe's office that Tuesday afternoon in October. This is one of a number of gaffs which can be attributed to poor editing. S&D having pushed the date of CAES back to 1937, now begin some convoluted conjectures. They claim Wolfe was the source of confusion, saying, "This October, as my nineteen forty-five income now stands, I'll keep about ten percent of any additional receipts after paying taxes." Wolfe doesn't have to fill out his income tax form to know when he is in the 90% bracket. S&D propose a business year, July 1944 to June 1945

so as to place the event in 1944. They also have to go into an elaborate explanation for Archie's comment, "I have been a civilian again for only one week." The explanation is that this happened because of a grateful Army and Wolfe's irresistible powers of persuasion in getting Archie discharged from his duties while the war was still on. This would be wholly out of keeping with Archie's character, Archie who tried four times unsuccessfully to get overseas. No, the war ended in August of 1945 and it is reasonable to assume that Archie returned to civilian life in October.

THE SILENT SPEAKER 16.11 SLNT

Wed. March 27 to
Sat. Apr. 6, 1946 (11 days)

Tues. Mar. 26 -
Sat. Apr. 6, 1946

Mar/Apr
1945

Wolfe on listening to the nine cylinders of Cheney Boone's dictation, ostensibly on the day of Boone's murder, March 26, checks his calendar and notes that he and Archie have been sniggled. We know that Boone was killed on a Tuesday. This places the event in 1946. This is in spite of Archie's comment that it was the warmest March in the history of New York City. S&D research into the weather records for that period show that 1945 was the warmest March. March of 1946 was warm but not record breaking. Archie in his flamboyant way is not above dramatic over-statement in his bid for sympathy as he heads out on an errand. The account starts on a Wednesday as Wolfe and Archie discuss the aggregate wealth of the members of the National Industrial Association and guess it at 30 billion dollars.

BEFORE I DIE 17.14A BFOR (befo)

Mon. Oct. 7 to
Tues. October 8, 1946 (2 days)

Mon. Oct. 7 -
Tues. October 8, 1946

Oct. 1946

In BFOR we have a most unusual collection of conflicting dates and facts. The only reason that can be surmised is the state of Archie's nerves. He is distressed that they are getting involved with the most dangerous elements of the underworld. He has twice had persons shot down around him and to find himself still alive. The contradictions, however, still remain. Here is the list of a most untypical Archie report:

--- Dazy Perrit says, "I have got a daughter, born in nineteen twenty five, twenty one years ago. She'll be twenty-one next month, November 8th." "Making the year 1946.)"

--- The evening before he is killed on Wolfe's sidewalk, Dazy Perrit writes Wolfe a letter, dated October 7, 1946, 9:42 P.M. Dazy's lawyer, L.A. Schwartz delivers it along with other documents. One of them is Perrit's daughter's birth certificate. It is for Beulah Page for July 26, 1925. (This conflicts with the birthday on November 8th.)

--- Wolfe in preparation to tell Beulah of her father's death says, "You're not an infant, Miss Page. You're nineteen year old." She agrees, "In Georgia, I could vote."

TOO MANY WOMEN 18.12 WOMN

Tues. Mar. 18 to
Sat. Apr. 5, 1947 (19 days)

Tues. Mar. 18 -
Sat. Apr. 5, 1947

Mar/Apr
1947

MAN ALIVE 19.16A ALIV (mana)

Mon. June 9 to
Tues. June 10, 1947 (36 hours)

Mon. June 9 -
Tues. June 10, 1947

June 1947

BULLET FOR ONE 20.18B BULT (bult)

Tues. Oct. 14 to
Thur. Oct. 16, 1947 (72 hours)

Tuesday in
October, 1945

Oct. 1944

I have not been able to discover the basis for B-G's dating of BULT for 1945. S&D base their date (1944) on Archie's comment on how long he had known Lily Rowan, that is, "...since I had only known her seven years." They couple this with Archie's comment of studying Wolfe's face for ten years to come up with their choice of 1944.

In the context of Archie's spoofing comment on how long he has known Lily, a nine will do as well as a seven. This would fit the date I discovered in examining Victor Talbott's visits to seven cities as a salesman. The table that reveals the year in question looks like this:

<u>Place and Date</u>	<u>Day of the Week</u>			
	<u>1944</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>1946</u>	<u>1947</u>
Dayton, Ohio Aug. 11 & 12	Fri/Sat	Sat/Sun	Sun/Mon	Mon/Tue
Boston, August 21	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur
Los Angeles, Aug 27 - Sep. 5	Sun/Tue	Mon/Wed	Tue/Thur	Wed/Fri
Meadville, Pa. Sep. 15	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
Pittsburgh, Sep. 16-17	Sat/Sun	Sun/Mon	Mon/Tue	Tue/Wed
Chicago, Sep. 24-26	Sun-Tue	Mon-Wed	Tue-Thur	Wed/Fri
Philadelphia, Oct. 1	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed

Good salesmen are apt to make the best use of their travel time to see their customers and not spend unnecessary week-ends on the road. In 1944, we have 8 week-end days out of the 16 days Victor Talbott was traveling. 1945 is better with only six Saturday and Sundays. 1946 is even better with only four. The best is in 1947 when there is only two, the week-end of the long trip to Los Angeles of nine days. This suggests 1947 as the date for BULT. It was gratifying after this research to find that Archie's literary agent, Rex Stout affirms that Archie wrote the account in November of 1947. cf. REX STOUT by John McAleer, p. 368.

AND BE A VILLIAN 21.13 VILN (ANDB)

Sat. Mar. 13 to
Sat. Apr. 3, 1948 (22 days)

Sat. Mar. 18 -
Sat. Apr. 3, 1948

Mar/Apr
1948

OMIT FLOWERS 22.16B OMIT (omit)

Tues. July 6 to
Thur. July 8, 1948 (42 hours)

Tues. July 6 -
Thur. July 8, 1948

July 1948

DOOR TO DEATH 23.16C DOOR (door)

Tues. Dec. 7 to

Thur. Dec. 9, 1948 (32 hours)

Sun. Dec. 5 -

Tues. Dec. 7, 1948

Dec. 1948

The note Saul Panzer found in the Pitcairn household is dated December 6. Wolfe observed that it was after midnight and therefore the date applied to the day before yesterday. Wolfe appeared at the Pitcairn residence on December 7th. The story appeared in The American Magazine in June of 1949, therefore, the year is 1948 and the day a Tuesday.

DISGUISE FOR MURDER 24.18C DISG (disg)

Mon. to Tues.

March 1949 (33 hours)

Mon. - Wed.

in March 1950

Mar. 1950

Archie's literary agent, Rex Stout reports that Archie began writing DISG in December 1949, cf. REX STOUT, p.377. This account appeared in The American Magazine, September 1950, therefore B-G and S&D place it in 1950.

THE SECOND CONFESSION 25.15 CONF (SCND)

Thur. June 16 to

Mon. June 27, 1949 (12 days +)

Thur. June 16 -

Mon. June 27, 1949

June 1949

THE GUN WITH WINGS 26.18A WING (gunw)

Sun. Aug. 14 to

Wed. Aug. 17, 1949 (80 hours)

Sun. Aug. 14 -

Wed. Aug. 17, 1949

Aug. 1949

THE COP-KILLER 27.20B COPK (copk)

Tues. Spring

1950 (12 hours)

Summer 1951

Fall 1949

B-G's date of 1951 doesn't make sense with COPK appearing in The American Magazine issue of February 1951. S&D remark that the day was "sunny and sparkling" and chose the fall of 1949 to avoid the fall of 1950 when Wolfe's great loss of weight would have been noticed from his adventure from April through September in 1950. Sunny and sparkling days also come in the Spring, which is where I chose to place it. Stout concurs saying Archie wrote it in July of 1950. This was the time when Archie had time on his hands with the disappearance of Nero Wolfe from the old brownstone.

IN THE BEST OF FAMILIES 28.17 BEST

Fri. April 7 to

Fri. Sept. 8, 1950 (5 months + 1 day)

Thur. Apr. 6 -

Fri. Sept. 8, 1950

Apr/Sept
1950

THE SQUIRT AND THE MONKEY 29.20C SQRT (sqr)

Mon. to Wed.

Winter 1950 (3 days)

Mon. - Wed.

Winter 1951-52

Winter
1950

SQRT appeared as "See No Evil" in the August, 1951 issue of The American Magazine making B-G's Winter of 1951-52 a matter of prenescent predestination by Archie which is a little much even for an Ohio lad.

MURDER BY THE BOOK 30.19 BOOK

Tues. Jan. 9 to

Mon. March 12, 1951 (63 days)

Mon. Feb. 19 -

Mon. March 12, 1951

Jan/Mar

1951

B-G starts his dating from when Wolfe has a client instead of when Archie begins his narrative.

HOME TO ROOST 31.20A HOME (home)

Tues. 6 PM July 31 to

Mon. Aug. 6, 1951 (7 days - 4 hrs)

Tues. July 31 -

Mon. Aug. 6, 1951

July/Aug

1951

THIS WON'T KILL YOU 32.23C WONT (this)

Wed. October 1951 (10½ hours)

Wed. in October 1952

Oct. 1951

S&G provide some very helpful data. To quote them, "THIS WON'T KILL YOU could not have taken place in October 1952 because Archie's account was published in The American Magazine in September of 1952. It is therefore obvious that the crime occurred on Wednesday, October 10, 1951, the sixth (Archie made a slight mistake in calling it the seventh) and final game of the World Series." S&G go on to point out that there were big-name gamblers trying to fix the Series in 1951. Archie evidently changed the facts slightly to spare the feeling of the sabotaged team. The New York Yankees won the Series not the Boston Red Sox, who only played the New York Giants in a Series in 1912.

PRISONER'S BASE 33.21 PRIS (BASE)

Mon. June 23 to

Mon. June 30, 1952 (8 days)

Mon. June 24 -

Mon. June 30, 1952

June 1952

It looks like a typographical error in B-G. Mondays, June 24 occur only in 1946 or 1957.

INVITATION TO MURDER 34.23A INVT (invi)

Fri. before Oct.

1952 to Sat. at 2:15 AM (14 hours)

A Friday, latter

half of 1952

Fall 1952

Archie's literary agent says the account was written in October of 1952. cf. REX STOUT, p. 390. It appeared as "Will to Murder" in The American Magazine, August 1953 issue.

THE ZERO CLUE 35.23B ZERO (zero)

Tues. 5 PM to Thurs. 3:20 AM

February 1953 (34 hours)

Wed. in the latter

half of 1953

Fall 1953

In ZERO there is mention of the new President Eisenhower. Rex Stout, literary agent says it was written in March of 1953 so the crime occurred after the inauguration in January, say February. The story appeared as "Scared to Death" in the December 1953 issue of The American Magazine.

THE GOLDEN SPIDERS 36.22 GOLD

Tues. May 19 to

Fri. May 29, 1953 (11 days)

Tues. May 19 -

Fri. May 29, 1953

May 1953

DIE LIKE A DOG 37.26C ADOG (diel)

Wed. 11 AM to Thurs. 2:30 PM

Fall of 1953 (27 hours)

Wed. - Thur. late 1954
or early 1955.

Fall 1954

ADOG appeared in the December 1954 issue of The American Magazine as "The Body in the Hall." The wet and windy fall day suggests 1954. However, Rex Stout reports that Archie wrote the tale in January of 1954, cf. REX STOUT, p. 401. This makes it the fall of 1953.

THE BLACK MOUNTAIN 38.24 MONT (BLCK)

7:56 PM Thur. Mar. 18 to Wed.

April 28, 1954 (42 days + 8 hrs)

Thur. March 18 -

Wed. Apr. 28, 1954

Mar/Apr

1954

WHEN A MAN MURDERS 39.26B AMAN (when)

Tues. to Wed.

May 1954 (29 hours)

Tues. - Wed.

in May, 1954

May 1954

AMAN appears in the May 1954 issue of The American Magazine. This means that the Editor must have held the presses when he got wind of the story through The Gazette so as to include Archie's version of the event. This is not going to be the only time a national magazine adjusts their publishing schedule to take advantage of having a story about Nero Wolfe.

THE NEXT WITNESS 40.26A NEXT (next)

Wed. to Thurs. mid

September 1954 (24 hours)

Summer of 1954

Sept. 1954

This account appeared as "The Last Witness" in the May 1955 issue of The American Magazine.

BEFORE MIDNIGHT 41.25 BFOR (befo)

Tues. Apr. 12 to

Wed. Apr. 20, 1955 (8 days)

Tues. Apr. 12 -

Tues. Apr. 19, 1955

Apr. 1955

A WINDOW FOR DEATH 42.28A WIND (wind)

Tues. Aug. 16 to

Thur. Aug. 18, 1955 (3 days)

Sat. Aug. 6 -

Thurs. Aug. 11, 1955

Aug. 1955

Unaccountably, B-G uses the death of Betram Fyfe as his starting point. Archie actually begins his narrative ten days later when David R. Fyfe comes to ask Wolfe to investigate his brother's death.

IMMUNE TO MURDER 43.28B IMMU (immu)

Autumn 1955 (20 hours, 44 min.)

Autumn 1955

Fall 1955

The concurrence of minds here is probably because this event was reported in the November, 1955 issue of The American Magazine.

TOO MANY DETECTIVES 44.28C DTEC (dets)

Mon. Jan. 9 to

Tues. January 10, 1956 (40 hours)

Mon. - Tues.

early in 1956

Jan. 1956

Stout reports that Archie began writing this account on January 13, 1956. cf. REX STOUT, p. 415. The earliest working Monday in the New Year would be January 9th when Wolfe and Archie were ordered to appear in Albany in a wire-tapping scandal.

EASTER PARADE 45.30B EAST (east)

Wed. March 28, to

Mon. Apr. 2, 1956 (6 days)

Tues. - Mon. in the

Spring of 1957

Mar/Apr

1956

EAST starts five days before Easter Sunday. It is on a Wednesday when Wolfe solicits a favor from Archie. The favor is to steal an orchid. The story appears in the April 16, 1957 issue of LOOK magazine. Using the Easter Table from the Lutheran Common Service Book, one finds that Easter in 1957 was on April 21, too late for LOOK. Therefore, the year of this time that Archie was in front of St. Thomas was April 1, 1956. The favor was solicited on March 28th.

MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD 46.27 MIGH

Mon. Apr. 9 to

Mon. April 16, 1956 (8 days)

Mon. April 9 -

Mon. April 16, 1956

April 1956

CHRISTMAS PARTY 47.30A XMAS (xmas)

Wed. Dec. 19, to

Sat. Dec. 22, 1956 (3½ days)

Wed. Dec. 19 -

Sat. Dec. 22, 1957

Dec. 1950

B-G errs in 1957. The CHRISTMAS PARTY appeared in print on January 4, 1957 as "Christmas Party Murder" in Colliers magazine. A Wednesday, December 19 occurs in the Leap Year of 1956.

S&D report that William J. Clark in "The Case of the Missing Wolfe", The Mystery Reader's Newsletter 3 (April 1970):16 say that a January 1st, "a week from Monday" and prior to the Collier publication would happen in 1951 making the start of this adventure in December of 1950. But this mystery can be solved in another way.

We have two clues taken from Archie. Here is the context.

The first is when Archie says to Wolfe, "If I get a raise the first of the year, which is a week from Monday." The doubt of getting a raise comes from Archie insisting that his prior commitment to go to the Christmas Party comes before driving Wolfe to Hewitt's on Long Island. Archie reminds Wolfe that he told him two days ago about his plans and that someone else could just as well drive Wolfe safely to Long Island.

The second is in Archie wanting to console Fritz who is upset by the chilling atmosphere between Wolfe and Archie. He wanted to say to Fritz, but didn't, "that everything would be rosy

by Christmas, only three days off."

The mystery is solved when one realizes that Archie is thinking like everyone does in the Christmas season: so many days to Christmas, meaning a counting of the days between the present and Christmas Day.

Here is the chronology of the CHRISTMAS PARTY.

Monday - Archie tells Wolfe of his plans to attend the
Dec. 17, 1956 Christmas party. No objections from Wolfe.
Wednesday - Wolfe hears of a shipment of orchids and
demands that Archie drive him to Hewitt's
place on Long Island. Archie refuses.
Friday - Wolfe leaves for Long Island. Archie goes to
Dec. 21 the Christmas party. He wants to console
Fritz, "Christmas is three days off."
Saturday - The story ends
Dec. 22

"Christmas three days off" = $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Sat. Dec. 22} \\ \text{Sun. Dec. 23} \\ \text{Mon. Dec. 24} \end{array} \right.$
said on Friday.

Tuesday, Christmas Day $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Tues. Dec. 25} \\ \text{Wed. Dec. 26} \\ \text{Thur. Dec. 27} \\ \text{Fri. Dec. 28} \\ \text{Sat. Dec. 29} \\ \text{Sun. Dec. 30} \\ \text{Mon. Dec. 31} \end{array} \right.$ (a week of days)
"First of the year, a
week from Monday"
said on Wednesday

Tuesday, New Year's Day 1957

Archie's expectation of a raise on the first of the New Year is significant. This may be the anniversary of his employment. Thus, January 1, 1927 marks the day when Archie goes to work for Wolfe and moves into the old brownstone. This relationship was to continue to November 7, 1974, the last narrative of the Wolfe saga in A FAMILY AFFAIR. It lasted for forty seven years, ten months and sixteen days.

So, after all, B-G may have solved this mystery too in his chronology and be undone by careless editing which put down 1957 instead of the actual year, 1956 for the CHRISTMAS PARTY.

IF DEATH EVER SLEPT 48.29 SLPT

Mon. May 20, to
Tues. June 4, 1957 (15 days)

Mon. May 20 -
Tuesday, June 4, 1957

May/June
1957

FOURTH OF JULY PICNIC 49.30C PICN (july)

Wed. July 4,
Thur. July 5, 1957 (28½ hours)

Wed. July 4 -
Thur. July 5, 1956

July 1957

S&D rightly observe that Fritz has already been visiting Ruster-
man's on and off as a consultant for three years after the death
of Vukelic. LOOK magazine held the presses to include this
Wolfe story under the title, "The Labor Union Murder in its
July 9, 1957 issue.

MURDER IS NO JOKE 50.30D JOKE (joke)

Tues. - Wed.
in July 1957 (31½ hours)

Tues. Aug. 5 -
Wed. Aug. 6, 1957

Summer
1957

I have not been able to find the evidence for B-G's August 5th dating. Stout maintains that the account was written starting August 5, 1957. This is where B-G may have gotten his information, but that places the event before that time. There another version of this account in which the dumpy, middle aged Flora Gallant is transformed into a beautiful young woman who meets Archie on a Monday. This appeared as "Frame-up for Murder" in the Saturday Evening Post, June 21, 28, and July 5, 1958.

CHAMPAGNE FOR ONE 51.31 CHAM

Tues. to Sunday
March 1958 (6 days)

Tues. - Sunday
in March 1958

Mar. 1958

POISON A LA CARTE 52.33A POIS (pois)

Tues. April 1 to
Thur. April 3, 1958 (74 hours)

Tues. April 1 -
Thur. April 3, 1958

Apr. 1958

METHOD THREE FOR MURDER 53.33B METH (meth)

Mon. 9:20 PM to Tues. 2:30 PM
September 1958 (17½ hours)

Mon. - Tues.
Sept. 1960

Sept. 1958

The Saturday Evening Post series of this story appeared Jan. 30 through Feb. 13, 1960. This precludes the B-G date of 1958. Stout says that Archie wrote the account in 1958. cf. REX STOUT, p. 428.

EENY MEENY MURDER MO 54.36A EENY (eeny)

Mon. Jan. 5 to
Tues. January 6, 1959 (25 hours)

Mon. Jan. 5 -
Tues. Jan. 6, 1958

Jan. 1959

Another careless slip on the part of B-G's posthumous editor. There is no Monday, January 5th in 1958. It is in 1959.

COUNTERFEIT FOR MURDER 55.36C CNFT (coun)

Mon. to Tues.
Winter 1958-1959 (32 hours)

Mon. - Tues.
winter 1960-1961

Winter
1960-1961

Because, CNFT was published in the Saturday Evening Post in the January 14-28, 1961 issues, others have placed the event in the winter of 1960-61. However, Stout, Archie's literary agent, says it was written, starting March 6, 1959. cf. REX STOUT, p. 429. This places it in the Winter of 1958-59.

PLOT IT YOURSELF 56.32 PLOT

Mon. 6 PM, May 18 to
Wed. June 3, 1959 (17 days + 3 hrs)

Mon. May 18 -
Wed. June 3, 1959

May/June
1959

THE RODEO MURDER	57.33C	RODE	(rode)	
Mon. Oct. 5 to			Mon. - Wed. in	Oct. 1959
Wed. October 7, 1959	(69 hours)		late August 1960	

S&D's helpful research has enabled us to date this event rather accurately. "The murder in THE RODEO MURDER... occurs on a Monday, one week before the rodeo closed at Madison Square Garden in New York. That was October 5, 1959. There was no rodeo in New York in 1960. Archie made a minor slip, natural for such an avid baseball fan, when he called it the World Series Rodeo instead of the World Championship Rodeo. The 1959 rodeo world series was held in Texas." This compliments information from Stout who says it was written in 1959. cf. REX STOUT, p. 431.

DEATH OF A DEMON	58.36B	DMON	(demn)	
Tues. Jan. 26 to			Tues. - Wed.	Jan. 1960
Wed. January 27, 1960	(24 hours)		January 1960	

TOO MANY CLIENTS	59.34	CLNT	(CLIE)	
Mon. 4:30 PM May 9 to			Mon. May 9 -	May 1960
Sat. 5:14 PM May 14, 1960	(5 days+)		Sat. May 14, 1960	

KILL NOW - PAY LATER	60.40A	PAYL	(kill)	
Mon. to Friday			Mon. - Fri. in	Dec. 1960
December 1960	(5 days + 7 hrs)		December 1960	

THE FINAL DEDUCTION	61.35	FINL		
Tues. April 25 to			Tues. April 25 -	Apr./May
Mon. May 1, 1961	(7 days + 10 hrs)		Mon. May 1, 1961	1961

MURDER IS CORNY	62.40B	CORN	(corn)	
Tues. Sept. 12 to			Tues. Sept 12 -	Sept. 1961
Fri. Sept. 15, 1961	(69 hours)		Fri. Sept. 15, 1961	

GAMBIT	63.37	GAMB		
Mon. Feb. 12, to			Mon. Feb. 12 -	Feb. 1962
Fri. Feb. 16, 1962	(4 days+)		Fri. Feb. 16, 1962	

THE MOTHER HUNT	64.38	MOTH	(MAMA)	
Tues. June 5 to			Tues. June 5 -	June/July
Mon. July 24, 1962	(49 days)		Mon. July 9, 1962	1962

BLOOD WILL TELL	65.40C	BLOD	(blod)	
Tues. Aug. 7 to			Tues. Aug. 7 -	Aug. 1962
Thur. August 9, 1962	(55 hours+)		Thur. August 9, 1962	

WHY NERO WOLFE LIKES ORCHIDS	66.38Y	WHYN		
April 19, 1963	LIFE magazine			

Archie shares with us Why Nero Wolfe Likes Orchids in the April 19, 1963 issue of LIFE magazine. He says that the wife of a man Wolfe had cleared of a murder rap gave him a Vanda suavis. Wolfe kept it in the office and it petered out. He got mad, built a little shed on the roof and bought 20 plants. Now

the plant rooms are 34x86 feet, the size of the house.

A RIGHT TO DIE 67.39 RGHT

Mon. Feb. 24 to

Sat. March 14, 1964 (20 days + 11 hrs)

Mon. Feb. 24 -

Fri. Mar. 13, 1964

Feb/Mar
1964

THE DOORBELL RANG 68.41

Tues. Jan. 5 to

Fri. January 15, 1965 (10 days)

Tues. Jan 5 -

Fri. Jan. 15, 1965

Jan. 1965

THE CASE OF THE SPIES WHO WEREN'T 69.41Z SPIE

January 1966

RAMPARTS magazine.

SPIE was a book review of Invitation To An Inquest by Walter and Miriam Schneir based on notes taken by Archie of an after dinner conversation between Nero Wolfe and Rex Stout. Archie explains:

"For three hours last evening I sat at my desk taking notes. Nero Wolfe, my employer, in his oversized chair at his desk, and Rex Stout, my literary agent, in the red leather chair, who had been a dinner guest were talking about a book... Around midnight Wolfe asked how many pages of my notebook were filled and I told him 27.

He frowned at me. 'Much too much. It must be less than 3,000 words or Mr. Keating will not publish it. Contract it. Cramp it.'

I frowned back. 'You cramp it. Or Stout. Let him earn his ten per cent. Dictate it.'

They both said no. Nothing doing. I fought them for five minutes and lost. So this cramping job on their verdict on that book is mine."

DEATH OF A DOXY 70.42 DOXY

Sat. Jan. 29 to

Mon. Feb. 7, 1966 (9 days)

Sat. Jan. 29 -

Mon. Feb. 7, 1966

Jan/Feb
1966

Archie finds Wolfe reading (again?) Invitation To An Inquest. Probably checking on Archie's "cramping job" book review in "The Case of the Spies Who Weren't." RAMPARTS Jan. 1966

THE FATHER HUNT 71.43 FATH

Thur. Aug. 17 to

Fri. Sept. 8, 1967 (22 days)

Thur. Aug. 17 -

Fri. Sept. 8, 1967

Aug/Sept
1967

DEATH OF A DUDE 72.44 DUDE

Fri. Aug 2 to

Tues. Aug. 13, 1968 (11 days)

Aug. 1968

PLEASE PASS THE GUILT 73.45 PASS

Tues. June 3 to

Mon. July 1, 1969 (28 days)

Summer
1969

In the FRAG we have Archie's response to a birthday card sent to him by John J. McAleer. The text of Archie's response reads:

"Thank you very much for your good wishes. I need them right now because I'm crabby. I like to vote and I don't see how I can next week, for a jerk like Nixon or a sap like McGovern. Nuts." cf. REX STOUT, p. 506.

A FAMILY AFFAIR 75.46 AFAM
Tues. Oct. 29 to
Thur. Nov. 7, 1974 (9 days + 10 hours)

Oct. 1974

OBSERVATIONS

The longest Wolfe and Archie adventure is that of the IN THE BEST OF FAMILIES. It was five months and a day in a mortal struggle with Arnold Zech.

The shortest adventure was that at the Polo Grounds in THIS WON'T KILL YOU. Wolfe and Archie vie for the honor of who solved it first. It was 10½ hours in duration.

However, if you subtract Archie's usual sleep time of 8½ hours from the 17½ hour period of METHOD THREE FOR MURDER, one might make a case for it being the quickest solving of a case, nine working hours.

COLLECTIONS IN PUBLISHED ORDER

BLACK ORCHIDS 9A
CORDIALLY INVITED TO MEET
DEATH 9B

NOT QUITE DEAD ENOUGH 10A
BOOBY TRAP 10B

TROUBLE IN TRIPPLICATE 14
Before I Die 14A
Help Wanted: Male 14B
Instead of Evidence 14C

THREE DOORS TO DEATH 16
Man Alive 16A
Omit Flowers 16B
Door to Death 16C

CURTAINS FOR THREE 18
The Gun With Wings 18A
Bullet for One 18B
Disguise for Murder 18C

TRIPLE JEOPARDY 20
Home to Roost 20A
The Cop-Killer 20B
The Squirt and the Monkey 20C

THREE MEN OUT 23
Invitation to Murder 23A
The Zero Clue 23B
This Won't Kill You 23C

THREE WITNESSES 26
The Next Witness 26A
When a Man Murders 26B
Die Like a Dog 26C

THREE FOR THE CHAIR 28
A Window for Death 28A
Immune to Murder 28B
Too Many Detectives 28C

AND FOUR TO GO 30
Christmas Party 30A
Easter Parade 30B
Fourth of July Picnic 30C
Murder is No Joke 30D

THREE AT WOLFE'S DOOR 33
Poison a la Carte 33A
Method Three for Murder 33B
The Rodeo Murder 33C

MOMICIDE TRINITY 36
Eeny Meeny Murder Mo 36A
Death of a Demon 36B
Counterfeit for Murder 36C

TRIO FOR BLUNT INSTRUMENTS 40
Kill Now - Pay Later 40A
Murder is Corny 40B
Blood Will Tell 40C