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THE STRANGE CASE OF DOCTOR GREENE AND MISTER CHASE

(Third Part and end)

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The story so far:

Following the publication of pamphlets disclosing their collusion, James Hadley Chase (British, 1906-1985) and Graham Greene (British, 1904-1991) recall the various sides of their collaboration. During their dialogue, it became clear that James Hadley Chase, Rene Brabazon Raymond's pseudonym, did shoulder works obviously written by Graham Greene. But Chase's plagiarist reputation combined with Greene's cleverness to concoct secret operations and conceal his trails, had delayed the disclosure of this fact.

The two men mentioned also the evolution of the literary structure of their association and the motive of their venture: Graham Greene was in need of a straw man who would claim the authorship of sadistic texts rather unusual and difficult to acknowledge for a writer honorably known.

For a man who liked to live it up, this represented a fair additional income without any control from the tax office. Until the day where...But, better listen to our two authors.

INTERLUDE: The disadvantage of sharing a tax adviser...

Mr CHASE: Let's get to Tom Roe's business (the tax adviser)

Mr GREENE: I can assure you that there is nothing to get from this story except that, according to the old adage, it's your own kind you have to watch out...

Mr CHASE: I recognize your distorted mind. You are very clever to conceal all matters which do not turn the subject to your advantage(1). Since you do refuse to tackle this part of your life, let me refresh your memory. Up to now you have poured scorn on me at a very little cost. From now on, I will control the situation.

Mr GREENE: I see that you do not beat about the bush !

Mr CHASE: Yesterday, we have seen that all elements of our association were ready by 1950. After some kind of misbehavior such as the proliferation of pseudonyms and a refining period due to the war, the books signed James Hadley Chase ranked among the best in the detective novel market. It was then the matter to be on to a good thing. And we did it up to 1983. We had agreed to publish between one and two Hadley Chase per year and this program was honored scrupulously. Each title, when released, became a commercial success...

Mr GREENE: Not that much. The U.S. refused to subscribe to this mode. They even could not understand the Chase with the description of an American setting which looked to them unbelievably approximate ! And this was justified considering that I did not sufficiently know the States to paint our books from life. After all, my stormy relations with this country prevented me to go there (2).

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- (1) To the extent that in the Greene's biographies, we notice immediately the incomplete side of these works ("*Ways of Escape*") and we are more interested in the gaps of the author's life than the facts which are developed.

Mr CHASE: Once more, you are trying to change the subject: it's obvious that the Chase craze did not work in America, but in England...

Mr GREENE: And what about France ! Ah, France ! Between the Chase and the publications of my formal and all successful novels, we got from this country the best of our reputation and our profits. We must add that the French reader who used to brag about reading more of Graham Greene than your "Série Noire" was waiting anxiously for each novel to come out to the extent that with "*The Guilty Are Afraid*" (in French: Pochette Surprise), and until our ultimate novel "*Hit Them Where It Hurts*" (Ca Ira Mieux Demain), almost one title on two was first released translated into French. It ensured you a large income as well as a very big bit on my side, since after all, I was the engine of the business... On top of this, our association being invisible, this asset could not be tracked by the tax office... Hence, thanks to France and yourself, I had a comfortable earning far from prying eyes...

Mr CHASE: In short, dear Graham, after few difficult years, we hit the jackpot. With this success, you came to like earning a lot of money and gamble for high stakes.

Mr GREENE: I became a business man. And if you had read my novel "*England Made Me*" (Les Naufragés), you would certainly know that this side of my personality was in demand for self-expression.

Mr CHASE: It was your choice

Mr GREENE: Of course, but a socialite life is pretty expensive, my dear James... I was moving in the wake of Lady Catherine Walston (5). Her upper-crust circle did not worry to make ends meet. Besides, I had bought a house in Capri, an apartment in Paris, and once I had resigned from Eyre & Spottiswoode, Ltd (London printing firm), I did travel intensively around the world as a journalist, sometimes as a secret agent but most of the time for my pleasure. I was therefore in need of an amount of money coming in regularly to sustain my exciting but expensive lifestyle. The success of my books (all of them, signed either Greene or Chase) and the sales of copyrights (for the cinema) arrived just in time.

(2) Greene was known for his scathing anti-Americanism which will be exacerbated by his experience in the international political arena reinforced by his spying activity. "*A Quiet American*" (Un Américain bien Tranquille, 1954) is the book which synthesizes the best this anti-Americanism: Greene reproaches their apparent altruism which covers the worst neocolonialism and to believe naively in their own civilization. In the 50's, the rise of the McCarthyism did not help: Greene who never concealed his leftist sympathy, was declared *persona non grata* (unwelcome person) on the entire American territory

(3) American writers like Day Keene (1904-1969), Harry Whittington (1915-1989), Horace McCoy (1897-1955) or Martin Brett did understand the benefit of the French translations and gave Marcel Duhamel (French, 1900-1977, founder of the Série Noire Publishing imprint) all their censored texts, rejected by the editors or awaiting their publication. Some original editions are French. Some were even published only in France.

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(4) Greene, in 1935 a penniless young author, described in "*England Made Me*" (Les Naufragés), the financial operations of the great capitalist Krogh with great details. He depicts with surprising knowledge, the illicit fund transfers (one of these transfers to finance the launching of an American branch of the Krogh group, will turn the course of the intrigue).

(5) Greene's mistress at the time, to whom the book "*The End of The Affair*" (La Fin d'une Liaison) is dedicated.

Mr CHASE: But we always need more money, don't we ? This would explain Tom Roe's disastrous recourse.

Mr GREENE: Oh, yes. You want absolutely to speak about him. You are pitiless... It is in 1960 that I became acquainted with this fiscal counselor, an offshore fund specialist. At this time, I was looking for a way to hiding part of my income: I did not have the capacity to pay heavy English taxes and spend money for my pleasure at the same time. Do not forget that, in 1967, the highest tax bracket in the United Kingdom meant 94% levy on all the declared amount. (6) The significant amount of money produced by the Chase filled in the gap of this imposition but I had to conceal that I was the author remunerated according to our mutual convention. Besides, if someone had stumbled on my cheating, my reputation would have collapsed immediately. Imagine the results if somebody had discovered that a catholic novelist, a decent person in every way, let secretly off steam in writing police novels which, at this time, were openly despised.

Mr CHASE: Two reputations shattered: yours and mine. And on top of this, the possibility to be detained in jail for tax fraud.

Mr GREENE: During the 50's, I developed several techniques to conceal not only the gains from the Chase but also partly the money won with my own books. When, in 1955, "*A Quiet American*" (*Un Américain Bien Tranquille*) was translated into French, I charged the copyrights to my next kin's account and then succeeded in hiding the money from the tax collector. (7)

Mr CHASE: That's the old stooge principle. I was not the only one to take advantage of it.

Mr GREENE: But this time, it was a failure given the fact that my relative had the poor idea to pass away at the end of the 50's. The tax office came and knocked at my own door since I had the copyrights benefits under my belt. Up to then, I had been given a respite and I had to find a more safer path for my tax avoidance. To be frank, I do not recall how I heard about Tom Roe and what was his occupation in 1960, but I told to myself: here is the man I need !

Mr CHASE: Oh ! I can speak about his occupation: under the pretense of tax expertise, he used to move large amounts of his customers' income to Switzerland to escape the British taxes. How did this charming fellow do that ? With his consulting organization called Roturman S.A. he used to pass the money through Swiss dummy companies to, subsequently, re-invest it in various businesses. As you were a member of the board of directors of several of these firms, you could recover a large part of these investments...

Mr GREENE: A marvelous mechanism worthy of the high reputation of the Swiss watchmaking precision. To the extend that I let my friends - you were one of them - in on the secret. (8) After having shared the Chase's revenues, we, henceforth, shared the fiscal counselor. That's how a large part of the copyrights of what we wrote subsequently, had been saved in Switzerland from the British tax. If the Chases used to fill in the Geneva banks through the Roe channel, my official novels "*A Burnt-out Case*" (*La Saison Des Pluies*) and "*The Comedians*" (*Les Comédiens*) rejoined the same path allowing me to win on all counts.

(6) In 1967, their revenues having exceeded the marginal debt of 94%, the Beatles declared themselves employees with a salary of their company Beatles & Co. Hence, their taxes became more modest. (see the monthly "Capital", November 2009, pages 154 to 56)

(7) This trick has been mentioned by W.I. West in "The Quest for Graham Greene, New York, St Martin's Press

Mr CHASE: And to lose all the same ! Frankly, Graham, what happened to you to get blindly embarked in this scheme ? And why did you drag me to top it all ? Do not tell me that you had not been warned. The alarm had already been raised with Tom Roe...Certainly an Off-Shore genius but a very mediocre investor. Remember the collapse of *the Royal Victorian sausage Company*, this absurd firm which could have been the subject of one of your stories. This foreseen failure should have encouraged us to be careful...

Mr GREENE You see only the black side of the story. Overall, we had five years of quiet prosperity ! And, after all, everybody can make the wrong choice...

Mr CHASE: I should not have listen to you, definitely not.

Mr GREENE: I agree that I should have been wary of this Tom Roe. But the trick sounded solid to me and the man was so levelheaded... I did rely on him...

Mr CHASE: You wanted to play the wise business man ! Too bad for you. Too bad for me too who listened to your praise of this kind of tax avoidance safety. Too bad also for Tom Roe who ended to draw the Swiss authorities' attention by making ceaseless foolish affairs: he was arrested on the 25th of July 1965, date which gave the signal for our troubles. It looks like you are suddenly speechless !

Well, I continue....At the beginning, Roe stood accused of forged currency trafficking - the Police had found hundred thousand dollars in forged bank notes in his car but in going over, they discovered quite a number of dummy companies which proved to be a screen to hide some shady activities. As a matter of fact, Tom Roe did pass counterfeit money in the name of movie people and particularly for Hollywood's, but also for the Mafia. So, when the authorities saw our names among those of other celebrities, being members of the board on some of these companies... In short, all looked hopeless including our honor. You will agree with me that what saved us....

Mr GREENE: I agree, my dear, it's you...

Mr CHASE: Upon Roe's arrest, his wife called me: she did not know what to do and did ask for my advice and my help. At this time, we, both of us, were in Paris and I could alert you of what could happen...

Mr GREENE: You mean to end in disaster. I was neither aware of Roe's all investments nor of his relations with the Mafia. I would have known, I would have pulled out. Nevertheless, I was quite flabbergasted when I learnt that he was so deeply involved in so many fishy matters. But even in this adversity, I was quite lucky because you warned me sufficiently in time to allow me to salvage something from the disaster. It's how the secret of our association was protected and that I could continue to get the clandestine revenue from the Chase publications. As far as the rest is concerned...

Mr CHASE: The British tax office had the proof that we were practicing blithely the tax evasion. We could not expect its indulgence. In 1965, all your editorial revenues were confiscated and the revenue service gave us the choice: either go into exile or go to jail. As far as I am concerned, I took flight to Corseaux-Sur-Vevey in Switzerland.

(8) Some Greene' s friends (Charles Chaplin, Noel Coward) were initiated by Roe to the marvelous flight of capital system "à la" Swiss mode and were subject to the front pages of the papers at the same time as Roe's bankrupt. Roe aimed to Hollywood personalities and used the actor George Sanders ' "savoir faire" to catch the favors of this well preserved environment. He did succeed and Sanders became his dearest associate in all possible senses

Mr GREENE: ...While I moved to Antibes, in France (9) where I tried hard to dispel my appalling image of swindler in invoking my imperative escaping needs, far from the jail which was now my country. I know that in one of my biography, “*Ways Of Escape*” (Les Chemins de l'Evasion), I mention my runaway in clearer terms but you will observe once more how I am able to conceal facts alluded by my biographers !(10)

Mr CHASE: I take note of it ! But I am quite satisfied to have had the opportunity to see your self-esteem manhandled.

Mr GREENE: Oh, you paid the price too !

Mr CHASE: That is correct and the secret of our association was jeopardized...

Mr GREENE: Enough...Could we speak about something else ?...

ACT III: Hello, FRANCE OR THE RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Mr CHASE: I will try to dispel your bad mood. If I spoke about Tom Roe, it was not only to have the pleasure to leave you speechless...

Mr GREENE: Fancy that !

Mr CHASE: It was also to emphasize the fact that our collaboration was not restricted to literature but was also dealing with finance. The facts that our tax evasion difficulties, although unflattering, can be verified, could lead an inquisitive individual to employ a stratagem to discover the particular structure of our association...

Mr GREENE: Come on ! What's wrong with you, this time ?

Mr CHASE: We are no longer talking about simple literary comparisons. Due to the fact that we have shared the same tax adviser and taken benefit of the same off-shore set-up, everything is showing that the links which bind us are too close and cannot be simple coincidence. And this will reveal some other practices...

Mr GREENE: I see... You are going to discuss again about the management of our success...

Mr CHASE: Yes and particularly our achievement in France. The truth forces me to say that you have deployed quite a skill including the unexpected as if it had been there since the beginning. Hence, the Chase having a spectacular success across the Channel, the French reader was entitled to receive the best treatment...

(9) The Copyrights for “*The Comedians*” (Les Comédiens) filmed in 1967 by Peter Glenville with R. Burton and E. Taylor, came just at the right time: Greene used this money to buy a small flat in Antibes. Later on, he will also live in Switzerland, at Vevey, few blocks from Chase's villa.

(10) “*What could have led me from a depressive period to a state of overexcitement during which I wrote most of the short stories of “Could you Lend me your Husband ?” and start to work on “Travel with my aunt” (Voyage avec ma Tante, 1969) ? This could only be the result of a difficult decision affecting my own life and my depart from England in 1966 to France where I installed myself permanently. I have burnt all my boats and well-lit by the flames, I have started a new novel*”. Greene, “*The Ways of Escape*” (Les Chemins de l'Evasion, 1980, Presses de la Cité). The Tom Roe's business had the merit to clarify these sibylline words because we know, now, which “boats” have been burnt when Greene left Antibes.

Mr GREENE: We had just to capitalize on this success and prevent any grounds for contention: from now on, no foolish action, no stupid pseudonyms but a strict exploitation of our recipes. You were right to say that when I started the publication of the Chase, obsessed by the war and the urgent need for money, I could not imagine all the possibilities that my system would offer.

It's the interest of the Série Noire Edition director, Marcel Duhamel (French, 1900-1977) for our oeuvre which made me thinking. From 1944, Duhamel came to England to stock up all possible translation rights before launching his police publications. He came back to France with "*Lemy Caution*'s investigations and "*No Orchid For Miss Blandish*" (Pas d'Orchidée pour Miss Blandish). James Hadley Chase and Peter Cheyney (British, 1896-1951) set out to conquer Descartes' country (1596-1650), after all, why not ! This was quite a large market. You know, after so many meager years and fights to be free from want, I used to turn anything to good account.

Mr CHASE: With "*No Orchid...*", we could not dream of a better start. The book, translated by Duhamel himself, was a resounding success to the extent that the English commercial achievement which was remarkable, looked pale compared to the French sales.

Mr GREENE: Duhamel's intuition was worthwhile and I immediately understood how beneficial could be our collaboration with this man. With "*No Orchid...*", Chase had a name and the novel became the standard of art by which all French Hard-boiled stories were measured. We, the three of us, had only to work it out...

Mr CHASE: You mean, the four of us...

Mr GREENE: Excuse me ?

Mr CHASE: You did hear it well. You should not discount the person who, in France, was our common literary agent: Mrs Bradley. Oh, yes ! It was not only our tax adviser that we had shared and this new detail emphasizes our collusion.

Mr GREENE: Probably the most important. Mrs Bradley was my agent in France and I did appreciate her efficient and discreet qualities to let her in on the secret and I convinced her to also take care of you. In addition to this, she was living in Paris, in the flat above mine. As you had just moved to the French capital, we, the three of us, could see each other regularly to discuss the Greene-Chase business. Mrs Bradley was a real treasure (11): not only could she keep a secret as crucial as ours but in addition she had an astounding aptitude to protect it.

Mr CHASE: It's another of her qualities that we should not forget: the success of the Chase produced a large volume of royalties which were handled with competence and better than anybody else by this quiet person. However, these profits drew an inquisitive crowd with, in a first row, many journalists.

Mr GREENE: And we had to avoid at any price an interview of James Hadley Chase because your incompetence to talk about your work would have caused the scales to fall from their eyes. We had to get round the obstacle and if the interview was inevitable, the circumstances had to be controlled as much as we could. So, first of all, your public image had to receive the finishing touches which would reflect a discreet man speaking in bad French, refusing to comment his own work and even declaring to averse the police stories and write only for the money.

(11) Mrs Bradley was such an essential irreplaceable element in the Greene/Chase's business that when she died, Chase did not supply any other novel, in France or anywhere else.

Mr CHASE: And continually shunning.. Just remember the anecdote divulged by Robert Deleuse (French, born 1950) in “*Ala Recherche de James Hadley Chase*” (In Search for James Hadley Chase, Presses de la Renaissance, 1992) : “*Jean-Paul Kauffmann (French, born 1944), journalist with the daily “ Le Matin De Paris” had an appointment at Chase's apartment. He goes there, rings the bell. Rene Brabazon Raymond's wife welcomes him. He is invited to come in and take a seat. She leaves him and goes to another room, probably Chase's working place, comes back few minutes later with the novel signed by the author. This day, J.P. Kauffmann met neither Rene Brabazon Raymond nor James Hadley Chase. For the nasty tongues, he can definitely certify that a spouse does exist...*” (12)

Mr GREENE: We had to discourage the journalists but without repelling them. I wanted just that they speak or write about Chase without coming close to him as if he were a sulfurous phenomenon.

Mr CHASE: A sensationalistic success like in England.

Mr GREENE: Yes, a whiff of scandal. And we did not fail. Thomas Narcejac' s critic (French, 1908-1998) “*La Fin d'un Bluff*” (The End of a Bluff) proves it as much as the one by Jean-Patrick Manchette (French, 1942-1995)... quick to qualify you as the “star of the cheap hard-boiled”

Mr CHASE: For God's sake, you expected me to be teared to pieces on both sides of the Channel. I do not know if your own sadism was satisfied, but, after all, I could have taken advantage sooner of your French literary critic network. Right after the second World War, it was already in place. It would have saved myself a lot of troubles....

Mr GREENE: ...During which your self-esteem did suffer but one recovers rapidly if one is thick-skinned. However, when you say that I only thought about myself, you are unfair: my hope was to win over this literary critic, first, for my work, but also, on a longer term, for yours. I told you that so many times, I wanted you to be known in France since the Chase were so successful there. But without intermediary critics, without any journalist to flush you out, without any detailed analysis of your oeuvre, the success become rapidly exhausted and while I caught a glimpse of all possibilities of our association, I wanted it to be long-standing.

Mr CHASE: How did you succeed ?

Mr GREENE: The Parisian critic looks like the same as any French professional group, highly centralized in a network of few key men.. . To obtain the support of these eminent persons was equivalent to give the Chase' s work a good critical success and, at the same time, a kind of protection against any ill-advised suspicion aroused by our activity. But our Chases had newly been published in France and, although the police literature was a popular entertainment, the French critic turned its nose up at it. Time was necessary to conquer it: we had first to understand its structure and how it was working, and overall, detect the spheres of influence. In one word, it was imperative to immerse ourselves in that specific world

(12) Robert Deleuse, “*A la Recherche de James Hadley Chase*” (The Quest for J.H. Chase), Presses de la Renaissance, “Les Essais”, 1992, page 33

Mr CHASE: This explains why you did not hedge one's bet. You first ensured the success of your official books and, at the same time, you became acquainted with some of the critics and few influential novelists, principally François Mauriac (French, 1885-1970). Besides the catholic faith and a fascination about the forces of evil, you shared with him an ambiguous determination to be a man belonging to the literary ring. With his provincial look from Bordeaux, he went up to Paris where he became one of its jewel and an intimate in many circles. As André Ribaud (French, 1921-1999) penned ferociously in a weekly paper: “with his ascetic appearance, he would not have missed a supper, a play, an honor” (13). Mauriac wrote in many prestigious magazines or dailies of the time : “*La Table Ronde*,” *L'Express* “, “*Le Figaro*” and his short articles (bloc-notes) published in the press were read by many, many readers. Mauriac' s support meant to be part of a sphere of influence including the literary coteries. But, despite his admiration for your work, you did assess rapidly that this influential figure would offer his help as long as he can expect a compensation.

Mr GREENE: This is the reason why I did offer him to publish his books in Great Britain taking advantage of my position as young editor at Eyre & Spottiswoode. The latter did produce Mauriac' works. Meanwhile, I used all my literary and journalistic relations to make sure that he would obtain quite a success from the critic. Obviously, I expected a favor in return. I had even succeeded to get Mauriac in London and I did organized a reception which can be considered as a miracle considering the scarcity at this time.

Mr CHASE: Introducing Mauriac in England gave him back the feeling of novelty: the foreign country offered him a kind of revival of the commercial and literary successes of his youth...

Mr GREENE: After these events, he could not refuse his support: he wrote the preface to “*The Power and the Glory*” (*La Puissance et la Gloire*) and, thanks to this powerful introduction, my novel was, in France, the first of my best-sellers. Above all, he introduced me to many of his circle who granted me with good critics and papers. They all were very useful when I wished to publish my books in France but also when I emphasized the work of some authors I did appreciate...

Mr CHASE: Among them, a certain James Hadley Chase...

Mr GREENE: Of course ! In the biography that William J. West dedicated to me in 1997, he describes the exchange of our courtesies (14). And, hand in hand, both of us were very successful in Paris.

Mr CHASE: I really do not know if Mauriac was fooled by our respective parts. You know as I do that he could, in words or in writing, give the impression of innocence for, all of a sudden, show his true colors. As far as I am concerned, I did not read without uneasiness, the preface devoted to a study of your work published by “*Les Classiques du XXeme Siècle*” (The 20th Century Classics)

13) A. Ribaud in “*Le Roi, Chronique de la Cour*” (The King, Court Chronicles). Mauriac is named Cardinal Mauriac.

(14) Greene had succeeded to convince François Mauriac to allow Eyre & Spottiwoode to publish his work translated into English. In exchange, Paris gained a knowledge about the British contemporary authors of thrillers promoted by Greene with great enthusiasm.

Mauriac was probably closer to Chase who was introduced to his Parisian agent who took care of the publication of the Chase novels. This association lasted during all the 70's and consequently, Chase became in France as famous as Greene (W.J. West, *The Quest for Graham Greene*, New York, St Martin's Press, 1998)

Mr GREENE: Yes, I see what you mean. The citation was this ones:

“These criminal and police atmospheres, the scum of the cities where the crowd tears each other, where outlaws are hunted down but where each one in his turn becomes a hunter, all what makes, according to me, that the “Greenian” world do not correspond to a true reality: it's a movie transposition of life which would hardly concern me if it was not in close touch with eternity. What I find authentic in the Greene' s novels, is the elegance. His actuality consists to be out of the today's world. Graham Greene will have led the crime fiction film and the hard-boiled detective thriller to a truth that the world has not heard of. Here is his personal greatness (15).”

He is effectively pretty good, our old chap Mauriac: what make the difference between your work and mine (and the hard-boiled in general), is God, is the prospect of salvation. In other words, James Hadley Chase's world is Graham Greene' s one less the greatness. Yes, he is pretty good but I am somewhat upset. Just make the effort to acquire an original literary style to just be compared to your straw-man .

Mr CHASE: Do not be ironic ! You can see very well that, behind the reputation that the critics built on us, our respective domains are separated by only a tiny string. Mauriac, probably without realizing it, did demonstrate with few sentences how they are similar. Imagine that one reader, one day, sees these lines...

Mr GREENE: Do not be taken with this idea. Mauriac is no longer read to-day as he used to be. Therefore his prefaces...Besides he was one card among others in my game to seduce in the French literary circle. Do not forget that we had another asset with Marcel Duhamel: he was too, at the head of another interesting clique of writers and critics...

Mr CHASE: And this is our old devil Duhamel who had the stroke of genius to use is theatrical fame to introduce me to the French audience: to simply adapt the Chase novels for the stage. It was plain but it had to be thought !

Mr GREENE: He also knew the suitable person for this job. This is thanks to him that we met one of the enthusiastic admirers of the Chase, I mean Frédéric Dard (French, 1921-2000).

Mr CHASE: A very nice person, very helpful...

Mr GREENE: Shy and with a lot of hang-ups, the beginner wanted essentially to learn and for him, Chase was a master. At this time, he was trying to make a name in Parisian literary circles. He had just left Lyon where his career was full of ups and downs. As he had concluded that he would not be successful in a provincial town, he had just moved to Paris, with wife and children and was trying to penetrate as many literary coterie as possible.

Mr CHASE: The choice had been excellent. His ambitions did equal ours and he was absolutely talented. Marcel Duhamel managed the negotiations of the adaptation with his editor. Let's note in passing that he took his share of the spoils in co-signing the first play “*No Orchid For Miss Blandish*” which was staged in January 1950 and revived the “*Grand Guignol*” theater in Paris.

(15) Victor Depange's Essay with a preface by F. Mauriac “Graham Greene” editions Universitaires , Les Classiques du XXeme Siècle, rewarded by l' Académie Française.

Mr GREENE: God knows why Dard concealed himself behind the pseudonym Eliane Charles (16). On the other hand, his second adaptation "*The Flesh For the Orchid*" (La Chair de l'Orchidée) was again co-signed with Marcel Duhamel but this time, with his real name. It was in 1955.

Mr CHASE: Of course, we kept having together a good relationship. But soon, I felt that he came under our influence...

Mr GREENE: Do you know when I discovered it ? That is when he tried to trap Georges Simenon (Belgian, 1903-1989), the one he did not idolize anymore (17), following a falling out. He proposed him to adapt for the stage one of his novels "*Liberty-Bar*" through the young actor Frédéric Valmain.

Meanwhile, Dard was hidden in the backstage suggesting his figurehead how to behave...

Mr CHASE: Just like you who took shelter behind me. He did learn quite a lot through spending time with us, the "little" Dard !

Mr GREENE: It is under Frédéric Valmain's signature who got to like his status of stooge that he did adapt us for the third time with "*Trusted Like the Fox*" (Traquenard) staged at the "*Charles de Rochefort*" theater in 1956. But we could use him further for, with his duet with Valmain, Dard had to establish the public image of his protégé in order to give him some kind of credibility as an author. To no one else than James Hadley Chase could he ask "*Hand Me a Fig Leaf*" (File-Moi Une Couverture) (18) and declare Valmain a great writer.

Mr CHASE: In reality, we were lending our support to one another. It was a quadrangular game, based on an exchange of courtesies. Through their praises, their dedication, their tribute to my talent (Dard will even use my name as a character in one of his San Antonio stories)(19), Valmain and Dard witnessed the existence of a Chase as a true writer. In compensation, I did acknowledge Valmain's qualities and let him sign the adaptation for the stage of "*Trusted like the Fox*" (Traquenards) while Valmain expressed his recognition in dedicating to me some works such as "*Death in Disguise*" (La Mort en Travesti) (20). As far as Dard is concerned, certainly a talented writer in need to be renowned, he used to take care of his own image (and mine at the same time) walking on my arm, showing the incomparable friend I was. I do remember the poster about his novel "*Délivrez Nous du Mal*" (Deliver us From Evil) with the photograph of both of us. I was generally parsimonious about my photographs (21) and here, it did cost me dear for a young French author ! To a certain extent, it was the engagement ring of our entente. _

(16) Our first hypothesis was that Eliane Charles was a pseudonym ; after investigation, Alexandre Clément found out with certainty that this author was real and had access to the Parisian theatrical world. We have revised our position and now think that he was a front name.

(17) Following the stage adaptation of "*La Neige Etait Sale*" (Dirty Snow) by Frédéric Dard, Simenon, irritated, was hurtful vis-à-vis his young adapter. Simenon took benefit of the lack of experience of the latter to rob his royalties on the movie based on the play. After that, the discord was definitive between the two men.

(18) Title of a novel by Chase published directly in France in 1980

(19) See "*Remets ton Slip, Gondolier*" (Put your underpants back, Gondolier) where San Antonio (Dard's recurrent hero) stops his chase to relate an anecdote about J.H. Chase "The last time I had a dinner with him, he brandished his knife shouting below his nice mustache: "Leu Caoutaô" (Couteau in French (knife) pronounced with a supposed British accent). He was so pleased to speak this language so unfriendly for him.

(20) "*A J. H. Chase, avec tant d'admiration et d'amitié*" (To J.H. Chase with my admiration and my friendship). Dedication written by Valmain page 7 of "*Death in Disguise*"

(21) From the 60's onwards, the Swiss Maw Feissel was his unique photographer

Mr GREENE: Yes, to consolidate your credibility, I did ask you to use some photographs (22) of yours and I am proud of it. As far as Dard is concerned, I would have stopped there but you took a liking to this kind of hoax, right ?

Mr CHASE: What do you mean ?

Mr GREENE: You know, I dislike when the pupil goes one better than the master and start having his own initiatives...

Mr CHASE: I feel that you are going to reproach me the association I built with my longstanding friend George Langelaan (British, born in Paris 1908-1972). It was absolutely necessary to respond to the craze of the spy novel. The editor Robert Laffont set up in 1964 the series “*Agent Secret*” (espionage agent) supervised by Langelaan who was himself an author.

Mr GREENE: Better to say that he was supposed to be an author...

Mr CHASE: I accept it ! You are right. However, when one discovers a prodigy like Frédéric Dard, you will agree that it would be stupid not to take advantage of his talents !

Mr GREENE: Your friendship with Langelaan dates back to the war since both of you, you have published your first works (23) with Eyre & Spottiswoode where I was myself working. If Langelaan had been successful in his spying career, his writing ability was quite limited (24) and from there, came your temptation to give your comrade the Dard's good way.

Mr CHASE: In the end, everybody got something out of it. Langelaan provided well organized subjects generated from the current affairs and Dard his talent and his inimitable briskly execution. As far as I am concerned, I limited myself to play the modest role of intermediary between both of them. “*Les Nouvelles de l'Anti-Monde*” (The News from the Anti- World) was our trial run followed by a pastiche of a Simenon's novel “*Indice à l'Envers*” (The Clue Upside Down). Well, as the success was there....

(22) Nothing more indisputable or manipulative than a photograph used judiciously

(23) See “*Slipstream: A Royal Air Force Anthology* “. Collection of war stories and articles published in 1946 by Eyre & Spottiswoode. The collection was gathered by Rene Raymond (alias J.H. Chase) and David Langdon (alias G. Langelaan). The only text signed by Rene Raymond (with the exception of the Chases) is included in this anthology: “*The mirror in Room 22*”

(24) To realize it, we can refer to his biography “*One named Langdon: Memories of a Secret Agent*” or “*Un Nommé Langdon*” that Langdon published well before his collaboration with Dard. It is a plodding book with a lifeless style, lacking totally of the literary qualities and the surprising vivacity that will be found later in his “*Les Nouvelles de l'Anti-Monde*”(News from the Anti-World), “*L'Indice a l'Envers*” (the Clue upside-down) and other spying thrillers in the collection “*Secret Agent*”.

(25) One of them, Alain Moury, is subject of an exhaustive article by Alexandre Clément: “*Alain Moury, script-writer and novelist*” (see Bulletin N° 13 *Polarophiles Tranquilles*). Michael Maltravers' case has been partly analysed by Thierry Cazon in “*Encore Frédéric Dard*” (F. Dard, once more, in Bulletin N°5 *Polarophiles Tranquilles*) . We should also consult Maltravers' work in the series “*Agent Secret*” (Secret Agent): “*Allo... La Bombe !*”(Allo...The Bomb), “*Merry Pontus Trouve un Cheveu*” (Merry Pontus finds a single hair) and “*On a Bonne Mine*” (We Look Stupid).

And there is also Yvan Noé with “*La Guêpe prend la Mouche*” (the Wasp flies off the handle), Eddy Ghilain with “*Silence, Clinique*” (Silence, Hospital), Paul Branca with “*Elomire se marre, Elomire, la Cafteuse*” (Elomire has a good laugh, Elomire the tattletale) and Michel Vall “*Trahison on the Roch*” (Treachery on the Roch). All these novels have numerous characteristics which remind Dard' style.

Mr GREENE: I have heard that among the thirty four titles published within the collection “Agent Secret”, twenty had been written by Dard between March 1964 and June 1965. Dard did also sign Langelaan seven stories but for all others, he used various men of straw and pseudonyms (25). As a matter of fact, he was working like mad, the only one to be able to sustain such an infernal cadence. Overall, Langelaan was a lucky guy...

Mr CHASE: Do not complain. The series could have lasted longer if Dard's personal problems did not force him to put an end to his collaboration. As a consequence, the prodigy was lost for us... but not for the editor Fleuve Noir

Mr GREENE:What a charming country were one can cheat by using a literary hoax right under the tax office and the critic's noses !

CONCLUSION

Mr CHASE: By now, I believe that we got it off our chest.

Mr GREENE: Yes, I cannot see anything else to discuss about our “French Crusade” or even touching any other matter.

Mr CHASE: When I think about all this, I am struck by the firmness of our good terms in spite of some hard times and sometimes, rivalry; and the secret of our collusion is a miracle. Just like all secrets, they are not eternally protected against a nosy researcher.

Mr GREENE: Don't worry, James ! You perfectly know the French literary people. They definitively could not believe that a “Great Writer” like Graham Greene, fallen from his sublimated heaven, would have condescended to perpetrate a clandestine work purely to make a living. It's beyond them ! Just imagine that everything would be thrown back into doubt: the conventional ideas largely shared on both of us, on which they have built all their academic theories – all these ideas destroyed suddenly – all to be rebuilt ! Some could be excited by this prospect but not the average scholars. It would be necessary for them to examine deeply what we have presently just outlined: set up some thematic and stylistic similarities, analyze how our respective biographies are mixed and how, both of us, have managed the Chases' success. Never will they accept to revise their prejudices. No, never. Our works are two worlds so far away from each other. Besides, all this would require an independence of mind, a lot of tenacity and courage. Tell me, who would be mad enough to proclaim that Greene and Chase outputs are from the same hand ? And risk his neck about a thesis off the beaten tracks ? Imagine the outcry among the aligned literary intelligentsia...

Mr CHASE: Obviously, described this way...

Mr GREENE: Well ! At present, aren't you secured ? Aren't you convinced now that our secret was and is well kept ?

Mr CHASE: (in an aside and in a low voice), I wish I would... but remember Thomas Narcejac, Jean-Paul Kauffman, then Robert Deleuse and last but not least, the “Olivier d'Alban' s chronicle” by François Rivière. Besides, what you have just outlined looks to me similar to the description given by the “*Polarophiles Tranquilles*” who look to take up a challenge. All things considered, I feel uneasy...

Mr GREENE: stop mumbling in your mustache, relax, just live this moment to the full and let us drink !

Mr CHASE: To what ?

Mr GREENE: To those who, with a blinkering attitude, want to administer a world which was a source of wealth for us.

Mr CHASE: And to the miracle to see us discussing a glass of brandy in hand while we have been dead for quite a while !

(It's getting dark, the mist of the Lake Geneva shrouds little by little our two authors. When it clears up, both have disappeared.)

THE END