



# Les Polarophiles Tranquilles

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## THE STRANGE CASE OF DOCTOR GREENE AND MISTER CHASE (Second Part)

### The Permanent Change of Pseudonyms

#### **The story so far:**

Following the publication of pamphlets suggesting that the police fictions signed James Hadley Chase could have been written by Graham Greene, for fear that their strategy could come out, Mr Chase required Mr Greene to set the record straight about the situation.

The two men recalled at length their literary similarities which could be found in their works but did not discuss the motive of their association. This will be the subject of this second part where they will also tackle the technical aspects of their collaboration.

**Mr GREENE:** Oh, pleased to see you, my dear James !

**Mr CHASE:** For God's Sake, stop calling me "my dear James" all the time ! I have the feeling to be a butler waiting orders from his English Lord and Master !

**Mr GREENE:** The comparison is pretty good because I have the idea ...

**Mr CHASE:** Oh, God !

**Mr GREENE:** I have just achieved to write a novel which could be exactly your sort of thing although I have added a little innovation. You know, I believe that for some times now, the cruelty in the Chase's stories became dull. The adventures of the cop Lepski, the description of the wealthy people in the fictional Paradise City (1) which is equivalent to Miami Beach, all this make tinkling the cash-register, but it looks to me quite toneless compared to the sadistic summits I reached when I started out.

**Mr CHASE:** What do you have in mind ?

**Mr GREENE:** Well, since the censorship is no longer chasing the novelists, I have the urge to return to the roots. Now, we do not risk anything in committing ourselves totally.

**Mr CHASE:** What ! Yet more cruel ? Even further unbearable ? Good God, Graham, you want to ruin me completely.

**Mr GREENE:** Do you mean that you disapprove me ?

**Mr CHASE:** I am done with all this, Graham. I cannot stand anymore to shoulder all these texts. Each time one of my books is published, the critics snigger at me and my wife gives me a filthy look as if she were afraid that I would put all these delights that you lend me all through the pages into practice on her. That is why, I am telling you straight: you can keep all these sadistic fantasies for your official work and insert them into your books, such as "*The Honorary Consul*" (in French: *Le Consul Honoraire*) or "*Human Factors*" (*Le Facteur Humain*)..

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(1)The cycle “Paradise City” began in 1963 with “*Soft Center*” (Chantons en chœur) which stages a police team's activities in a rich and corrupted seaside resort in Florida. It is the Chase's novel the closest to a police proceedings. The series is made of about fifteen books among which we find, besides “*Soft Center*”, “*Well, my Pretty*” (Eh bien, ma Jolie !, 1966), “*Want to Stay Alive ?*”(le Dernier du Colt, 1971), “*You're Dead without Money*” (Pas de Vie sans Fric,1972), “*Try This One For Size*”,(La Grande Fauche, 1980)

**Mr GREENE:** Well, well, well, I will find another outlet. Look, I think that I will phone Peter Loughran who, long time ago, accepted to be my straw-man and to sign “*Train Ride*” ( Londres Express) . I am pretty sure that he is ready to do it again.

**Mr CHASE:** Ah, yeah ! If you have in mind to use him as my replacement to pass your clandestine production...(2)

**Mr GREENE:** Why are you so boring with your scruples. Yesterday already, I was tired of hearing about your literary comparisons between my official output and the one I confide to you with kindness. All this, because few snoopers have had one or two intuitions...Come on, relax ! Remember that it is thanks to my initiative that we can exchange our souvenirs and drink a brandy sitting outside a café in Lausanne, with, in front of us, the Lake Geneva displaying its liquid magnificence which meets the secretive splendor of our bank accounts. I know, I am cynical but what a development since 1939 and our financial difficulties.

**Mr CHASE:** I am unable to determine what is your prevailing feeling, cynicism or nostalgia ?

**Mr GREENE:** Probably a mixture of both. The human being is a cocktail of stunning emotions. My most important needs in 1939, and this led me to bring you in, was the sentiment of emergency, the need to earn money as fast as possible in order to make ends meet but also because I did foresee an inevitable war.. How my wife, my two children and myself, witnesses of a time of blood and tears, would be free from want if I could not ensure our material needs.

**Mr CHASE:** Yesterday you talked about “*The Confidential Agent*” ( L'Agent Secret) which you had expected to be a best-selling book....

**Mr GREENE:** Yes, I was in the clear but for a short period only. As a matter of fact, it used to be the good fortune of all entertaining novels that I published in the 30's such as “*Stamboul Train*” (Orient-Express) or “*A Gun For Sale*” (Tueur à Gages). They were definitely more successful than my challenging novels not selling such as: “*It's A Battlefield*” (C'est un Champ de Batailles), “*England Made Me*” (Les Naufragés) or “*Brighton Rock*” (3)(Le Rocher de Brighton) which were a real drain on my financial situation and I had to deal with it...

**Mr CHASE:** in adding another string to your bow...which is exactly when I came on.

**Mr GREENE:** No, not yet ! Do not forget that “*The Confidential Agent*” used to be the pattern of my idea. Fast conceived, fast written, this novel, without being impersonal, was less “Greenian” than my previous stories to the extent that it could have been easily taken as the work of a different author. You know my taste for everything which is secret: the idea of publishing it under the signature of a pseudonym crossed my mind. Hence, I signed the final manuscript “Henry Gough” (4).

**Mr CHASE:** When have you changed your mind ?

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(2)This probably happen in 1983 when the Chases were definitely stopped. From this point on, Peter Loughran who remained curiously silent after the publication of “*Train Ride*” (Londres-Express, 1967) in spite of its success. To the objection: “Why, this time, Greene did not sign Chase ?”, the answer could be that it was not the first time that Rene Raymond did refuse to shoulder a manuscript a little bit too “spicy”. The new association Loughram-Green will produce three other titles: “*Dearest*” (1983), “*Jacqui*” (1984) and “*The Third Beast*” (1987). Overall, a doubt exists: is Peter Loughram a real person or a pure spiritual construction ? The future will tell us. Meanwhile, if you are interested by the Loughram's case, you can consult the “*Polarophiles Tranquilles*, Bulletin N° 7”.

(3)Graham Greene explained himself in “*The Ways of Escape*” (Les Chemins de l'Evasion, 1980), published in France in 1987 by “Presses Pocket” (N° 2697), page 68) but according to an avoidance strategy, customary to Greene, the book becomes suddenly very evasive as far as his sources of income are concerned during the war...

(4) The full name of Greene is Henry Graham Greene. Hence H. Gough is a pseudonym quite transparent...

**Mr GREENE:** When I did realized that, after all, “*The Confidential Agent*” was still too much “Greenian” to be the work of somebody else, essentially because the book is steeped in black humor (5). I was linked to it by too many strings. But the idea took form and once I had completed “*No Orchid For Miss Blandish*”, it was sufficiently developed to let me find somebody who would shoulder my prose. Most importantly, I had to be above suspicion for, if “Henry Gough” was a dummy identity which could not hide me for ever, what could one do against a “James Hadley Chase” made of blood and flesh. Men believe only in what they see and you, Mr Rene Brabazon Raymond can be seen.

**Mr CHASE:** But why did you choose me to embody “James Hadley Chase” ? Anybody with a low profile would have suited to be your straw-man !

**Mr GREENE:** Oh ! No ! So that my project takes shape, I was in need of a reliable man, somebody quite close to my circle, easy to get in touch and under control without turning a hair, modest and holding his tongue. Considering all these points, you deserved widely to take on James Hadley Chase's personality and work.

**Mr CHASE:** Incidentally, a bizarre pen-name...

**Mr GREENE:** It's not due to chance...

**Mr CHASE:** You can say so: Chase was the name of the main character of your third novel “*Rumor at Nightfall*” (Rumeur au Crépuscule). What a lack of thought. It's a miracle that it has not been noticed yet.

**Mr GREENE:** That sounded so good to my ears. It was a kind of private joke I usually like to play with unless it was a youthful mistake. But I knew how to remove every trace. Do not forget that I have forbidden the reprinting of two of my first books, including in the complete edition of my work (6) and “*Rumor at Nightfall*” is among them (7). You see, I have staged everything carefully so that this inconsistency remains hidden.

**Mr CHASE:** You want to have the last word on everything ! But get back to our convention. In reality, it has been quite easy to convince me: I had a job without prospect, I was available and consequently I agreed to team up with you. I would add that your interest for me was essentially due to my pastime: I was an amateur writer, who had already published some poems and one or two fictions. It was sufficient to introduce me as a plausible novelist but obviously, I was inadequately trained to impose a style, the “style Rene Raymond”.

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(5) Greene' s idea to publish “*The Confidential Agent*” with a pseudonym is developed by Michael Shelden in Graham Greene 's biography “*Graham Greene, The Man Within*”, Heinemann, 1994, pages 279/80. This book is quite interesting although Shelden missed the interpretation of some facts (for example, Greene's fight against the corruption of the Nice city council during the mayor Jacques Medecin' s term and the interest of his pamphlet “*J' accuse*” (I denounce) which was one of the causes of the disgrace and the exile of the mayor.

(6) “*Les Romans de Graham Greene* “(Graham Greene' s novels), Lausanne, Editions Rencontre, 1965. The two books not included are “*The Name of Action*” (1930) and “*Rumor at Nightfall*” (1931). The subtlety consists of deleting two books in order not to draw attention on the one which is ambiguous.

(7) See Shelden's biography (note 5) and the “*Ways of Escape*” by Greene himself. The latter confirms his interdiction to re-print the two books (see note 6) which are his second and third novels considered disgraceful for his career (still to-day, they are unpublished in France). We should note that if the hero of “*Rumor at Nightfall*” is named Chase, we also find in this book a certain “*Crane*” which will be used in another James Hadley Chase “*Trusted like the Fox*” (Traquenards, 1954)

**Mr GREENE:** This was going to be my role. But for the rest, you are right: as a writer, you were quite insignificant to be watched closely. After all, the publishing firms and the magazines (principally, the less important ones) are crammed with dabblers who generally disappear after having written one or two texts.

**Mr CHASE:** Thank you for “dabbler”.

**Mr GREENE:** I stand by what I said because it is the right word. You should be rather grateful that I did offer you the opportunity to be published copiously and fairly regularly.

**Mr CHASE:** For books that I did not write ? That I contented myself to shoulder although I disapproved them, and even worst, signed with a pseudonym? Graham, I have always had the unpleasant feeling that what you offer with the right hand, is taking back with your left one.

**Mr GREENE:** You are thankless. I helped you to become rich without lifting a finger, even less for putting it on a typewriter except, of course, during your meetings with the press or the photographers. You are moaning again !

**Mr CHASE:** I have some difficulties to believe that the necessity of saving money was the only aim of such a foolish project.

**Mr GREENE:** I did break off all contact. At the beginning, I used to write as a freelancer rejecting the stability of a journalistic job at the “*Times*”. I had already a foothold in the cinema as a scriptwriter for the director Alexander Korda (1893-1956) who used to reject many of my scripts because of their physical, erotic and psychological violence.(8)

Difficult, therefore, to earn a lot of money with my only writing. It was the time that the “hard-boiled” crime fictions started a trend with the American novelists Dashiell Hammett (1894-1961), Raoul Whitfield (1898-1945), Carrol John Daly (1889-1958) etc.... As a matter of fact, in England, the same genre appeared signed Peter Cheney (1896-1951) (9) who was selling his books like hot cakes. The general craze for Cheney showed me the way. And, in addition to the commercial success, I had found an outlet more efficient than the scripts for the innermost violence wearing me down, which, previously thwarted and contained, led me to write psychological asphyxiating scenes. (10)

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(8) William J. West, a rare author to have tempted to write a Greene's objective biography (alas, unfulfilled), confirms this fact: “*Even Korda had difficulty in restraining Greene for putting violence and sexual innuendo in some of his scripts and, actually, rejected material for this reason. The trouble was that Greene saw his films in these terms, particularly sexual*”. (William J. West, *The quest for Graham Greene*, New York, St Martin's Press, 1998, page 76)

(9) Peter Cheney met the success in 1936 with his first novel: “*This Man is Dangerous*”, first story with Lemmy Caution (the FBI agent)

(10) Just refer to the terrifying conclusion of “*Brighton Rock*”: the only memorabilia kept by the young Rose of her dead lover is a recording of his voice: she believes that she is listening to a love declaration when the record pours out insulting words.

**Mr CHASE:** You have perfectly pulled it off. “*No Orchids For Miss Blandish*” (Pas d' Orchidée Pour Miss Blandish) was not only a best-selling but the amazing sadism of some episodes had also made the novel a profitable scandal...(11)

**Mr GREENE:** ...that I let you have the entire fame.

**Mr CHASE:** I am touched by all your kind gestures. I believe that it is at this time that I had some difficulties to look at my own reflection in a mirror... for I am generally discreet, shy and the violence horrifies me. The Americans too.

**Mr GREENE:** That are specifically these qualities which gave me the guaranty of your silence with the journalists. But I must tell you the truth: at this stage of our association, I could not think of a long term arrangement. I had to deal with the most urgent matter first: hoard the more money possible before the war breaks out and also to cloud the issues. I did not want to let somebody believes that, I, Graham Greene, writer with a catholic reputation, gave my blackest state of mind free rein in these books. The need for money led me, just after “*Miss Blandish...*” to publish the same year “*The Dead Stays Dumb*” (Bouchées Doubles); But, the necessity to create a diversion in 1940, gave me the idea to publish under your name “*He Won't Need It Now*” (Qu'est-ce qu'on Déguste) with the pseudonym James L. Docherty never re-used since.

**Mr CHASE:** I had to change not only my front-name but better safe than sorry, I had to go to another editor ! Douglas Jerrold and his publishing firm paid well, though !

**Mr GREENE:** Heineman too. Stop complaining. And what Jerrold has lost on the Chase, he got it back when I joined his company “Eyre and Spottiswoode” as deputy-director in 1944...

**Mr CHASE:** You are going too fast.

**Mr GREENE:** In 1939 too. The top speed (six weeks) I experienced when writing “*Confidential Agent*” (l'Agent Secret) helped me to write “my” first few Chase . When I had to join the army, I must say that I had some manuscripts ready in my drawers (12). And when I was called up by the reserve officer forces, I did request a few months delay to join the Territorial Army in order to achieve “*The Power And The Glory*” (La Puissance et la Gloire) and, of course, write one or two additional Chase(13). The surplus of writings allowed me to publish books at a sustained pace during the all war (14) and consequently, have a regular income. It served me in good stead : after a position as Community Policeman in a London under the Nazi bombs, I joined the Intelligence Service in 1941. This new job in the propaganda services, did not allow me any free time. Moreover, in 1942, I was sent with a secrete mission to West Africa, in Sierra Leone. One year later, in March 1943, hardly back to London, Kim Philby (British, 1912-1988) got me into his clutches to work for the MI6. If you add my job as a dramatic critic for the magazine “The Spectator” and the scripts written this time for the B.B.C.(which were rejected in the same amount and for the same reasons than those refused by Korda), you will understand that my publishing strategy had necessarily to involve Chase.

**Mr CHASE:** But once the emergency factor due to the circumstances had disappeared, what pushed you to continue to publish the Chase as you have done it during more than forty years ?

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(11) The scandal is confirmed by the critic John Mair: “*guys killed: 22 (9 with a gun, 6 with a machine gun, 3 with a knife, 2 with a truncheon, one punched and the last one committed suicide). Chicks screwed: 5 (3 willing, one paid and one raped)...*” (See Jacques Sadoul in “*Anthologie de la Litterature Policière: de Conan Doyle à Jérôme Charyn, Ramsey, 1980, page 357 (Police literature anthology from Conan Doyle To Jérôme Charyn).*)

**Mr GREENE:** Of course, the war was over but the Chase pseudonym gave me some ideas how to continue. After all, everything was in place to maintain a long term association. I had found the literary genre which worked the best, I mean the crime story. I had a straw-man, you ! fully trustworthy.

In addition, working for “Eyre & Spottiswoode”, I was aware of the editorial and commercial openings. Remained to refined the system and hide entirely my personality behind yours. My motive remained interested considering that I could earn money uncontrolled by the Tax Office which is, as everybody knows, merciless.

**Mr CHASE:** What ! You were that much interested !

**Mr GREENE:** James ! You are talking like a French scholar. For these people, as soon as we leave the ethereal literary summits to tackle some practical questions, we are becoming sordid, petty-minded and we almost belong to the class of the “untouchables” (in the Hindi sense of the term). For them, the career of a writer is **justified by the artistic beauty of his skill and his style. This is probably true for some French novelists such as Flaubert (1821-1880)(15)** but pretty rare. As far as I am concerned, do not forget than I am an English writer, and the English, when they write, take into account all aspects of what is at the same time, a mode of expression and a livelihood.

**Mr CHASE:** You could be nicknamed “Avida Dollars” (16)(i.e. Eager For Dollars)

**Mr GREENE:** This would go to the opposite extreme. As often with me, the truth is more ambiguous: the Chase became a regular and clandestine income, a cathartic help to unwind as well as a ground for literary explorations. You see the marvelous freedom that you offered me through your benevolent attitude.

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(12)In “*The Way of Escape*”, Greene confessed to have written concomitantly “*The Secret Agent*” and “*The Power and the Glory*”, working in the morning very rapidly on the first one and far more slowly on the second. We can suppose that the Chases took over in the morning once “*The Secret Agent*” was over. In this specific instance, Greene alludes probably to “*Lady, here is your Wreath*” (Le Corbillard de Madame, 1949) and “*He Won't Need it Now*” (Qu'est-ce qu'on Déguste).

(13)Probably “*Miss Callaghan comes to Grief*” (Méfiez-vous Fillettes, 1949) and the short stories collection “*Get a Load of This*” (Le Fin Mot de l'Histoire). Both were published in 1941 and 42 when Greene, engaged in the war, did not have time to write.

(14)Greene is exaggerating a bit: from two Chases a year in 1939 and 40, only one will be published in 41 and 42. No publication in 1943. The normal rhythm will start again in 1944 with a new pseudonym Raymond Marshall, Chase's concurrent.

(15)Flaubert was disinterested because of his independent means. However, he did not appreciate being cheated by his editor Michel Levy when his novel “*Madame Bovary*” was very successful.

(16)Anagram based on the name of Salvador Dali -Spanish, 1904-1989- created by André Breton - French, 1896-1966 - as a reference to the painter's greed.

**Mr CHASE:** Very well. I surrender. Let's get back to the point and let us see how you have improved our association

**Mr GREENE:** First of all, to use pseudonyms competing with Chase: as you know, the first book not written under the Chase's name "*He Won't Need it Now*" (Qu'est-ce que l'on Déguste !) signed James L. Docherty (17) was a diversionary move but as far as the atmosphere of the book and the situations of the story were concerned, it was a Chase of the first water. However, in 1944, I became tired to write these synthesized American stories with the usual share of actions, of tortures, of gun crackles along with stereotyped and limited characters.(18) But all this guaranteed the success of the Chases. From there, how could I change my tactics without having my readership to get away from me ?

**Mr CHASE:** Hence, you said to yourself:: I will attempt another time to put a pseudonym under the pseudonym.

**Mr GREENE:** Right ! I created a new name, Raymond Marshall (19), and in his "first" novel, I did destroy all clichés of the "Hard Boiled" roman noir. This gave "*Miss Shumway Waves a Wand*" (Miss Shumway jette un sort) where the tough nuts spend their time to faint, the women to split their personality in two halves, half good, half bad (when they do not throw a torrential rain on their rivals) and the dogs to give their opinion on everything. To summarize, with a roar of laughter, I ruined a pattern I was so bored with. But, "*Miss Shumway...*" offered me the other advantage to liquidate the last souvenirs I had kept from my trip to Mexico in 1938 (20)(the one which inspired me "*The Power and the Glory*").and use the magic of "Nagual" (in South American religions, some human beings have the power to turn themselves into animal forms). It will not be the last Chase to use the trick: later on, I will use again the Indochinese scenery of "*The Quiet American*" (un Americain Bien Tranquille) and my knowledge of this area in the very "Greenian" "*A Lotus For Miss Quon*" (Un Lotus for Miss Chaung)

**Mr CHASE:** I do remember the face I made when you asked me to shoulder "*Miss Shumway...*" in the case where somebody would have suspected that Raymond Marshall was not real (21). I said to myself: I have been a dupe all along.

**Mr GREENE:** Not at all because in 1945, in order to go beyond the limits of the Chase, I decided to push it a bit and after having created a series of parallel pseudonyms, I resolved to internally re-arrange the Chase to not feel myself prisoner of my success as a pseudo- American novelist...

**Mr CHASE:** I see ! Are we going to talk about "*Eva*" now ?

**Mr GREENE::** What a hatred for this name !

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(17) However, in France, it will be attributed to Chase upon its publication in 1950.

(18) P. Cheney, Chase's rival, will also be tired of these stereotypes. Lemmy Caution will leave the scene to be replaced by a somewhat more English detective Callaghan and the "*Dark*" series: "*The Stars are Dark*" (Les Etoiles se Cachent, 1943), "*Dark Hero*" (Heros de l'Ombre, 1946) will reveal Cheney's desire to try something new: spying plots and a style more detailed.

(18) Raymond was the surname of one of his brother and Marshall, his mother's maiden name.

(19) Which inspired him "*The Power and the Glory*"

(20) This, of course, did happen !

**Mr CHASE:** It is justified ! Frankly, what was the matter with you to force me to take on this thick psychological book which has nothing in common with my violent and primary universe ? And the plot ...! It brought me out in a cold sweat only in reading it ! The story of a novelist who became fabulously rich thanks to the success of his books... not written by himself but by a ghost-writer. Do you realize that if our tandem is suspected, this book will be a painful proof.

**Mr GREENE:** My poor James ! Never trust a writer's integrity: he will use all elements he can find that he will judge necessary to complete his creation, even if these elements belong to the shameful side of his private life. I agree that with "*Eva*", it was a bitter pill to swallow, but put yourself in my shoes ! I know, you could have asked you to sign this book Raymond Marshall. But the Chases were the locomotive of our association. All things considered, the Raymond Marshall and the other occasional pseudonyms were far less successful. You will agree that the critic and the readers did not identify them as written by Chase. I took "*Eva*" to heart and I wanted it triumphant. And after all, it is not a book out of place in the Chase's oeuvre: the prostitute Eva can very well be extracted from the white slave trade world of "*Miss Callaghan Comes to Grief*" (Mefiez-vous Fillette) that you had published four years earlier. It is, par excellence, the portrait and the incomparable prototype of the Chasian bitch. In that light, the fraud of the writer was hidden under this piece of choice...

**Mr CHASE:** ...moving away all suspicions at the same time. Well done ! You always knew how to divert the attention even in the middle of the worst dangers. Nevertheless, besides "*Eva*", the pseudonyms continued to play their roles in our enterprise to overthrow the Chase written the old way. "*More deadly Than The Male*" (Elles Attigent) published just after "*Eva*" had initially another title...

**Mr GREENE:** And do you know why ?

**Mr CHASE:** Yes, I remember what you said this specific day: "I am fed up to portray a mockery of the United States where I never set foot and only to please my readers. I would rather prefer to show London, my good old London that I would describe surrounded by the blackest atmosphere".

**Mr GREENE:** Yes, all in all, my own effort to rebuild myself. However, coming back to the old Chase style would not have been understood by the critic nor the public who wanted their dose of America with its immortal folklore. Even if "*Eva*" was not a classical Chase, it had the merit to take place across the Atlantic. Then, I had to be crafty. Raymond Marshall being for the moment used for my "hard-boiled" inspiration - I refer to "*Miss Shumway Waves a Wand*", (Miss Shumway Jette un Sort), and "*Just the Way it is*" (En Trois Coups de Cuiller a Pot), but soon, "*Trusted Like a Fox*" (Traquenards) (22) would change the order – I had to create a fourth pseudonym, Ambrose Grant, to compete with Chase.

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(22)Published in 1948, "*Trusted Like a Fox*" was breaking with Raymond Marshall's farcical inspiration in designing a very "Greenian" profile of an indefensible man, Edwin Cushman, British pro-Nazi compelled to hide himself in his own country due to his participation in some German anti-allied broadcasts. Greene was visibly inspired from the young propagandist William Joyce's trajectory, very close to the "*British Union of Fascist*" who had in Germany the same activities lent to Cushman (the latter looked small, flimsy with a scare on his face, just like Joyce). But through Cushman, Greene thought about the American poet Ezra Pound (1885-1972), great admirer of Mussolini who, like Joyce (American-British, died hanged 1946), presented anti-Semitic and anti-American broadcasts in Italy. If Greene never met W. Joyce, he knew Pound but never developed any friendship with him. Pound who valued Greene's work, did support one of his books "*It's a Battlefield*" (C'est un Champ de Bataille, 1934). The two of them had a common friend T.S. Eliot (American, 1888-1965) who was also tempted by the Mussolini's fascism.

**Mr CHASE:** And that is when, in 1946, you made this terrible mistake: you gave “*More Deadly than the Male*” (Elles Attigent) from the collection you were managing at Douglas Jerrold to Eyre and Spottiswoode. Do you realize that you gave credence to the suspicion that you were the real author of the book. Even better, in this novel, there were some scenes and characters very similar to those of the “*Brighton Rock*” ? (Le Rocher de Brighton).

**Mr GREENE:** The Grant signature weakened this audacity...

**Mr CHASE:** ...that one of your biographer, William J. West, was on the verge to give away. I am still shaking all over. Look: in his biography “*The Quest For Graham Greene*”, he maintains that you are the real author of the book..

**Mr GREENE:** My dear James, I have read the West and I can assure you that he did not write such a thing, at least explicitly. I, however, agree with you that the book starts with : “*Any reader of this book signed by this new name (hence, Ambrose Grant) will immediately understand that the two men have worked together on it*” (23). He will then mention all the similarities between “*More Deadly Than The Male*” and my personal universe: the resemblance of Sidney Brant with Pinkie (the character of “*Brighton Rock*”) (24), the similar expressions...But, see how later on, West will step back with his contradictory assertion: “*it has been said that the book had been entirely written by Greene. A cautious reading demonstrates that it is most improbable.*”(25) The matter will end without any other argument.

**Mr CHASE:** Are you satisfied with his arbitrary climb-down ?

**Mr GREENE:** Entirely ! Convincing or not, is not important. As a matter of fact, we can consider that West has been put under some pressures. But I do not believe that the readers will care.

**Mr CHASE** Some pressures ..? He succeeded to discover in England some letters revealing our relationship. Fortunately, our families, yours and mine, did put a stop to it and hushed up the scandal ! (26).

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(23)William J. West “*The Quest for Graham Greene*, New York, St Martin’s Press, 1998, page 113: “*Anyone reading the book Greene published for him under his new name will immediately realize that the two men must have worked very closely together on the book*”

(24)More than in any other novel, we find there the very heart of Greene’s oeuvre, a savagery deeply disturbing, revealing violent impulses hidden under an apparent civilized world. “*Brighton Rock*” is effectively a book where all values are upside down just like a mirror of nightmares: the unadulterated Evil, symbolized by Pinkie, is obviously infinitely more seducing than the ugly Good, trivial and stupid represented by the prostitute Ida Arnold. Nothing surprising if the little Rose gets away from the latter to succumb under the black charm of the one who will despise her until he gets rid of her. Facing the mediocrity without future of her own life, she chooses the damnation just as one prefers the adventure. One feels how the author pushes her insidiously to opt for this choice and how he would like to impose it to the reader as the best for himself. The shameful of “*Brighton Rock*” heralds the cruelty of some Chases: “*No Orchid For Miss Blandish*” (which will appall the critic and many readers) comes close to the polluted complicity with the Evil. The following Chases will subsequently reuse significantly some entire sections of “*Brighton Rock*” (see “*More Deadly than the Male*” but also “*Trusted Like the Fox*” where the sadist Crane exerts on the poor Grace, Pinkie’s fascination on Rose: more he hates her, more she loves him. No need to talk about Peter Loughram’s books which are even more cruel.

(25)See opus note 23, page 114: “*It has been suggested that the entire book is largely Greene’s work. A close reading shows that this is unlikely*”

(26)In “*Quest For Graham Greene*”, West tells that he discovered at Ealing, a cache where he found 500 letters signed Rene Brabazon Raymond alias J.H. Chase, sent during more than 60 years to Graham Greene. It would be interesting to know where they are for they could give us many clues about Greene-Chase collusion. But the Greene and Chase families maintain a complete black out. Although the pressure led West to retract himself, he situates the first encounter of the two men around “...the last days of the Second World War and for a long time afterwards. Their paths crossed repeatedly over the next forty years, particularly during the 60’s. Quite by chance, both men were living in the same small Swiss village of Corseaux-sur-Vevey when they died, Chase in 1985, Greene in 1991”

**Mr GREENE:** Whatever, West's baking-down is the guaranty that under Ambrose Grant's mask, the Chase hold out.

**Mr CHASE:** In summary, the usage of a mask under a mask...

**Mr GREENE:** This would be renewed for Raymond Marshall for reasons less noble than the artist's needs. In 1948, we had to deal with our first major blow:"our" Raymond Marshall had to go to an American court because of the book "*Blonde's Requiem*" published in 1946 (Le Requiem des Blondes).

**Mr CHASE:** I do remember. The plaintiff was nobody else than Raymond Chandler (1888-1959) who reproached us to have plagiarized some passages of his books. By the way, he was not wrong but, by chance, we had also plagiarized Dashiell Hammett (1894-1961) and the prologue of "*Blonde's Requiem*" was an imitation of "*Red Harvest*" (Moisson Rouge). Fortunately, Hammett did not notice it and we have been able to limit the troubles due to our incredible lack of foresight...

**Mr GREENE:** My lack of foresight ?

**Mr CHASE:** May I remind you, Graham, that you are the one who took the initiative of these successive plagiarisms. Your role is acknowledged by West himself ! (27)

**Mr GREENE:** Yes, but do not forget that in weakening these revelations, he discredited himself. The danger was then past on this side.

**Mr CHASE:** If you say so... But, let's get back to the point. Since Raymond Chandler summoned "Raymond Marshall" to appear before the court, the latter had to present himself...

**Mr GREENE:** But, it was only a pseudonym. The mask had to reveal another mask. Because I could not represent "Raymond Marshall", I put you in the front line. Rene Brabazon Raymond, alias James Hadley Chase recognized to be the author of all "Raymond Marshall" in general and "*Blonde's Requiem*" in particular.

**Mr CHASE:** What a chore. Not content to be the supposed writer of your dubious little novels, I had now a reputation of plagiarist !

**Mr GREENE:** My dear James, your perpetual complaints annoy me. In appearing at court, you were fulfilling your straw-man obligations. Do not forget that you were hired and generously paid for that. I agree with you that it is an ungrateful job to take the responsibility of somebody else's work and all the avatars which go with it but when I did explain your role, I did not try to butter you up.

**Mr CHASE:** I could not think that it would have been that difficult.

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(27) According to W.J. West: "*Shortly after his next book "Blondes' s Requiem" appeared, Chase was obliged to publish a letter in the "Bookseller" admitting certain borrowings from Raymond Chandler (American, 1888-1959). They were not extensive and partly, as a result of Greene' s support, which lasted for many years afterwards"*

**Mr GREENE:** Overall and although somewhat incredible, the trial put an additional screen between our association and those who could have discovered it. As a matter of fact, to the reputation of a man looking for a popular and commercial acclaim, Chase was granted the reputation of a plagiarist, living on a shameless plagiarism. Based on this new fame, the resemblance between my work and yours disappeared. Yours could, retrospectively, have looked like a borrowing to the Graham Greene's oeuvre. It was of no consequence anymore that the hero of "*Miss Callaghan Comes to Grief*" be named "Raven" just like the one of "*A Gun For Sale*" (Tueur à Gages), or that the "Sidney Brant" from "*More Deadly Than The Male*" recalled Pinkie...

**Mr CHASE :** But why did you continue to play with pseudonyms after the trial ? Literary, commercially, we got something out of our organization.

**Mr GREENE:** Because the fuse "Raymond Marshall" had blown out to the profit of Chase. In disappearing, it revealed that our structure was well in place: from now on, the reader knew what he could expect from an author like James Hadley Chase including the somewhat atypical novels signed Raymond Marshall or Ambrose Grant, even from a book like "*Eva*". In one word, we had all latitude to move. Our stories could happen in England, in America or anywhere else, as long as the name Chase was on the cover, we had our readers.

**Mr CHASE:** Hence, we could forget the Chase's competitors and it is true to say that, after the trial, in 1949, we have never published again a book signed Raymond Marshall.

**Mr GREENE:** Mainly because the Chase's novels did arouse a general craze of new readers: it was the turn of the French to discover, thanks to the "Série Noire" editions, the English substitutes of the American Romans Noirs – Peter Cheney and "you", my dear. Some young French novelists like Boris Vian (1920-1959), Jacques Laurent (1919-2000), Serge Laforest or Léo Malet (1909-1996) have even followed your example and written police stories using eccentric American pseudonyms to, them too, earn rapidly a lot of money.

**Mr CHASE:** Yes, from that point on, France became a large opportunity for our production to the extent that the "Raymond Marshall" were published without suspecting that they could be from the same vein as the Chase (28). Later on, in the 50's, they were re-published under "my" name. The same happened to the Ambrose Grant and the James L. Docherty. Nevertheless, in spite of the critics (in 1949, Thomas Narcejac described somewhat biased in "*La Fin d'un Bluff*" - the End of a Bluff - the immoral content of the Chases) (29), we had our blue-chip and the other pseudonyms did not survive..

When we look back, yet, it is a miracle that our tandem could hold until 1983. For, in spite of the solidity of the structure, you felt the need to play some new tricks that nearly sank us without return ! Do you remember this tax counselor that you did hire in 1950 ?...

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(28)In France, the Raymond Marshalls have been equally published by "Les Editions du Scorpion", "Les Presses de la Cité" and "La Série Noire". This would prove that Marshall was a distinct author from Chase and this until the "*Blonde's Requiem*"'s trial. Otherwise, all novels would have belonged to "Série Noire". Besides, after the lawsuit and the disclosure of Marshall's identity, Marcel Duhamel (French, 1900-1977), founder of the "Série Noire" publishing imprint, managed to get back all copyrights of all books signed Marshall and printed them with his collection.

(29)Many supporters of the Black Novel did feel that "*La Fin d'un Bluff*" (the End of a Bluff) missed entirely its aim: supposed to be a critic of the American Hard-Boiled, it relied on Cheney and Chase's examples although both of them were pure British writers. In reality, we could wonder if Narcejac was not trying to denounce the Greene's methods and his utilization of Chase to make money at the American Black Novel expense. Did he have the premonition that G. Greene was hidden behind Chase ? Did he try to speak in veil terms of their enterprise fairly profitable ? We think so !

Nevertheless, in the part of the essay devoted to Chase, this one is very often compared to Greene as far as his view about the cruelty of the modern world is concerned. Narcejac, with some sort of ambiguity, will conclude: "*The vicious authors are often great novelists who prefer to be "taxi boys"*" ("*La Fin d'un Bluff*", Le Portulan, 1949, page 106).

**Mr GREENE:** Well...You are referring to Tom Roe. I know.. You are impatient to tackle and tell me straight this matter.

**Mr CHASE:** Oh ! No !do not be evasive once more. You promised that we will talk about it. How do you want us to have a complete look at the subject if we do not mention the financial consequences of our association ?

**Mr GREENE:** I will keep my promise. But we have been talking for hours now and I am tired.

**Mr CHASE:** All right ! I give up but you are not quits. We will continue to-morrow.

**Mr GREENE:** Certainly. To-morrow, you will know everything. And I promise to go around in sackcloth and ashes as much as you need to be satisfied and receive your absolution.

**End of Act II.**