

## **PARTNERS IN CRIME: FU MANCHU AND CARL PETERSON**

by Rick Lai

British thriller fiction between the two World Wars abounded in master criminals. Perhaps the two most popular sinister masterminds of this period were Fu Manchu, the creation of Sax Rohmer (pseudonym of Arthur Sarsfield Ward) and Carl Peterson, the main villain of the Bulldog Drummond novels by H. C. McNeile (who wrote under the pseudonym of “Sapper”). Although mainly known as the author of classical whodunits, Agatha Christie occasionally ventured into the realm of thriller fiction. In *The Big Four* (1927), she conceived the idea of having her most popular detective, Hercule Poirot, confront a diabolical plot to rule the world. The conspiracy consisted of four leaders. Two of these conspirators were essentially altered versions of Fu Manchu and Carl Peterson. Both Rohmer and McNeile had killed off their respective fictional criminals before Agatha Christie wrote her Poirot thriller. However, both arch-felons would be revived years later, and these resurrections left unresolved gaps concerning their criminal exploits in the 1920’s. It is quite easy to construct a theory viewing *The Big Four* as the actual record of a criminal alliance between Fu Manchu and Carl Peterson. When other parallels between the works of Rohmer, McNeile, Christie and even other authors are noted, *The Big Four* emerges as part of an even more complex tapestry of connections between the two great malefactors.

*The Big Four* was written by Christie in the style of Sax Rohmer’s early Fu Manchu books, *The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu* (1913, British title: *The Mystery of Fu Manchu*), *The Return of Dr. Fu Manchu* (1916, British title: *The Devil Doctor*) and *The Hand of Fu Manchu* (1917, British title: *The Si-Fan Mysteries*). Although those books were packaged as novels, they were really short stories detailing the duels between Fu Manchu and his archenemy, Sir Dennis Nayland Smith. Often a short story that had originally been published in a magazine became repackaged as a few chapters in the first three Fu Manchu “novels.” Christie did the same in *The Big Four*. Many chapters were actually revised versions of Poirot short stories that had appeared in magazine form during 1924. In terms of the internal chronology of the Poirot series, the events covered by *The Big Four* begin in July and conclude in May of the following year. The events of the novel certainly took place after 1923. There are references to “the Japanese earthquake,” a catastrophe that devastated Tokyo on September 1, 1923. The date of “Thursday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of July” transpired in the opening year of the novel. No such date happened during 1924-27, but the 10<sup>th</sup> of July fell on a Thursday in 1924. Probably the reference to the “20<sup>th</sup>” is a misprint. It is logical to conclude that *The Big Four* happened during 1924-25.

The Big Four were Li Chang Yen (“Number One”), a Chinese mandarin, Abe Ryland (“Number Two”), an American millionaire, Madame Olivier (“Number Three”), a French scientist, and Claude Darrell (“Number Four,” alias “the destroyer”), a master of disguise whose real features were never seen. For the moment, the focus will be on Li Chang Yen. He was a recluse who lived in a place in Peking (Beijing). The mandarin never made a physical appearance in the novel, and no description of him was ever given by Christie. Among the various government officials allied to Poirot, John Ingles, a retired civil servant, was the only individual to have ever glimpsed Li Chang Yen.

According to Ingles, Li Chang Yen was behind all the social unrest in modern times. Ingles even implied that Communist leaders Lenin and Trotsky took their orders from Li Chang Yen. Over the last four years before the events of *The Big Four*, four men had sought to expose the underground activities of Li Chang Yen. One wrote an article linking Li Chang Yen to the Peking riots. Two days later, the author of this article was found dead from a stab wound. The other three men also linked Li Chang Yen to social upheaval in either an article, a speech, or in conversation. One man was poisoned, the other died of cholera, and the last was apparently electrocuted. Ingles also heard rumors of bizarre experiments on human subjects in Li Chang Yen's palace.

When discussing Li Chang Yen, Poirot described the intellect of his adversary in much the same manner as Nayland Smith described that of Fu Manchu: "...the brain of Li Chang Yen, the finest criminal brain ever known..." Nevertheless, there was one significance difference between Poirot's appraisal of Li Chang Yen and Smith's evaluation of Fu Manchu's. Smith always admitted that Fu Manchu was his intellectual superior. Poirot asserted that Li Chang Yen was "the second greatest brain in the world." Any one familiar with Poirot's ego knew the name of the individual that was ranked higher than the mandarin.

In the first three Fu Manchu books, Nayland Smith was investigating various crimes committed by his chief adversary that have their parallels in the illegal activities of the Big Four. Fu Manchu murdered scholars who knew too much about the Far Eastern underworld, and abducted scientists. The Big Four killed Mr. Paynter, a world traveler, because he was writing a book called *The Hidden Hand in China*. The quadruple alliance also abducted Halliday, a British scientist experimenting with wireless energy.

At the conclusion of *The Big Four*, Li Chang Yen's three partners in the quadruple conspiracy were apparently killed in the explosion of their headquarters in the mountains of Italy. Poirot then received a report that Li Chang Yen died from suicide in China. The details of Li Chang Yen's demise were so vague that it is very easy to speculate that he faked his death. In Rohmer novels, Fu Manchu had a catalepsy-inducing drug that created the semblance of death. If Fu Manchu was indeed Li Chang Yen, then he could have just used the drug to make it look like he had died from suicide by poison.

*The Big Four* fits in very easily with events of the Fu Manchu novels. For the chronology of the Fu Manchu series, the reader is advised to consult Cay Van Ash's "A Question of Time" and my own "Some Chronological Observations on the Fu Manchu Series" (1). In the first three Fu Manchu books, Fu was working for the chief European agent of a Far Eastern crime syndicate that would be eventually identified as the Si-Fan. Fu Manchu then apparently perished when the *Chanak-Kampok*, the ship reportedly transporting him and his daughter Fah Lo Suee out of Britain, was destroyed in a storm during the conclusion of *The Hand of Fu Manchu*. Van Ash's chronological observations place the destruction of the vessel in the spring of 1914. The Si-Fan then apparently disintegrated. It would later be revealed that both Fu and his offspring survived in *Daughter of Fu Manchu* (1931), a novel whose events were assigned to 1928. Without Fu Manchu's permission, Fah Lo Suee revived the Si-Fan. An aging Fu Manchu returned to re-assert his authority over the Si-Fan and wrest control of it from Fah Lo Suee. It looked like the Si-Fan would return to a state of dormancy, but Fu Manchu

discovered an elixir of immortality around 1929. After restoring his health with the elixir, Fu Manchu then again transformed the Si-Fan as a threat to world peace. Various gaps and contradictions in the first four novels influenced Van Ash to write two new Fu Manchu novels. *Ten Years Beyond Baker Street* (1984) was set in 1914 (during a gap of months in *The Hand of Fu Manchu*) and pitted Fu Manchu against Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. Van Ash was mystified by the fact that Rohmer never explained how Fu and his daughter survive the 1914 shipwreck. Also somewhat perplexing was how Fu Manchu suddenly claimed to have been the previous head of the Si-Fan since he obviously didn't hold that position in the first three books. There were also many references in *Daughter of Fu Manchu* that placed the events of *The Hand of Fu Manchu* happened during 1917. Even though that year was when the novel was published, the events couldn't have transpired then because there were no references to World War I. If *The Hand of Fu Manchu* had concluded in 1917, then the *Chanak-Kampok* would have faced greater danger from German submarines rather than from storms. Van Ash speculated that there was a suppressed adventure that really happened in 1917. Out of this theory grew *The Fires of Fu Manchu* (1987), an adventure that was supposedly withheld from publication because it involved secret atomic experiments in World War I. The novel revealed that Fu Manchu and his daughter had not taken flight on the *Chanak-Kampok*, but used some other means to leave Britain, and that Fu Manchu had assumed control of Si-Fan after *The Hand of Fu Manchu*. After the events of *The Fires of Fu Manchu*, Fu Manchu effectively disbanded the organization.

The Si-Fan appeared under two different names elsewhere in Rohmer's works. *The Golden Scorpion* (1919) featured a brief appearance by an unnamed character clearly meant to be Fu Manchu. The novel's chief villain was Fo-Hi, who claimed to have succeeded Fu Manchu as the chief European agent of an international organization called the Sublime Order. Many of the top members of the Si-Fan belonged to a tong called the Sacred Order of the White Peacock in *The Return of Dr. Fu Manchu* and later referred to as the Sublime Order of The White Peacock in *The Hand of Fu Manchu*. Thus, the Si-Fan and the Sublime Order of the White Peacock were organizations with identical aims and overlapping members. Since my own article on the chronological aspects of the series placed *The Golden Scorpion* in 1915, there is no difficulty with the events of this novel because it transpired before the Si-Fan was largely dissolved in 1917.

On the other hand, the events of Rohmer's "The Voice of Kali" (published in the United States in *Short Stories*, December 10, 1923) raise several questions. The story was part of a series featuring Paul Harley, a private detective often hired by the Foreign Office to track down master criminals. In the summer of 1923, Harley was after Mandarin K, the chief European agent of an Asian secret society known as the S. Group. This organization had its headquarters in Tibet and used the image of Kali, the Hindu goddess of destruction, as its symbol. The previous Fu Manchu stories had indicated that the Si-Fan had bases in Tibet. Furthermore, *The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu* identified the Thuggee cult, adherents of Kali, as a major component of the Si-Fan. In *Daughter of Fu Manchu*, Fah Lo Suee invoked the image of Kali in her efforts to revive the Si-Fan. It is probable that Kali was some sort of avatar of the Lady of the Si-Fan, a demi-goddess worshipped by Fu Manchu's organization in *The Hand of Fu Manchu*. Paul Harley in "The Voice of Kali" also referred to the S. Group as "a secret council," a designation that recalled the Council of Seven, the governing body of the Si-Fan in the Fu Manchu

series. The “S.” in S. Group either stood for Si-Fan or Seven. Taking advantage of local superstition, Mandarin K pretended to be the ghost of an English monk. Fah Lo Suee would also disguise herself as a legendary ghostly monk in *Daughter of Fu Manchu*.

In “The Voice of Kali,” Harley had been chasing Mandarin K for over a year. Mandarin K was a master of disguise who had been murdering people with the Listening Death, a deadly device that utilized sound to kill. The Listening Death had been the invention of Dr. Ulric Ernst, a Swiss scientist living in Cairo, Egypt. Ernst died there under strange circumstances, and Harley believed that the S. Group murdered him and stole the invention. Harley eventually triumphed over Mandarin K when the death ray exploded because it had the drawback of attracting lighting. It was unresolved whether Mandarin K died in the explosion.

The Listening Death, also known as the Ernst Trajector, should not be confused with the Ericksen Ray, a death ray that was introduced in *The Golden Scorpion* and featured prominently in the Fu Manchu series. The Ericksen Ray was the invention of a Norwegian scientist who had been abducted by Fo-Hi. The Ericksen Ray could generate massive sound waves that disintegrated people and property. The Ernst Trajector just killed people without destroying their corpses, and left property undamaged. The Ernst Trajector was sort of the “neutron bomb” of the Si-Fan’s sonic arsenal. Like the Ernst Trajector, the Ericksen Ray also had the flaw of attracting lighting as demonstrated in the climax of *The Island of Fu Manchu* (1941).

Dr. Ernst’s death was supposedly due to natural causes. Harley voiced the suspicion that the S. Group had actually murdered Ernst with his own invention, but there is a far more likely explanation for the scientist’s death. Throughout the Fu Manchu series, the Si-Fan was abducting prominent scientists and technical experts by faking their deaths. The kidnap victims were injected with *F. Katalepsis*, a drug that induced a state of catalepsy. After the Si-Fan’s victims were mistakenly declared dead, they were buried. The Si-Fan’s agents then retrieved the corpses and revived them. The victims were spirited to Si-Fan bases in remote parts of the world and forced to work for Fu Manchu’s plan of global conquest. Such a fate befell the inventor of the Ericksen Ray in *The Golden Scorpion*, and there can be no doubt that Dr. Ernst was captured by the Si-Fan in the same manner.

“The Voice of Kali” was actually a different version of an earlier 1923 play by Rohmer, “The Eye of Siva.” The text of the play is now lost, but a summary based on a detailed theatrical review was provided by R. E. Birney in “The Lost ‘Eye’” from *The Rohmer Review* #6 (February 1971). In the play, the role of the goddess Kali was taken by Siva, her husband, and the death ray was based on the principle of light rather than sound. The secret society was not called the S. Group, but the Council of Seven. Such a name made the Si-Fan connection very explicit. The evil master of disguise was called Mandarin Yen Sun Yen. The nationality of Mandarin K was unknown in “The Voice of Kali,” but Mandarin Yen Sun Yen was definitely Chinese.

If there is any doubt that the S. group was some incarnation of the Si-Fan, it should be observed that the Paul Harley series occupied the same fictional universe as the Fu Manchu series. In *The Golden Scorpion*, Fo-Hi, Fu Manchu’s colleague, matched wits with Gaston Max of the *Surete*. In Rohmer’s “At the Palace da Nostra,” a short story first published in 1930 and reprinted in the American edition of *Tales of East and West* (1933), Harley cabled Max for information.

There clearly was some attempt to revive the Si-Fan in 1922-23 with Mandarin K as the chief operative, but there was an even earlier Asian secret society with a sinister mandarin investigated by Paul Harley in "The Black Mandarin," a story that was first published in 1922, and later reprinted in *Tales of East and West* (2). In "The Black Mandarin," Harley was on the trail of an Asian mastermind who was fomenting unrest throughout India and China. He was also responsible for a massive crime wave in the United States (3). This awesome figure was known as the Black Mandarin. Harley's quest ended when he discovered that the Black Mandarin had been slain by an American secret agent, Raymond M'Cabe. Dying from a bullet wound delivered by the mastermind, M'Cabe strangled the Black Mandarin.

"The Black Mandarin" is one of several Rohmer stories revolving around a residence in Limehouse, London's Chinatown. The other stories are "Kerry's Kid" and "The Key of the Temple of Heaven," both from *Tales of Chinatown* (1922), and the novel *Yellow Shadows*. (1925). The Chinatown house was first owned by a wealthy Eurasian, Zani Chada. In "Kerry's Kid," Chada was arrested for kidnapping by Red Kerry, a British police official who appeared in several Rohmer's stories (4). The house then passed to Madame de Medici, a beautiful Eurasian who committed a successful robbery in "The Key of the Temple of Heaven." The same story briefly noted that Paul Harley was her enemy. She and Harley clashed in "The Black Mandarin." Madam de Medici was revealed to be agent of the Black Mandarin. With her master's death, she fled London.

The house then became the possession of Burma Chang whose murder was investigated by Red Kerry in *Yellow Shadows*. Kerry discovered that the house was really the property of the most powerful tong in China. The occupant of the house was always the tong's London representative. The head of the tong was a descendant of Confucius. The most prized possession of the tong was an amulet in the shape of a golden lotus. Whoever possessed this talisman had a passport to immense power in China. Burma Chang was slain by an unscrupulous adventurer in order to gain possession of the golden lotus. The novel concluded with the death of the killer. Red Kerry allowed the golden lotus to be returned to a representative of the Chinese tong.

In terms of chronology, "Kerry's Kid" would seem to have transpired in 1919. *Yellow Shadows* mentioned that Zani Chada served three years in prison. He had been released from jail by the time of "The Black Mandarin," which must have transpired in 1922. "The Key to the Temple of Heaven" must have transpired earlier in 1922, and *Yellow Shadows* probably occurred in 1924.

Although the Chinese tong came off as a relatively benevolent association in *Yellow Shadows*, it must have been behind the earlier activities of the Black Mandarin. In fact, the Black Mandarin was probably the actual head of the organization just before his death. His death led to the elevation of a descendant of Confucius to the top leadership possession.

The existence of this enigmatic tong was noticed by August Derleth, the author of the Solar Pons series. Solar Pons was a detective who not only imitated the methods of Sherlock Holmes and also came into contact with other fictional characters including both Fu Manchu and Hercule Poirot (5). Fu Manchu appeared in "The Adventure of the Seven Sisters" from *The Chronicles of Solar Pons* (1973), "The Adventure of the Praed Street Irregulars" from *The Reminiscences of Solar Pons* (1961), and "The Adventure of

the Camberwell Beauty” from *The Return of Solar Pons* (1958). In these stories, Fu Manchu was either unnamed or identified as “F.” Robert Patrick’s “A Chronology of Solar Pons” from *The Reminiscences of Solar Pons* put “The Adventure of the Praed Street Irregulars” in April 1926 and “The Adventure of the Camberwell Beauty” in May 1933. “The Adventure of the Seven Sisters” is generally believed to have transpired during the autumn of 1923 (6). These stories actually support some of the theories mentioned in this article. The events of *The Big Four* would have transpired between “The Adventure of the Seven Sisters” and “The Adventure of the Praed Street Irregulars.” The usage of the alias “Simon Fance” for the Si-Fan by one of Fu Manchu’s agents in “The Adventure of the Seven Sisters” would be consistent with the evidence in “The Voice of Kali” that there was an attempt to revive the Si-Fan in 1922-23. Fu Manchu’s role in “The Adventure of the Praed Street Irregulars” was largely benign, and the story does not contradict the premise that he was virtually retired by 1926. In “The Adventure of the Camberwell Beauty,” Pons identified Fu Manchu as “the insidious mastermind of the Si-Fan and the Brotherhood of the Lotus.” The Brotherhood of the Lotus identified by Pons must have been the unnamed Chinese tong from *Yellow Shadows*.

Since Rohmer never gave a formal name for this Chinese tong, Derleth’s title will be used for the sake of further discussion. Because he was not a descendant of Confucius, Fu Manchu can’t be the individual who formally assumed leadership of the Brotherhood after the death of the Black Mandarin. Nevertheless, one of his close associates could have been descended from the Chinese sage.

In the late 1940’s and 1950’s, Fu Manchu’s chief of staff was an old mandarin, Huan Tsung Chao. He appeared in *Shadow of Fu Manchu* (1948), “The Wrath of Fu Manchu” (a 1952 novelette that was later reprinted in a Rohmer collection entitled *The Wrath of Fu Manchu* (1973)) and *Emperor Fu Manchu* (1959). Huan Tsung Chao was eighty-five years old in *Shadow of Fu Manchu*. Since *Shadow of Fu Manchu* is generally assumed to have occurred in 1947 (one year before it was published), Huan Tsung Chao was born in 1862. He was tall thin elderly man with a white mustache. Rohmer described him with the following words: “He resembled the traditional portrait of Confucius.” Huan Tsung Chao could be descended from Confucius.

In *Emperor Fu Manchu*, Huan Tsung Chao noted that he came from a long-lived family. His father had married his sixth wife at the age of eighty. In *The Hand of Fu Manchu*, *The Trail of Fu Manchu* (1934) and *President Fu Manchu* (1936), there appeared an even earlier chief of staff, a mandarin who utilized the aliases of John Ki and Sam Pak. This mandarin was older than Fu Manchu and had been his political mentor before becoming his lieutenant. John Ki (alias Sam Pak) was a short man who looked about a hundred years old in the mid-1930’s. He must have been born in the 1830’s. Both of Fu Manchu’s chiefs of staff declined to partake of *elixir vitae* and preferred to live their natural life spans. Both also had been governors of Chinese provinces. Despite the lack of similarity in height, it is likely that Huan Tsung Chao was the son of the prior chief of staff. The real surname of the personage known as John Ki and Sam Pak must be Huan. The elder Huan could have been the man who succeeded the Black Mandarin as head of the Brotherhood of the Lotus (7).

Rohmer’s tong from *Yellow Shadows* also inspired a similar organization in the exploits of another Asian mastermind, Robert J. Hogan’s Wu Fang (8). The exploits of this bizarre criminal appeared in seven novels published in a pulp magazine, *The*

*Mysterious Wu Fang* during 1935-36. Wu Fang was supported by an organization that was also depicted as the most powerful tong in China. Later the tong would turn against Wu Fang. This tong had branches in both London and New York. Its members were known to cultivate a rare plant, a black lotus (9). The name of this tong in Hogan's novels was the Chang Li (10).

The similarity of the names Chang Li and Li Chang Yen leads to an interesting conclusion. The Brotherhood of the Lotus, alias the Chang Li, must have been a major component of the Si-Fan during the early battles of Fu Manchu and Nayland Smith. The symbol of this tong was a golden talisman made in the image of the rare black lotus (11). The leader of the Brotherhood was called the Black Mandarin because of the tong's cultivation of the black lotus. While Fu Manchu and Fo-Hi had functioned as the Si-Fan's chief agent in Europe, the Black Mandarin must have been concurrently the Si-Fan's chief agent in the United States. In 1917 as a result of the events described in *The Fires of Fu Manchu*, the Si-Fan collapsed. However, the Brotherhood of the Lotus remained totally intact and their profitable American operations were undamaged. Following the dismantling of the Si-Fan, Fu Manchu retreated to China and accepted the protection of the Brotherhood of the Lotus. The success of his American ventures enhanced the Black Mandarin's prestige so much that he now had greater influence than Fu Manchu in the Chinese underworld. Fu Manchu was now forced to become a vassal of the Black Mandarin. In a display of his subservience to the master of the Chang Li, Fu Manchu adopted the alias of Li Chang Yen (a variation on Chang Li) and became a recluse in a Peking palace. There he performed experiments and directed activities for the Black Mandarin. When the Black Mandarin was slain in 1922, leadership of the Brotherhood passed to Fu Manchu's chief of staff, Huan the elder. With this change of leadership, Fu Manchu became the *de facto* head of the Chang Li. Fu Manchu then tried to revive the Si-Fan with limited success during 1922-23. When this endeavor was stalled by Paul Harley, Fu Manchu formed the alliance, which became known as the Big Four in late 1923. When Poirot defeated that criminal combine, an elderly Fu Manchu effectively retired from criminal activities by faking the death of his Li Chang Yen identity. His daughter then revived the Si-Fan in 1928. Fu Manchu returned to thwart her ambitions. His original intent was to again disband the Si-Fan, but his discovery of the secret of eternal life caused his earlier ambitions to resurface.

The identification of Li Chang Yen as Fu Manchu leads to a startling theory about the most important chronological contradiction in the Hercule Poirot series. In the 1940's, Agatha Christie wrote *Curtain*, the novel in which Poirot died from natural causes. The novel was locked away and not published until 1975. By this time, Christie had written several Poirot novels that were clearly set in the 1950's and 1960's. However, the chronological references in *Curtain* reflect the late 1940's, shortly after the end of World War II. Julian Symons discussed this point at length in his book *Great Detectives: Seven Original Investigations* (1981). According to Symons, the latest year in which Poirot could have been born was 1864. If *Curtain* transpired in the late 1940's, then the Belgian sleuth Poirot would have been in his eighties when he perished. Symons argued that cases set in the 1950's and 1960's were actually updated versions of investigations that had transpired earlier in the 1920's or 1930's. The Symons theory appears unassailable because the only other possible explanation is for Poirot to have been restored to life and then rejuvenated after the events of *Curtain*. Although such an

event seems implausible, it did happen to other individuals in Rohmer's Fu Manchu books.

As previously mentioned, the Si-Fan had engaged in a long campaign of capturing Western scientists by using *F. Katalapsis*, a catalepsy-inducing drug. Some of the kidnap victims eventually decided to embrace this servitude and work willingly for Fu Manchu. An inducement for their acceptance of captivity was that Fu Manchu would share his immortality serum, the *elixir vitae*, with the abducted experts. In *The Island of Fu Manchu*, there appeared James Ridgwell Horton, an American who had been kidnapped by Fu Manchu around 1920. He originally viewed the Si-Fan as little more than a gang of criminals akin to the Mafia, but his views change when he realized the advantages of immortality.

Learning of the ailing health of his old adversary, Fu Manchu (alias Li Chang Yen), must have arranged to have Poirot injected with *F. Katalapsis*. After Poirot's premature burial, Si-Fan agents retrieved the Belgian from his grave and then injected him with the antidote. Poirot was also injected with *elixir vitae* to restore his health. What then happened is open to conjecture. Poirot could have escaped the Si-Fan with an ample supply of *elixir vitae* to sustain him for over two decades. Another possibility presents itself when one considers the chivalrous attitude of Fu Manchu that caused him to respect his adversaries. In "The Adventure of the Camberwell Beauty," Fu Manchu even hired Solar Pons to solve a mystery for him despite the pair having been enemies in the past. Perhaps Fu Manchu needed a mystery solved in the late 1940's, and spirited a dying Poirot away for this purpose. As Poirot's fee for solving the case, he was given his freedom and several vials of *elixir vitae*. Probably Poirot's supply of *elixir vitae* ran out in the 1970's, and the celebrated detective finally died in unrecorded circumstances.

One wonders if the other prominent member of the Big Four, the resourceful master of disguise known as Number Four, played a role in Poirot's abduction. Agatha Christie probably derived this character in part from the villain from "The Voice of Kali" (originally the play, *The Eye of Siva*). Christie never gave any explanation for why Number Four was also known as "the destroyer" other than to suggest that Number Four was exceptionally murderous. "The Destroyer" is one of the titles of the Hindu god Siva, who was used in the theatrical version of Paul Harley's adventure. Also Siva is the husband of Kali. The "K" in Mandarin K almost certainly stood for Kali. It is not difficult to imagine that Mandarin Kali and the Destroyer would be aliases of the same master criminal. Christie was not just content to model Number Four on Mandarin K, she decided to inject a large portion of the main villain of the Bulldog Drummond series into Li Chang Yen's partner.

Number Four was identified eventually as an actor known as Claud Darrell. It is not clear whether this is the actor's real name, and there is some mystery about his origins. His age was estimated to be about thirty-three at the time of *The Big Four*. However, Darrell could have been as old as thirty-five. Therefore, he was born somewhere about 1889-1991. The only known photo of Darrell was destroyed, and Poirot's information on him was based on the memories of the actor's theatrical colleagues. Darrell had brown hair and a fair complexion. Poirot's file on Darrell's listed his eyes as gray, but actress Flossie Munro described them as blue-gray. Darrell was a man of medium height (five feet, ten and a half inches). He had a short straight nose, to which he could later add makeup to appear larger. Most (if not all) of his teeth had been

removed. This fact allowed him to change his face significantly with different sets of false teeth. He was active in the British theater during World War I. He visited China in 1919, and then went to America in the same year. There he played a few roles on the New York stage before disappearing. When in makeup, Darrell was totally unrecognizable. Nevertheless, he had an unconscious habit of playing with bread at dining tables that allowed Poirot to recognize him when he was disguised. At the conclusion of *The Big Four*, Darrell was supposedly killed in the explosion of the Big Four's headquarters. While the bodies of fellow conspirators Abe Ryland and Madam Olivier were positively identified, the body that was supposedly Darrell's lacked a head. Poirot suspected that Number Four might still be alive.

Carl Peterson of the Bulldog Drummond stories was a brilliant master of disguise who could only be detected by a mannerism. He had the habit of unconsciously tapping his knee. It is quite conceivable that Peterson had more than one unconscious mannerism. Carl Peterson appeared in these books by Sapper (H.C. McNeile): *Bulldog Drummond* (1920), *The Black Gang* (1922), *The Third Round* (1925) and *The Final Count* (1926). Peterson was killed off in his fourth appearance. After McNeile's death in 1937, the series was continued by Gerard Fairlie, who would eventually resurrect Peterson in *The Return of the Black Gang* (1954). Although Peterson's real appearance was never described, there was a sort of commonality about his various disguises that corresponded to Claud Darrell. In multiple identities, Peterson was generally of medium height. His hair was usually brown. Peterson generally had gray or cold gray-blue eyes. He usually had an aquiline nose. *The Third Round* revealed that Peterson frequently altered the shape of his nose, and implied that the aquiline nose of at least one false identity, Edward Blackton, was totally false. Therefore, Peterson's real nose is probably more like Claude Darrell's. Peterson's teeth were generally perfect, and *The Third Round* did reveal that he occasionally modified their appearance with a stain. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that the majority of Peterson's perfect teeth were really false like Darrell's.

Agatha Christie was clearly familiar with the Bulldog Drummond stories. She parodied them and especially the character of Carl Peterson in "The Affair of the Sinister Stranger" from *Partners in Crime* (1929) (11). She also may have inserted a couple of in-jokes in *The Big Four*. Poirot went to the office of his solicitor, Mr. McNeil, to receive the evidence that Number Four and Claude Darrell were the same person. The surname of Poirot's solicitor is virtually the same as that of Bulldog Drummond's creator. Also the surname of Darrell may have been derived by Christie from Peter Darrell, Drummond's close friend in McNeile's novels.

The chronology of Carl Peterson's career needs to be established before his exact role in *The Big Four* can be determined. *Bulldog Drummond* opened in December 1918 with Peterson initiating a plot to cause a revolution in Britain and then leaped to mid-1919 when the great scheme was unfolding. *The Black Gang* was set in the autumn of an unspecified year. There were at least three references in the novel that a year had passed since Peterson's first battle with Drummond. Therefore, *The Black Gang* was set in 1920. *The Third Round* transpired in June of an unspecified year. Although published in 1926, *The Final Count* claimed to have been set during June to September 1927. The novel also contained references to 1924 and 1925. This assertion is contradicted by a reference in the next Drummond book, *The Female of The Species* (1928). In this novel, Carl's mistress, the woman known as Irma Peterson, sought revenge for her lover's alleged

death in *The Final Count*. It was mentioned that more than six months separated *The Female of the Species* from the earlier novel, and there were references to summer. In the course of *The Female of the Species*, it was stated that Drummond had slain Carl Peterson's associate, Henry Lakington "three or four years ago" in *Bulldog Drummond*. Lakington's death happened in 1919. Consequently, *The Female of the Species* happened in either 1922 or 1923. The year has to be 1923 in order to have sufficient room for the events of the previous two Drummond books. *The Third Round* would logically be placed in 1921 and *The Final Count* in 1922. As for the references in *The Final Count* to 1927 and other years that followed 1922, the argument can be made that these were deliberate distortions because that novel dealt with Peterson's theft of a super-weapon with frightening military implications. The weapon, a poisonous chemical, was used by Peterson to slay a large number of British subjects. According to *The Island of Fu Manchu*, the British Foreign Office caused alterations in the earlier events of *The Drums of Fu Manchu* (1939) that concerned a thinly disguised portrayal of Adolf Hitler. If nebulous British bureaucrats could tamper with Rohmer's works, then they could do the same with McNeile's. It can be asserted that the dates in *The Final Count* were altered due to pressure from the British government for reasons of national security. The whole purpose of this governmental tampering was to convince readers that chemical weapons had never been used on British soil.

There are some unrecorded adventures alluded to by Peterson that need to be acknowledged before his activities are reconciled with that of Claude Darrell. In *The Black Gang*, Carl recalled that he met an Italian toxicologist, Fransioli, in Naples "three years ago." Carl thought that he was posing as an Austrian baron at the time. Fransioli revealed that he had discovered the secret formula for one of the Borgia poisons. Carl then stole some bottles containing the poison from the toxicologist's laboratory. Later, Carl and Fransioli went on a mountain climbing trip on Vesuvius. Carl threw Fransioli into the crater. Since *The Black Gang* happened in 1920, then the Fransioli murder happened in 1917. It would have been impossible for Peterson to pose as an Austrian baron in Naples in that year. Italy and Austria-Hungary were at war. Most likely, Carl pretended to be a Russian nobleman since Russia and Italy were then allies.

In *The Third Round*, Peterson mentioned Drakshoff, a man who secretly controlled three of the principal governments in Europe. Drakshoff paid Carl five million pounds to prevent a second revolution in Germany. The first revolution was the one that established the Weimar Republic after Germany's defeat in World War I. Of the various abortive attempts to overthrow the Weimar Republic during 1919-21, the most likely one for Carl to have foiled was the Kapp putsch of March 1920, a right-wing rebellion. Drakshoff was based on a real person, Basil Zaharoff (1849-1936), the munitions dealer who was rumored to secretly dominate European governments. *The Third Round* also cited an instance where Peterson had performed a service for Baron Vanderton, the head of a European banking firm. Vanderton hired Peterson to assassinate a rival international financier. Peterson must have performed this murder for Vanderton during the gap between *The Black Gang* and *The Third Round*.

An entry in Carl's records from *The Third Round* indicate that he had been active as a criminal since May 1913. His knowledge of languages in December 1918 indicated that he had traveled widely. He was fluent in French, German, English and Spanish. He

also could speak to a lesser degree the languages of Russia, Japan, China and the Balkan States. In "The Voice of Kali," Mandarin K had the reputation of being a superb linguist.

Is Claude Darrell's age in 1924 compatible with Carl's? There are conflicting references to Carl's age. Often in disguise, he appeared to be old enough to be Irma's father. In his final appearance, *The Return of the Black Gang*, it is stated that Carl was "not much" older than Irma. There are contradictory references to Irma's age in the novels. She was often depicted as a "girl" in the first few novels. This depiction would suggest that she was around twenty during the early Drummond-Peterson duels. Joe Dixon, the narrator of *The Female of the Species* judged Irma's age to be somewhere between thirty to thirty-three. However, Dixon saw her at night when she was wearing an exotic perfume. The atmosphere of this meeting could have caused Dixon to make a mistake. Fairlie's *Captain Bulldog Drummond* (1945), a novel set in November 1943, Irma was described as approaching middle age. This description would indicate that Irma was no more than in her early forties in 1943. Viewing all these references, my conclusion is that Irma was born in 1901. She then would have been sixteen when accompanying Carl to Naples during the commission of the Fransioli murder. She would have been eighteen when Bulldog Drummond first met her in 1919. She was actually twenty-two when Joe Dixon mistakenly guessed her age. An age of forty-two in 1943 could be considered approaching middle age.

Based on the references in *The Return of the Black Gang*, Carl can't be old enough to be Irma's father. On the other hand, he must be at least ten years older to have been operating as early as 1913 and to amass a formidable criminal reputation by December 1918. Thus, Peterson must have been born no later than 1891. By contrast, Claude Darrell was born around 1889-91. Of the years available, 1889 is most preferable for Carl Peterson's birth since it gives him more time to become the feared master criminal who appeared in December 1918. Carl would then be twelve years older than Irma.

The year of *The Third Round*, 1921, would appear to be a significant year in Carl Peterson's life. It may give some hint to why an alliance with Fu Manchu would be desirable. As the novel opened, Carl seemed to be going through a mid-life crisis. Carl was tired of merely being an agent of puppeteers like Drakshoff. He wanted to gain a fortune of his own in order to manipulate world events. With this aim, Peterson then unsuccessfully engaged in a scheme to steal a formula for manufacturing diamonds. Peterson hoped that a source of unlimited wealth would transform him into a man at least as powerful as Drakshoff.

1921 was also a significant year of another Big Four member, Madame Olivier. In that year, the husband of the respected French scientist had been killed in the explosion of their laboratory. This explosion also disfigured her cheek with a scar.

The significance of 1921 is indirectly revealed in *Captain Bulldog Drummond*. Here Irma adopted the identity of the Countess Lilli. She claimed to be a widow of a nobleman of Spanish-Irish extraction. The non-existent Count was killed in a hunting accident shortly after World War I.

The background of Irma's non-existent husband in *Captain Bulldog Drummond* reads like an abbreviated biography of Dominick Medina, the villain of John Buchan's *The Three Hostages* (1924). In the spring of 1921, Medina headed a conspiracy that reaped huge monetary profits for years by spreading anarchy throughout the world. The

group manipulated fanatical idealists and ruthless nationalists. Medina was a handsome man and a respected Conservative Member of Parliament. Despite his overt political position, Medina had ties to various left-wing groups around the globe. Medina professed to be a member of a noble Spanish-Irish family, but this background was false and his true antecedents were never revealed. In mid-summer, Medina was planning a coup that would grant him and his gang enormous profits. The exact nature of this plot was never stated. There were hints that it involved at least disrupting the prospects for peace in Ireland, then in the turmoil of a violent struggle for independence from Britain (13). The police forces of various countries were poised to smash Medina's organization, but the ringleader took a trio of hostages to prevent the global authorities from acting. Adventurer Richard Hannay rescued the hostages, and the forces of law and order replied accordingly. On the night of June 1, Dominick Medina's organization was thoroughly disrupted. Although Medina's schemes were smashed, he and many of his associates remained at liberty. In August, Medina died in a hunting accident of sorts. He went stalking with a rifle after Hannay in the Scottish highlands. The plan for revenge on Hannay ended with fatal consequences for Medina. He tripped while climbing a ridge and fell to his death.

It has been speculated that Carl and Dominick Medina were cousins. In *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life* (1973), Philip José Farmer theorized that Carl was the grandson of Professor James Moriarty, the nemesis of Sherlock Holmes. My own investigation into Moriarty's career (14) concluded that Medina was his nephew. Medina was the head of the Moriarty crime family in 1921. Carl Peterson would have been subservient to him.

In *Bulldog Drummond*, Carl convinced a group of Anglophobic millionaires from Germany and America to finance a left-wing revolution in Britain. In *The Black Gang*, Carl was seeking to accomplish the same end with financial support from Communist Russia. In *The Three Hostages*, it was hinted that Medina had ties to the Russian government. Medina must have been planning a huge left-wing revolution in Britain for years (15). He must have instructed Carl to gain financial support from other sources to bankroll operations to accomplish this goal. When Carl's efforts failed, Medina then stepped in directly to launch to destabilize Britain through the brutal conflict in Ireland. When Medina's master plan fell apart, Peterson became depressed. He had been a member of the most powerful crime family in Europe, and now that syndicate was in disarray. This will set him on a path towards an alliance with Li Chang Yen alias Fu Manchu.

Madame Olivier had to have also belonged to the Moriarty crime syndicate in 1921. She must have arranged that all of the evidence of her involvement with Medina pointed to her husband. When the French government along with the authorities of several other nations engaged in a coordinated crackdown on Dominick Medina's syndicate, she caused her spouse's death in the laboratory explosion that also had the undesired effect of disfiguring her. The French government then falsely concluded that only her husband had been entangled with Medina. Since Madame Olivier was a renowned scientist with a reputation equal to Madame Curie's, the French authorities then suppressed all the evidence linking her husband to the Medina plot in order to avoid a scandal.

Carl Peterson and Madame Olivier were both members of a criminal organization that existed before the formation of the Big Four, but there is another probable link between them. Like Irma Peterson, Madame Olivier was a tall woman with dark eyes. In *The Female Of the Species*, Drummond gave the opinion that Irma had “Southern blood.” In other words, Irma was partially French, Italian or Spanish. Philip José Farmer offered the theory that since the Petersons often assumed the roles of father and daughter in their numerous disguises, they probably were so in real life. The evidence concerning their ages can’t support this theory of an incestuous relationship. However, Farmer also speculated that Dr. Caber, a master criminal described in Lord Dunsany’s tales of Joseph Jorkens, was Carl’s brother. My biography of Dr. Caber (16) concluded that he was born in 1883, eighteen years before Irma. A teen-age Caber could have had an affair with the woman who eventually became known as Madame Olivier. Their romance could have grown out of their mutual scientific brilliance. When Irma was born, her mother let her be raised by the Moriarty crime family that was then headed by the Professor’s brother, a former railway master and Dominick’s father. Irma did not follow her parents into the world of science, but fell under the influence of her uncle and became his incestuous lover. As for Irma’s mother, she became a member of the Moriarty crime syndicate at an early age as a result of her affair with Caber.

The linking of Olivier and Peterson (alias Darrell) to Medina also illuminates a claim that John Ingles made about Li Chang Yen in *The Big Four*. Ingles suggested that Communist leaders Lenin and Trotsky took their orders from Li Chang Yen, the leader of the four criminal partners. There are no suggestions in the Fu Manchu novels of any strong ties between the Bolshevik leaders and the Si-Fan at this point in history. Although Fo-Hi, Fu Manchu’s associate, destabilized Tsarist Russia by abducting a noted military leader, there are no indications that the Si-Fan was aligned with the Russian Communists in either World War I or the 1920’s. In fact, Fu Manchu was a passionate anti-Communist during the Cold War. In *The Bride of Fu Manchu* (1933), the lord of the Si-Fan venomously identified Russia as the land of “those half-starved slaves of Stalin’s.” Both Medina and Peterson were involved in plots with the Communists. In fact, the Communists seemingly provided an elaborate cover story for Medina that he had been serving with the anti-Bolshevik forces of General Anton Denikin around 1917-1919 (17). This story made Medina a popular man in conservative circles, but he had actually been studying mesmerism in Central Asia when his mythical anti-Bolshevik exploits occurred. Although *The Three Hostages* only mentioned that Medina was seeking dangerous knowledge in Central Asia, he could have been engaged in other enterprises. It is conceivable that Medina was secretly orchestrating the Bolshevik Revolution during his years in Central Asia. With Medina’s death, both Olivier and Peterson would have maintained some influence with Communist Russia. They could have convinced the regime’s leaders to follow the interests of the Big Four. Therefore, Li Chang Yen’s power over the Russian leaders in 1924 was more indirect than Ingles suggested. Ingles also could have mistakenly interpreted earlier reports linking the Bolsheviks to an unnamed mastermind in Central Asia as evidence of the handiwork of the mysterious Li Chang Yen. During the Big Four alliance, Fu Manchu must have swallowed his distaste for Communist Russia by consoling himself with the knowledge that his partners were maneuvering the Soviets into schemes that suited his own interests.

There is a resemblance between another member of the Big Four, Abe Ryland, an American millionaire who cornered the soap industry, and Hocking, an American cotton magnate who partially financed Carl's master plan in *Bulldog Drummond*. Both Ryland and Hocking were tall gaunt men. Ryland and Hocking were probably wealthy cousins. It was through Hocking that Carl met Ryland and eventually recruited him into the Big Four. Ryland was probably not the only millionaire financing the Big Four. He probably enticed Hocking and other unscrupulous magnates to invest in the plot for world domination.

In *The Final Count*, Carl Peterson stole the formula for a chemical poison that killed at the mere touch. He began to produce this weapon in mass quantities. He also manufactured an antidote that must be applied to the skin in order to prevent the poison from penetrating. In the conclusion of the novel, Drummond confronted Peterson in a dirigible. Peterson was planning to use the dirigible to spray the fatal poison on an ocean liner. Drummond apparently slew Peterson by splashing the poison on the arch-villain's wrist. After Drummond left the dirigible, it inexplicably exploded and Peterson's corpse was seemingly destroyed.

The astute reader recognized that Peterson's death rang false. On an earlier occasion, Peterson had liberally coated himself with the antidote when handling the poison. Surely he would have done the same in the climax. Could he not have merely pretended to die from the poison in the conclusion? Also the explosion of the dirigible is extremely suspicious. Could not Peterson have merely planted a bomb and then parachuted out? Clearly Drummond's original creator, H. C. McNeile, was leaving an opening for the resurrection of Peterson at a later date. Although McNeile died before he could bring Peterson back, Gerard Fairlie provided the obvious explanation for Peterson's survival in *The Return of the Black Gang*. Reunited with Irma, Carl again battled Drummond, but this time the intrepid British adventurer was able to capture the master criminal and his female accomplice.

Unfortunately, there are three unanswered questions in Fairlie's revival of Peterson. First, Peterson would have still had possession of the formula for the chemical weapon. Why didn't he use it again? If Peterson were part of a larger criminal conspiracy that was amassing weapons of mass destruction, then he would have given the formula to his colleagues. A comparison of the chronology of *The Final Count* and Rohmer's "The Voice of Kali" reveals that Paul Harley must have been tracking Mandarin K months before the events of *The Final Count*. Peterson must have assumed the identity of Mandarin K and concluded an alliance in 1922 with the S. Group shortly before the events of *The Final Count* began. Peterson was able to elude Harley's pursuit for several months and embarked on the scheme described in *The Final Count*. As for the formula of the chemical weapon, Peterson would have transported it to Fu Manchu in Asia. Throughout Rohmer's novels, Fu Manchu accumulated a vast arsenal of weaponry. Any quantities of the chemical weapon produced by Fu Manchu were probably either destroyed in the explosion of the Big Four's Italian base in 1925, or in the destruction of a major Si-Fan base in Haiti during 1940 (see the conclusion of *The Island of Fu Manchu*).

Paul Harley claimed that Mandarin K was an expert chemist. Technically this was not true of Carl Peterson. However, his expertise in using poisons, as demonstrated by the examples of the Borgia poison in *The Black Gang* and the diabolical chemical from *The Final Count*, could easily have caused an investigator to falsely conclude that

the master criminal was a chemist himself. Harley mentioned three instances where he was nearly assassinated by Mandarin K. In Tientsin and Hong Kong, Mandarin K almost poisoned Harley twice. In Egypt, Mandarin K attempted to knife Harley at the Cairo Turf Club. Burton Van Dean, an American explorer who returned to Britain shortly before the events of "The Voice of Kali" unfolded, also saw Mandarin K dressed as a Tibetan lama in Tibet. All of these instances could have happened during 1922-23 in the gap between *The Final Count*, which ended in September 1922, and "The Voice of Kali," which was set in the summer of 1923. The S. Group also must have armed Mandarin K (alias Carl Peterson) with Ulric Ernst's death ray after the events of *The Final Count*.

The second unresolved issue in Fairlie's revival of Carl Peterson is the lack of any revelations concerning the mastermind's whereabouts during the decades that Drummond believed him dead. The theory that Carl was Claude Darrell only covered a brief portion of the missing years. The most likely explanation is that Peterson remained in the service of Fu Manchu. There is one indication of this possibility in Rohmer's Fu Manchu novels. *The Mask of Fu Manchu* (1932), a novel assigned to 1930 in Cay Van Ash's chronology, involved the Si-Fan's attempt to launch a religious war in the Middle East by securing the relics of an Islamic heretic. In the novel, a Si-Fan agent committed a brilliant theft on a seaplane in order to retrieve the relics from Nayland Smith. However, the thief only stole decoys made to look like the actual relics. Under the alias of John Kennington, this Si-Fan operative, actually an athletic man, posed as a rotund left-wing Member of Parliament. This agent could have been Carl Peterson in disguise. In his first two battles with Drummond, Peterson had managed to entangle a number of left-wing politicians in his plot to overthrow the British establishment. Peterson had ample opportunity to study the mannerisms of leftist Parliamentarians. Peterson could have remained in Fu's service for decades before his re-appearance in *The Return of the Black Gang*. The first letter of the Kennington alias also recalled the sobriquet of Mandarin K.

The only objection that could be lodged against the theory that Kennington was Peterson (alias Darrell) is that the narrator of *The Mask of Fu Manchu* first described the phony politician as "a fussy little man." If the term "little" were taken as a reference to Kennington's height, it would not be consistent with the general description of Peterson's numerous identities as a man of medium height, or the fact that Darrell was five feet and ten and a half inches tall. On the other hand, the term "fussy little man" could be a reference to Kennington's seeming lack of character. Kennington came off as an obnoxious hypocrite.

The third problem with Carl's resurrection is the explanation of Irma's behavior during his absence. Bulldog Drummond speculated that Irma had been pretending that Carl was dead during all these years. Actually, this premise is not contradicted in McNeile's novels. At the conclusion of *The Final Count*, Irma appeared to Drummond to warn him that the vendetta started by her lover would be continued. Even though Irma was not on the dirigible, she seemed to be aware of the details of Carl's death. Drummond reasoned that Carl and Irma had shared a telepathic link. The better explanation, implied by the revelations of *The Return of the Black Gang*, was that Carl had faked his death and then told Irma the details of his alleged demise. In *The Female of the Species*, Irma was crazed with vengeance. In her next appearance, McNeile's *Bulldog Drummond Returns* (1932, British title: *The Return of Bulldog Drummond*), she seemed to have totally abandoned her plans of retribution and was more concerned with

amassing wealth through illegally manipulating the stock market. If Carl had reappeared only after those two novels by McNeile, Fairlie's explanation of Irma's actions would hold water. Unfortunately, Fairlie's premise was contradicted in his own novels.

In the novels that Fairlie wrote before *The Return of The Black Gang*, memories of Carl's death sometimes drove Irma off the deep end. In *Bulldog Drummond Attacks* (1939), Fairlie portrayed Irma as pining for her deceased Carl in front of Freyder, her male secretary who had been Carl's secretary in *The Third Round*. If Carl were alive, why would she deceive Freyder? In *Captain Bulldog Drummond*, Irma had missed Carl so much that she developed the subconscious habit of imitating his finger tapping. This adopted mannerism now permitted Drummond to pierce her disguises. Not harboring any suspicions about Countess Lilli, Drummond met Irma in that guise at a party. Irma requested that Drummond tell her about his adventures. When Drummond recalled his final encounter with Carl, the recollection of this event unnerved Irma enough to cause her nervous finger tapping and ruin her deception. Irma would not have acted this way if she knew her lover was alive. *Hands off Bulldog Drummond* (1949) featured a scene where Irma privately mused about the possibility of she and Bulldog Drummond fighting on the same side. The idea was totally dismissed when she recalled the circumstances of Carl's death.

The connection between Carl and Fu Manchu provides a rationalization for Irma's actions. Fu Manchu and many of his associates were expert hypnotists who sometimes altered the memories of their subjects. In *The Drums of Fu Manchu*, Fu Manchu used hypnotism to remove the memories of his rebellious daughter. Although Irma must have been aware of Carl's survival at the conclusion of *The Final Count*, her memories were subsequently changed through mesmerism. She really now believed that Carl was dead. This action could only have been done with Carl's permission.

Carl's motivations for permitting this form of behavioral modification on Irma can only mean one thing. He was leaving Irma for another woman. Could this have been Fu's daughter, Fah Lo Suee? This is unlikely because Fah Lo Suee was always plotting to overthrow her father, and Carl would have been too smart to become embroiled in her schemes. The most likely candidate for the role of the "other woman" was Madame de Medici, the agent of the Brotherhood of the Lotus from Rohmer's "The Key to the Temple of Heaven" and "The Black Mandarin" (18). With the Black Mandarin's death, her loyalties would have shifted to Fu Manchu. Like Fah Lo Suee, Madame de Medici was a Eurasian with black hair, ivory skin and a bell-like voice. The only significant difference in the general physical description of Madame de Medici and Fah Lo Suee was the color of their eyes. Fah Lo Suee's were green like her father, but Madame de Medici were yellow like those of Fo-Hi, Fu's collaborator from *The Golden Scorpion*. Fah Lo Suee was the daughter of an unnamed Russian woman. It is likely that Madame de Medici was Fah Lo Suee's older half-sister. The Russian woman could have been Fo-Hi's mistress before she became Fu's.

Madame de Medici had been a spy for the Central Powers during World War I (19), and may have known Carl during that great conflict. She also was an accomplished hypnotist. She was most likely the person who robbed Irma of her memories. If Irma believed him dead, then she would seek vengeance on Drummond and distract him from any further interference in Carl's plans. If Irma had any knowledge of Carl's role as

Mandarin K and his connection to the S. Group, that information was also removed from her mind.

Irma's brainwashing must have happened in Egypt. She mentioned spending the winter of 1922-23 there in *The Female of the Species*. Irma's brainwashing must have happened around the same time Peterson nearly killed Paul Harley at the Cairo Turf Club. It was also during this stay in Egypt that Peterson received the Listening Death from the agents who had previously faked Ulric Ernst's death. In "The Voice of Kali," Paul Harley discussed with a British officer the usage of the Listening Death in Burma during early 1922. Harley was not in Burma at this time, and it is possible that neither was Mandarin K. Other agents of the S. Group could have deployed the Listening Death in Burma. There must have been more than one model of the Ernst Trajectory. The usage of the Listening Death in Burma in early 1922 would suggest that Ulric Ernst was abducted in Egypt during 1921. The agents who captured Ernst would have reported to Fu Manchu during the period when he accepted the ascendancy of the Black Mandarin.

Carl's betrayal of Irma could have been sparked by an earlier act of infidelity on her part. Irma may have briefly cheated on Carl with his cousin, Dominick Medina. As noted earlier, Irma pretended to be the widow of a non-existent man modeled on Medina. She also showed signs of Medina's influence in *The Female of the Species*. In *The Three Hostages*, Medina sent the hostages' families six lines of doggerel containing clues to the whereabouts of his prisoners. In 1923, Irma kidnapped Drummond's wife, Phyllis, and sent her husband a string of clues that would lead him on a scavenger hunt to rescue her. Medina was interested in ancient folklore. Dressed like the priestess of an ancient cult, Irma planned to sacrifice Phyllis on an altar in a room that looked like Stonehenge. Carl never exhibited any knowledge of pagan rituals. Irma must have gotten that information from another source, and that had to be Medina. If Medina romanced Irma, it was a short affair and lacked any sense of commitment on his part. Sandy Arbuthnot, Richard Hannay's close friend, made this assessment of Medina's relationships with women: "In his life he is practically an ascetic, and though he is adored by women he doesn't care a straw for them." After Medina's death in August 1921, Carl must have noticed something that made him suspect the possibility of a love affair between Irma and his cousin. Maybe Irma was too visibly upset by news of Medina's death. It's possible that Irma may have just flirted with Medina, and nothing serious ever resulted between them (20). Whether or not Carl's conclusions about Irma's fidelity were true, they dispatched him into the arms of Madame de Medici.

*The Return of the Black Gang* probably transpired in 1953. In the novel, Irma's death was faked by murdering a double. Carl claimed that it took him two years to find Irma's look-alike. Therefore, Carl became reunited with Irma sometime in 1951. By that year, the Si-Fan had fallen on hard times. After the destruction of its arsenal in Haiti during 1940 (see *The Island of Fu Manchu*), the Si-Fan's power has shrunk significantly. If Peterson was still a member of the Si-Fan in 1951, then he could easily have decided that it was time to pursue an illicit career elsewhere. Whatever influence Peterson possessed with the Soviet Union had dissipated after the Big Four was replaced by a revived Si-Fan with an anti-Communist agenda. Despite having worked for the Nazis in World War II, Irma had the Soviets to grant her commissions for subversive activities in Britain during the early years of the Cold War. Peterson saw the renewal of a partnership with Irma as an opportunity to re-establish his once profitable Communist connections.

When Carl found Irma, she was overjoyed to learn that he was alive. As for the explanation for his long absence, Carl probably told Irma half-truths. He could have professed to have been kidnapped against his will by Fu Manchu and coerced to work for the Si-Fan. He then revealed that Irma's memories were altered by the Si-Fan, but proclaimed that this was done without his sanction.

Before we outline Peterson's role as both Mandarin K and Number Four in more detail, there are some other players in the game who needs to be identified. *The Big Four* mentioned that Poirot was coordinating the activities of secret agents in India, China and Russia against Li Chang Yen. The chief agent in India was probably Nayland Smith, who was very familiar with India. For example, in *The Mask of Fu Manchu*, he returned from a recent secret mission in India as the novel opened. Smith could not have been operating in China because he then would have most likely come in contact with Fu Manchu and there is every reason to believe that they had no face- to-face encounters between 1917 (*The Fires of Fu Manchu*) and 1928 (*Daughter of Fu Manchu*). Smith may not even had realized that Li Chang Yen was Fu Manchu since the examples of Fo-Hi and the Black Mandarin had demonstrated that there was more than just one formidable mastermind in China.

Could Paul Harley have participated in the events of *The Big Four*? The failure of Paul Harley to further pursue the trail of Mandarin K after "The Voice of Kali" might be explained by the events of "Red Mist," a short story first published in the October 1924 of *The Story-Teller*. It was later reprinted in Peter Haining's anthology, *Tales of Unknown Horror* (1978). The story was set in August, and the year of its events was presumably 1924. Just as Harley had been commissioned by the Foreign Office to track down Mandarin K, he had now received a similar assignment to apprehend Isaac Schulameyer, an international saboteur who had been dispatched by an unnamed foreign government to disrupt British industries. Harley was more successful in pursuing Schulameyer than he had been with Mandarin K. Harley's new quarry clearly perished from a poison gas of his own devising. Schulameyer's employer was never identified, but the Communist regime in Moscow seemed the most likely candidate for this role. Since Peterson then had influence with the Soviet leaders, he could have persuaded them to send Schulameyer to Britain. Peterson's motive for doing so was to distract Harley from continuing his Mandarin K investigation. There is an implied connection between Mandarin K and Schulameyer. Learning of a local legend involving a spectral monk, Schulameyer assumed the identity of this apparition. Schulameyer's ploy was reminiscent of the ruses adopted by Mandarin K earlier in "The Voice of Kali" and Fah Lo Suee later in *Daughter of Fu Manchu*.

There also was a later Communist espionage apparatus called the S Group (no period (".") after the S) in Rohmer's non-series novel, *Moon of Madness* (1927). The novel was set in its year of publication. The "S" was apparently derived from the name of the spy ring's leader, Schmidt. Schulameyer could have originally headed this Communist cell since his poison gas was known as the "S Vapour." Most likely, Schulameyer formed the Communist version of the S Group, and after his death Schmidt assumed control of it. Peterson (alias Mandarin K) must have convinced the Communists to form their own spy ring called the S Group in 1923. The creation of the espionage ring would have further confused Harley's inquiries into the whereabouts of Mandarin K. As for the Communist variation of the S Group, British secret agents destroyed it in 1927

After Schulameyer's death in August 1924, Harley would have been available for assignments in either China or Russia to negate the power of the Big Four. Gaston Max of the *Surette* would also have been able to undertake such missions.

Another agent assisting Poirot's cause in Asia was almost certainly Captain Kent, a character who made a brief appearance in *The Big Four* during September 1924. He identified himself as a member of the United States Secret Service. Kent arrived in Britain to inquire into the whereabouts of Halliday, the missing British scientist. Kent believed that the Big Four possessed a weapon that could send a powerful beam of wireless energy. This weapon may have caused the 1923 Japanese earthquake (September 1) as well as the destruction of several American torpedo boats and destroyers off the Pacific coast of the United States. Kent was referring to an actual historical event, the Point Honda disaster of September 8, 1923. Captain Kent was depicted as "a tall, lean American with a singularly impassive face which looked as though it had been carved out of wood." Kent's facial description sounded like he was wearing a disguise. The possibility of a disguise raises the question that Kent was more than he appeared to be. Kent dropped out of the storyline at this point. His investigations could have brought him to the Far East in order to track down the Big Four's weapon and destroy it.

A similar shadowy American, Jerome K. Green, appeared to assist Drummond against Carl Peterson in *Bulldog Drummond*. Green had tracked Peterson's agents from New York. The American showed Drummond a badge identifying himself as a member of "the police force of the United States of America." No such organization ever existed (21). If Green were genuine, he would have been a policeman associated with an individual city or state. Despite his cleanly honorable behavior in *Bulldog Drummond*, Green must have been some globetrotting American adventurer who falsely adopted the identity of an American policeman.

There is every reason to believe that Jerome K. Green and Captain Kent were the same person. The "K." in the Green alias must have stood for Kent. Upon occasion, Kent Allard, the American adventurer known as The Shadow, assumed the identities of American law-enforcement officials. Like Green, The Shadow was very familiar with New York City. In Walter Gibson's *Double Z* (June 1932), The Shadow pretended to be Terry Blake of the Secret Service. My chronology of The Shadow's early years (22) indicate that Kent Allard spent 1919-1924 traveling to various parts of the globe including India, Afghanistan and Java. Trips to Britain in 1919 and 1924 could have also happened during this period. The events of *The Big Four* extend into 1925. In that year, Kent Allard went to Central America in his real identity and staged his own disappearance. However, Allard's adventures in Central America probably transpired after the conclusion of *The Big Four* in May 1925. It is also possible that the Big Four had agents in South America and that Allard originally went there in 1925 to fight them.

There are intriguing parallels between stratagems used by both The Shadow and Drummond. One year after meeting Jerome K. Green, Drummond and his assistants began to dress up in long black cloaks and combat crime as a group of masked vigilantes known as the Black Gang. During World War I, Allard had been wearing a black cloak in order to blend into the night when he functioned as a spy known as the Dark Eagle. After they had defeated Carl in 1919, The Shadow (alias Green) decided to reveal more about himself to Drummond. The intrepid Drummond, who had dressed in black to

conduct missions in No Man's Land during the War, came up with the idea of creating a group of British vigilantes like The Shadow. In *The Black Gang*, Drummond also conceived the idea of capturing wrongdoers and incarcerating them in his own private prison, an island off the British coast. The Shadow would later adopt a variation on Drummond's idea in the United States during the 1930's. He would apprehend criminals and transport them to an island where was located a private rehabilitation center run by the noted American criminologist Slade Farrow. Drummond disbanded the Black Gang on the orders of the British government. Probably the British authorities saw too many similarities between the activities of the Black Gang and certain right-wing groups that were springing up in Italy and Germany (23).

The Shadow did not borrow ideas only from Drummond. In *The Third Round*, Carl Peterson was revealed to have power over a German professor named Heinrich Scheidstrun. Carl could use make-up to impersonate Scheidstrun. If anyone suspected Carl's impersonation, he would blackmail the real Scheidstrun to appear and allay suspicions. The Shadow probably later heard of Peterson's ploy from Drummond. In the 1930's, Kent Allard would develop a similar relationship with an American millionaire, Lamont Cranston.

The actor known as Claude Darrell last made his appearance on a stage in New York in 1919, he was probably forced to flee America because someone appeared in New York who would interfere with his plans. The person who caused Darrell's flight was most likely The Shadow.

The history of the man known as Carl Peterson and Claude Darrell can now be elucidated. He was born in 1889 and raised as a member of the Moriarty crime family. He decided to study the acting profession in order to become a master of disguise. He probably adopted the identity of Claude Darrell years before the outbreak of war in 1914. In addition to Darrell, he also adopted a whole string of aliases over the following years, most notably Carl Peterson. Although his impersonations were impossible to detect because of his skills at make-up and histrionics, the master criminal had also developed unconscious mannerisms that could expose his false identities. One of these habits was tapping his knee. Another was playing with bread at the dinner table. He began to utilize his niece Irma (b. 1901) in his schemes since the time that she was sixteen.

This accomplished criminal, who will be referred to as Carl Peterson, was subordinate to his cousin Dominick Medina in the Moriarty crime family. Medina had plans to throw Britain into the throes of a violent revolution. On Medina's instructions, Carl gained financial backing from a group of foreign millionaires to achieve this result in December 1918. This scheme failed in mid-1919 due to the intervention of Bulldog Drummond with some assistance from The Shadow. Adopting his Darrell identity, Peterson then traveled to China in 1919 to meet with Medina, who had just finished his mystical studies in neighboring areas of Central Asia. Medina and Peterson sought to form an alliance with the Black Mandarin, who was then running the Brotherhood of the Lotus. The Black Mandarin didn't trust either Medina or Peterson because of their Bolshevik connections, and the offer was refused. Medina returned to Britain where he was elected to Parliament in a special by-election. Carl (still posing as Darrell) journeyed to New York. There he met Abe Ryland, a cousin of one of the millionaires who had provided financial support for the aborted British revolution. Because of the recent

failure financed by his kinsman, Ryland was reluctant to become involved with Peterson. The Shadow's arrival in New York forced Peterson to abandon his contacts with Ryland.

In early 1920, Peterson went to Germany where he prevented a right-wing revolution as a result of a commission from a munitions dealer who had influence over the Weimar Republic. Acting on Medina's instructions, Peterson then resumed his efforts to foster a left-wing revolution in Britain. This time he received financial support from Communist Russia. In the autumn of 1920, Bulldog Drummond leading the vigilante group known as the Black Gang foiled Peterson's scheme. Shortly afterwards, Peterson assassinated an international financier at the request of Baron Vanderton. Peterson then participated in Medina's great 1921 project, but the intervention of Richard Hannay allowed the police forces of civilization to strike a crippling blow to the Moriarty crime syndicate. This event caused Peterson to re-evaluate his priorities. Before he had only been concerned with increasing his own personal wealth. Now he wanted vast power for its own sake. Peterson tried to provide himself with unlimited financial resources by stealing a formula for synthetic diamonds, but he found himself foiled by Drummond again. With death of Medina in the Scottish highlands in August, the Moriarty syndicate broke into factions (24) including a large group under the leadership of Madame Olivier, a brilliant French scientist and Irma's mother. Peterson was unable to come to any accommodation with Olivier because of animosity resulting from his incestuous affair with her daughter.

In Egypt during 1921, agents of Fu Manchu and his then master, the Black Mandarin, abducted Ulric Ernst and his Trajector. During early 1922, The Brotherhood of the Lotus used the Ernst Trajector to spread terror as the Listening Death in Burma. In the same year, the death of the Black Mandarin caused a change of leadership in the Brotherhood of the Lotus. Fu Manchu, alias Li Chang Yen, now effectively controlled the organization. Peterson went to Asia and was able to convince Fu Manchu to form an alliance. As Mandarin K, Peterson would help Fu Manchu to launch the S. Group, a revival of the Si-Fan. Peterson also became sexually involved with Madame de Medici, the chief female agent of the Brotherhood. Paul Harley learned of Peterson's activities as Mandarin K very early, but Peterson was able to misdirect Harley on a wild goose chase. Peterson then arrived in Britain to steal a powerful chemical weapon for the S. Group. All of the men working for Peterson, and possibly even his mistress Irma, were unaware that he was working for a secret group in the Far East. This encounter with Drummond was actually the only one in which Peterson emerged somewhat victoriously. Although he failed to kill Drummond, he did manage to escape with the formula for the deadly chemical after having demonstrated its effectiveness as a weapon. On the other hand, Drummond should be credited with thwarting Peterson's plan to inflict massive casualties by attacking an ocean liner with the chemical.

Sending Irma to Egypt, Peterson then went to China to deliver the chemical to Fu Manchu. To his dismay, he found that Paul Harley was back on his trail. He tried to murder Harley with the deadly chemical in both Tientsin and Hong Kong. Even though Harley survived, Peterson succeeded in turning over the chemical to Fu Manchu. The insidious partners met in Tibet, where Burton Van Dean glimpsed Peterson in the guise of a Tibetan lama. Peterson then went to Cairo to meet Irma and to gain possession of Ulric Ernst's death ray, the Listening Death. Following Peterson there, Harley was nearly stabbed by his quarry. Because he wanted to desert Irma for Madame de Medici,

Peterson arranged for the memories of his young mistress to be altered. Irma was mesmerized into believing her lover to have been really slain by Drummond. Any knowledge that Irma had of Peterson's new Asian allies was also expunged. In the summer of 1923, Irma ruthlessly pursued a vendetta against Drummond. In the same summer, Harley had tracked Peterson in his Mandarin K guise to Britain. In a climactic struggle, Peterson's Listening Death weapon was destroyed, and Harley was left unsure whether his nemesis had perished..

Of course, Peterson survived. Peterson had put out feelers to Abe Ryland and Madame Olivier to form a new criminal combine with himself and Fu Manchu (Li Chang Yen). In order to demonstrate the awesome power that he and his Asian ally possessed, a powerful wireless weapon was used to cause both the Japanese earthquake and Point Honda disaster in September 1923. In the face of such an incredible display, Ryland and Olivier overcame any lingering hostility to Peterson and gladly joined the quadruple alliance of crime. Peterson dropped his Mandarin K identity and adopted the alias of "the destroyer." This was a reference to Siva the Destroyer, the husband of the goddess revered by the Si-Fan. Fu Manchu instructed his agents to now refer to themselves as operatives of the Big Four, and to drop all usage of the names S. Group or Si-Fan. Solar Pons did uncover the usage of the name "Simon Fance," an alias for the Si-Fan, while investigating one of Fu's extortion schemes in October 1923 (see "The Adventure of the Seven Sisters"), but the name had actually been used in June 1923, months before Fu Manchu issued his directive. To totally obfuscate his trail as Mandarin K., Peterson convinced the Communist spymasters to form their own elite espionage squad, the S Group led by Isaac Schulameyer. The existence of this group caused Harley's quest after Mandarin K to misdirect him to Schulameyer, who died in August 1924. Leadership of the Communist version of the S Group then fell to a spy named Schmidt.

During 1924-25, a titanic struggle occurred with the Big Four opposed by Hercule Poirot, The Shadow, and other adventurers whose ranks probably included Nayland Smith, Paul Harley and Gaston Max. At the conclusion of this battle, two of the Big Four had perished while the individuals known as Claud Darrell and Li Chang Yen had gone into hiding after faking their deaths. With Madame Olivier's death, her remnant of the Moriarty crime syndicate fell under the control of others (25). In a minor sequel to these world-shattering events, British Intelligence smashed the Communist incarnation of the S Group in 1927.

In 1928, Fah Lo Suee revived the Si-Fan, but Fu Manchu, with the full support of the Brotherhood of the Lotus, was able to re-install himself at the helm. Fu Manchu would use his genius to revitalize both himself and his organization. Peterson also participated in the reinvigorated version of the Si-Fan. The adoption of a staunch anti-Communist platform by the Si-Fan resulted in the dissolution of Peterson's Soviet ties. In 1930, Peterson impersonated a politician named John Kennington during the Si-Fan's efforts to start a holy war in the Middle East. Peterson probably occupied a position on the Si-Fan's ruling Council of Seven. The power of the Si-Fan declined drastically with the destruction of its Haitian base in 1940. Eventually, Peterson realized that the Si-Fan would never again reassert itself as a major force and left the organization. In 1951, Peterson sought out his former mistress Irma, who was then fighting Drummond mainly as a saboteur receiving lucrative commissions from the Soviet Union. They had a joyful

reunion in which Carl Peterson told a massive lie to explain his long absence. In 1953, Carl and Irma again launched an attack on Drummond (26). This final crime entered in their arrest and probably their execution for countless crimes.

In 1953, Irma was fifty-two year old. Carl had the appearance of a man only a few years older. He should have had the appearance of a man who was sixty-four years old. The reason for this discrepancy was that Peterson had been taking *elixir vitae*. The evidence in the Fu Manchu series indicates that usage of *elixir vitae* began spread throughout the Si-Fan in the 1930's. As the example of Fu Manchu's two chiefs of staff indicated, not everyone chose to take the immortality serum. Others could even have waited before taking *elixir vitae*. From his numerous disguises in the Bulldog Drummond series, it was quite obvious that Peterson's physical idea was of a mature middle-aged man. Peterson must have waited to he reached the age that gave him the desired appearance, and then started to partake of *elixir vitae*. When Fu Manchu took the serum, it made him look at least twenty years younger. Peterson didn't want the aging process reversed, and took lesser does of *elixir vitae* than Fu Manchu. Peterson was interested in freezing the aging process rather than reversing it. His dependence on *elixir vitae* must have commenced around 1942-44.

Before concluding, two parallels with another fictional series need to be noted. While Li Chang Yen did not make an appearance in *The Big Four*, a subordinate mandarin did. This man was tall and thin. He also possessed extremely long fingernails. The physical description fits Sen Gat, the mandarin who tried to plunder a lost Indochinese civilization in a Doc Savage novel, Lester Dent 's *The Thousand-Headed Man* (July 1934). Sen Gat could have worked for Li Change Yen in the 1920's, and then gone into business for himself in the 1930's (27).

The name Carl Peterson even surfaced in another of Dent's Doc Savage novels. *Se-Pah-Poo* (February 1946). That novel featured a character whose full title was Colonel Sir Carl Peterson. He was a British explorer who had grown fat and lazy in his old age. He was murdered by criminals in the novel. This Carl Peterson can't be the archenemy of Bulldog Drummond. Nevertheless, the existence of this respectable Carl Peterson explains where Drummond's adversary came up with the alias. The mastermind of the Drummond books only employed the alias of Carl Peterson in public in the first novel. After Drummond exposed his scheme, the super-criminal dropped the name of Carl Peterson and assumed other identities including the Rev. Theodosius Longmoor (*The Black Gang*), Edward Blackton (*The Third Round*) and David Wilmot (*The Final Count*). Drummond kept referring to his enemy as Carl Peterson because that was the alias used in their first battle. Irma generally called her lover Carl in private, but this could have merely indicated that she liked that false identity more than the others. The parallel between the criminal Carl Peterson impersonating an actual German professor and The Shadow pretending to be Lamont Cranston, a wealthy world traveler, was noted earlier. Kent Allard pretended to be Cranston when that wealthy individual was not in the United States. Allard originally started this ploy without Cranston's permission. The criminal genius of the Drummond novels must have been impersonating a real Carl Peterson, who was an explorer frequently absent from Britain. Of course, this was all done without the real Peterson's knowledge. In *Bulldog Drummond*, the main villain posed as the Comte de Guy in December 1918, and then assumed the identity of Carl Peterson in 1919. The impersonation of the genuine Carl Peterson in 1919 must have

happened before the genuine Englishman achieved the rank of Colonel and was knighted. The real Carl Peterson was fat by the mid-1940's (28). During 1919, however, he probably had an athletic physique similar to the miscreant who impersonated him.

This article has established the links that existed in the 1920's between Fu Manchu and the criminal feared as Carl Peterson. Could this diabolical pair have been in contact in the years before World War I? A future article will reveal evidence to support such a conclusion.

## NOTES

1. Cay Van Ash's article was first published in *The Rohmer Review* #17 (August 1977). The article is also available here: <http://www.njedge.net/~knapp/FuFrames.htm>. My article, "Some Chronological Observations on the Fu Manchu Series," is available here: <http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Fu.pdf>.
2. The British edition was published in 1932, and the American edition was issued in 1933. The contents of the two editions are somewhat different, but both contain "The Black Mandarin."
3. The Black Mandarin had ties to the Hip Sing Tong, a real-life organization that engaged in many violent conflicts with rival tongs in New York City's Chinatown. Rohmer would later have the Hip Sing Tong allied with the Si-Fan in *President Fu Manchu* (1936). Thrillers by other writers utilized the Hip Sing Tong. Perhaps the most famous example was Ian Fleming's depiction of the title character of *Doctor No* (1958) as the treasurer of the tong in the 1920's.
4. Besides "Kerry's Kid" and *Yellow Shadows*, Kerry appeared in *Dope* (1920) and other stories collected in *Tales from Chinatown*.
5. The meeting between Pons and Poirot happened in "The Adventure of The Orient Express" from *The Chronicles of Solar Pons* (1973). The story was set in the summer of 1938. In order to avoid a conflict with Agatha Christie, Derleth changed Hercule's surname from Poirot to Poiret, transformed his nationality from Belgian to French, and made him a member of the French *Surete*. However, we can just imagine these inconsistencies to be mistakes by the story's narrator, Dr. Lyndon Parker. The name and nationality changes are minor inconveniences. As for being an agent of the French police, Poirot could have been temporarily given an assignment by the *Surete*.
6. In *The Solar Pons Omnibus* (Arkham House, 1982), the placement of "The Adventure of the Seven Sisters" in a proposed chronological order suggested that it happened in either late September or early October.
7. The Shadow apparently met Huan the elder under another alias during the period when he was leading the Brotherhood of the Lotus. In Walter Gibson's *The Grove of Doom* (September 1, 1933), The Shadow briefly fought a sinister yet chivalrous Chinese opponent, Choy Lown. The physical description of Choy Lown as an elderly man (perhaps a hundred years old) is similar that of Rohmer's John Ki /Sam Pak character. In gratitude for sparing his life, Choy Lown gave The Shadow a black disk with a silver Chinese character that would enable the crime fighter to have influence over the Chinese underworld. This was apparently

- the same talisman identified as the sign of Chow Lee in another Shadow novel, *Six Men of Evil* (February 15, 1933). Although *Six Men of Evil* was published first, Gibson actually wrote *The Grove of Doom* earlier. Editorial juggling altered the sequence of the novels and probably changed the name of Choy Lown to Chow Lee in *Six Men of Evil*. The argument that the signs of Choy Lown and Chow Lee were the same was originated by Will Murray in *The Duende History of the Shadow* (1980). The sign of Choy Lown/Chow Lee operated in a manner similar to the golden lotus from Rohmer's *Yellow Shadows*. The head of the Brotherhood would have possessed the authority to issue talismans with lesser authority than the golden lotus. I placed the events of *The Grove of Doom* during late June to early July 1932 in my own Shadow chronology: [http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Shadow\\_Chron1.pdf](http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Shadow_Chron1.pdf). The meeting between The Shadow and Choy Lown transpired before the mandarin appeared under the alias of Sam Pak in *The Trail of Fu Manchu* (134), a novel that I argue should be placed in early 1933 despite internal references to 1934.
8. Wu Fang was a name used by many authors for Asian villains who were inspired by Rohmer's Fu Manchu. The first fictional villain named Wu Fang battled investigator Craig Kennedy in Arthur B. Reeve's *The Romance of Elaine* (1916). Other evildoers named Wu Fang appeared in Harold Lamb's *Marching Sands* (1930) and John P. Marquand's *Mr. Moto Is So Sorry* (1938). Besides Hogan's pulp series, there was another recurring mastermind named Wu Fang appearing in a series of books written by a prolific writer named Roland Daniel. The first of Daniel's Wu Fang thrillers was *The Society of Spiders* (1928). Other titles in the series include *Wu Fang* (1929), *Wu Fang's Revenge* (1934), *The Son Of Wu Fang* (1935) and *The Return of Wu Fang* (1937) (this is not a complete list). Perhaps aware of the Wu Fang phenomenon, Sax Rohmer even created a minor villain named Wu Fang in *Yellow Shadows*. James Clavell's *Tai-Pan* (1966) and *Noble House* (1981) featured a Wu crime family that flourished in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The founder of this criminal dynasty was a pirate named Wu Fang Choi. It is tempting to imagine that most of the various characters named Wu Fang were all descended from Clavell's pirate. However, Roland Daniel's character could not be a member of such an extended family. Daniel was unaware that the family name appears first in a Chinese name. Daniel asserted that his Wu Fang belonged to a family named Fang. The name of Daniel's character should have been more properly rendered as Fang Wu.
  9. The black lotus revered by the tong may be the same plant grown in ancient Khitai during the Hyborian Age in Robert E. Howard's Conan stories. Khitai geographically corresponds to China. "The Tower of the Elephant" (*Weird Tales*, March 1933) mentioned that the black lotus was cultivated in "the lost jungles of Khitai, where only the yellow-skulled priests of Yun dwell." Conan also encountered the black lotus being grown in Kush (an area that corresponds to Africa), most notably in the city of Xuthal described in "The Slithering Shadow" (September 1933). Xuthal was settled by a group of refugees who had fled the eastern part of Conan's world. Probably the early settlers of Xuthal were refugees from Khitai. Howard's black lotus appears to be the same plant described by Robert Bloch in "Black Lotus" (*Unusual Stories*, Winter 1935).

- According to Bloch, the black lotus once grew on the Nile River, and was mentioned in the writing of Abdul Alhazred, the Arabian sorcerer created by Bloch's mentor, H. P. Lovecraft. "Black Lotus" was reprinted in two anthologies, L. Sprague DeCamp's *The Fantastic Swordsmen* (1967) and Lin Carter's *Realms of Wizardry* (1976).
10. In Hogan's Wu Fang novels, Chang Li was initially the name of a demonic god in *The Case of the Yellow Mask* (November 1935). The devotees of Chang Li, the God of Lost Souls performed human sacrifices to their god by feeding their offering to hordes of rats. In the next novel, *The Case of the Suicide Tomb* (December 1935), Chang Li became both the name of a god and a tong. Maybe the members of the Chang Li actually worshipped the God of Lost Souls. Since the name of Chang Li is also associated with the black lotus, then perhaps another name for the God of Lost Souls is Yun, the Hyborian deity cited in the prior note.
  11. In *Yellow Shadows*, the lotus talisman sometimes had the ability to change color. Under certain lighting it appeared gold, and then could be made to appear blue. Maybe it could turn black as well.
  12. The short stories in *Partners in Crime* belong to a series of fictional adventures featuring Tommy and Tuppence Beresford, a pair of sleuths who are husband and wife. In *Partners in Crime*, the Beresford solved mysteries while imitating the methods of popular fictional detectives. In "The Affair of the Sinister Stranger," they originally believed that they were fighting a criminal similar to Clubfoot, a German spy featured in *The Man With the Clubfoot* (1918) and other thrillers by Valentine Williams. To their dismay, they discover that their foe is more like Carl Peterson from the Bulldog Drummond stories. In "The Man Who Was No. 16," the Beresfords imitate Poirot and even mock the events of *The Big Four* by comparing their enemy, a Soviet spy, to Number Four. Although Poirot was treated as a totally fictional sleuth in *Partners in Crime*, other Beresford books imply that the married couple belonged to the same fictional universe as the Belgian sleuth. The first Beresford book, *The Secret Adversary* (1922), featured a brief reference to Inspector Japp from the Poirot series. Two recurring Christie characters, Colonel Pikeaway and Mr. Robinson, appeared in both a Poirot novel, *Cat Among the Pigeons* (1959) and a Beresford novel, *Postern of Fate* (1973).
  13. Medina's aborted plan would have climaxed in June 1921. In July 1921, a truce was signed between the Irish and British forces, an action that led to a peace treaty in December. *The Three Hostages* also noted the possibility of Medina's interference in Italy and America. Italy had been unstable since the end of World War I in 1918, and the political disorder there would lead to Mussolini's rise in 1922. Prohibition in the United States (instituted by the Volstead Act of 1919) was leading to the significant expansion of criminal empires.
  14. See "The Secret History of Captain Nemo" at <http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Articles5.htm#NEMO>
  15. Between Carl Peterson's attempts to launch a Soviet-style revolution in Britain, there transpired a similar operation that was foiled by Tommy and Tuppence Beresford in *The Secret Adversary*. The novel was set in 1920 (five years had passed since the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915). The month of the novel's events was either February or August because "the 29<sup>th</sup>" fell on a Sunday. No

- matter what month is chosen, *The Secret Adversary* happened between Peterson's first alliance with left-wing radicals in 1919 and his second in the fall of 1920. The chief instigator of the revolutionary plot from *The Secret Adversary* was known as Mr. Brown. When Mr. Brown was killed, a diary was found that indicated he was the sole mastermind of the plot. However, Mr. Brown could have been forced to keep a diary full of disinformation by a more diabolical superior named Dominick Medina. After Brown's death, Medina could have arranged for the diary to be discovered by the authorities. Mr. Brown had another identity that would have put him into regular contact with Medina. For more information on Brown's alter ego, consult Christie's novel. After Brown's death, Medina must have instructed Peterson to contact the Soviets and conceive another attempt at a British revolution. During World War I, Mr. Brown had been allied to Germany. Mr. Brown was credited by British Intelligence as having funded most of the peace propaganda during the war. In John Buchan's *Mr. Standfast* (1919), Richard Hannay reached the same conclusion about Moxon Ivery (alias the Graf von Schwabing) during 1917. Ivery and Brown must have been partners. Ivery died on the Western Front in 1918.
16. See "A Brief Biography of Dr. Caber (1883-1945?)" at <http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Articles5.htm#CABER>
  17. Medina had been in Central Asia since at least 1914. The cover story about Medina's activities in Russia was the following. When World War I erupted in 1914, Medina was exploring in Central Asia. He spent two years there before he heard any news of the European conflict. In 1916, he hooked up with Russian army and participated in their campaigns against the Central Powers. When the Lenin seized power in Russia during 1917, he joined the anti-Bolshevik forces of General Anton Denikin in southern Russia. In June 1919, Denikin's drive towards Moscow ended in defeat. From that point onward, Denikin's forces were in constant retreat until he gave up his efforts to overthrow the Bolsheviks in 1920. Medina probably returned to Britain from Central Asia shortly after Denikin's forces were defeated in June 1919. Medina must have gotten elected to Parliament in a special by-election since the last general election before his death in 1921 had been held in December 1918 (one month after World War I ended). Medina would not have had time to return from Central Asia and participate in that general election. Although Medina was publicly viewed as a war hero, he had not seen any fighting at all. He had been pursuing his own diabolical agenda in Central Asia throughout 1914-19.
  18. Under the variant name of Madame de Medicis, this femme fatale also appeared in "The Treasure of Taia," a 1926 short story reprinted in *The Wrath of Fu Manchu* (1973). In this story (which does not feature Fu Manchu), Madame stole the recently unearthed treasure of an Egyptian queen, Taia. Fu Manchu owned the mummified head of Taia in *Shadow of Fu Manchu* (1948). Taia would appear to also be the unnamed sorceress from Rohmer's supernatural novel, *Brood of the Witch-Queen* (1918). The same novel featured a fictional London newspaper, the *Planet*, that also appeared in Rohmer's *The Green Eyes of Bast* (1920) and *Moon of Madness* (where the newspaper's full name was given as the

- Daily Planet*). In *Bulldog Drummond*, McNeile also used the *Planet* as the name for a fictional London newspaper.
19. Madame de Medici may have played a major role in destabilizing Tsarist Russia during World War I. Paul Harley asserted that “she has been instrumental in emptying at least one throne.” The empty throne probably belonged to Tsar Nicholas II, who was overthrown by the 1917 revolution. Germany had funded revolutionary agitators in Russia during the war, and Madame de Medici could have participated in these German covert operations.
  20. Irma was quite capable of provocatively flirting with another criminal with no intention of carrying their relationship to the next step. In *The Female of the Species*, she recruited Paul Lakington for her kidnapping of Mrs. Drummond by promising him sexual favors once it was concluded. Paul was the twin brother of Henry Lakington, the Peterson henchman slain by Drummond four years earlier. Paul worked for Irma for months, and only got the opportunity to kiss Irma’s hand just before Drummond captured him. Of course, Irma escaped. If the plan had succeeded, Irma had no intention of keeping her bargain with Paul. Irma implied that that once the Drummonds were dead, she then would commit suicide in order to join her beloved Carl. It is more probable that Irma was really planning to fake her death in order to escape her promise to accept Paul as a lover. None of the later Drummond novels showed Irma exhibiting any tendency towards self-destruction.
  21. In *The Secret Adversary*, Agatha Christie parodied the scene from *Bulldog Drummond* in which Jerome K. Green presented his badge. Tuppence Beresford used the badge of a defunct World War I training corps in order to pose as a member of the bogus “American Detective Force.”
  22. See *Chronology of Shadows* at :  
[http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Shadow\\_Chron1.pdf](http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Shadow_Chron1.pdf)
  23. Since the Black Gang fought Communist agitators, there is a certain parallel with the Fascists of Europe particularly Mussolini’s Blackshirts. A revolting element of anti-Semitism in the novel also leads to a comparison between Drummond’s vigilantes and the Nazis. Although Drummond’s creator, H. C. McNeile never commented on this in his later books, Gerard Fairlie noted the parallel apologetically in *Hands Off Bulldog Drummond*. When one of Drummond’s assistants suggested a revival of the Black Gang, Drummond argued against it because the methods of the group were Fascist by current standards. However, Drummond would later relent and allow his cohorts to briefly revive the group to fight crime in *The Return of the Black Gang*. Fairlie made sure that this version of the Black Gang lacked any Fascist overtones.
  24. One faction of the Moriarty syndicate came under the control of the Colonel, the super-criminal from Agatha Christie’s *The Man in the Brown Suit* (1924). Like Mr. Brown from *The Secret Adversary* (see note 15), the Colonel had a dual identity that would have put him into regular contact with Medina. To discover the nature of the Colonel’s real identity, you must read Christie’s book. During January to March 1922, the Colonel tried to launch a revolution against British rule in southern Africa. After his defeat, the Colonel retired to Bolivia. Anne Beddingfield foiled his efforts. She received assistance against the Colonel from

- Johnny Race, who also appeared in *Remembered Death* (1945, British title; *Sparkling Cyanide*), and the Poirot novels, *Cards on the Table* (1936) and *Death on the Nile* (1937).
25. Since *The Third Round* used the alias of Drakshoff was used for Basil Zaharoff, it is possible that another alias was used in that novel for a prominent member of society tied to Peterson. The name of Baron Vanderton, the corrupt banker who employed Peterson to murder a rival financier, is reminiscent of Baron Vardon, Doc Savage's enemy in Lester Dent's *The Golden Peril* (December 1937). As the Leader, Vardon headed a criminal organization that promoted global unrest and even instigated a civil war in a Central American country. Baron Vardon apparently had a background in banking because his ultimate aim was to plunder the gold reserves of a hidden Mayan civilization and then use them to disrupt the global economy. Vanderton and Vardon must have been the same man. The Baron took control of Olivier's portion of the Moriarty crime syndicate upon her demise. After Vardon's death, Doc Savage battled a similar organization in Harold A. Davis's *The Munitions Master* (August 1938). The leaders of this gang were Carloff Traniv and Pecos Allbellin. This diabolical pair must have been Vardon's lieutenants who inherited the organization upon his death. According to my *The Complete Chronology of Bronze* (An ex-text on CD published by ACES publications, 1999), the respective events of *The Golden Peril* in March 1937 and *The Munitions Master* in May 1937.
  26. In the climax of their final battle, *The Return of the Black Gang*, Peterson had a mind-control drug that turned individuals into mindless automatons. The drug was supposedly the invention of a Mexican professor whom Peterson had murdered. The effects of the drug were identical to those caused by a drug utilized by the Big Brain, Doc Savage's opponent in Laurence Donovan's *The Men Who Smiled No More* (April 1936). Either the Mexican professor arrived at the same invention independently, or he discovered the Big Brain's notes for how to create the serum. According to my Doc Savage chronology, *The Men Who Smiled No More* transpired in June 1935.
  27. In my Doc Savage chronology, I placed *The Thousand-Headed Man* in May 1933.
  28. August 1945 was assigned to *Se-Pah-Poo* in my Doc Savage chronology.