Welcome to the Club!

Why Would Doc Savage Want His Own International Magazine and Fan Club?

By Dafydd Neal Dyar

Why someone as secretive and publicity-shy as Doc Savage would authorize and promote sensational fictional adventures detailing his day-to-day operations, including those best left secret?

Doc had no need for self-promotion and, in indee6d, was famously considered an "International Man of Mystery" even within the pages of his own *Doc Savage Magazine*. So why would need, much less want, and authorize a public cultivation of his legend not only in a dedicated magazine but also nationally syndicated broadcast radio and comic strips, a fan club and perhaps movie serials or even feature films?

He certainly managed to keep activities and those who worked with and for him out of the major newspapers and newsreels. His magazine and radio shows were advertised and listed in schedules in the former but never mentioned, even in passing, in the latter. Why have them at all?

Tragical History Tour

Long before fanfiction (fanfic) made "Real Person Fiction" (RPF) a Three-Letter Acronym (TLA), fictionalized accounts of the adventures of celebrated people became a staple of both ambitious self-promoters and those just looking to capitalize on their fame.

Thanks to the 1836 *McGuffey Readers*, a series of graded primers for grade levels one to six widely used as textbooks in American schools from the mid-Nineteenth to mid-Twentieth Century and are still used today in some private schools and in homeschooling, America literacy rates soared during period leading up the Civil War. This led to a variety of popular fiction issued in series of inexpensive paperbound editions for several different but related forms: story papers, five- and ten-cent weeklies, "thick book" reprints. In 1860, publishers Erastus and Irwin Beadle released a new series of cheap paperbacks, *Beadle's Dime Novels*. "Dime novel" became a generic term for similar paperbacks produced by various publishers at that time and even applied to early pulp magazines.

Postbellum America was viewed by many as an Age of Miracles. The Industrial Revolution was in full swing. The Transcontinental Railway opened the floodgates of the frontier west of the Mississippi on Monday, 10 May 1869, providing overland routes to the interior and western coast, fulfilling the promise of "Manifest Destiny" across the North American continent. The telegraph spanned the Atlantic Ocean, both preceding and following the railways, together spawning towns and cities all along the way. Steam-powered steel ships replaced sail=powered wooden ones. Incandescent electric lighting began replacing gas and oil lamps in 1880.

But while the ongoing American continental territorial expansion officially spans 307 years from 1607 to 1912, the three generations from 1850 to 1920 has been mythologized from the outset as the "Wild West" (now the "Old West"). Heroes of questionable rectitude were born, many based on sensationalized stories of real events, places and people, whose document deeds of daring-do captured the popular imagination,

Among the real persons immortalized by Edward Zane Carroll "Ned Buntline" Judson Sr. (20 Mar 1821–16 Jul 1886) and other dime novelists were Christopher Houston "Kit" Carson (24 Dec1809–23 May 1868), James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok (27 May 1837–02 Aug 1876), William Frederick "Buffalo Bill" Cody (26 Feb 1846–10

Jan 1917), Jesse Woodson James (05 Sep 1847–03–Apr 1882), Wyatt Berry Stapp Earp (19 Mar 1848–13 Jan 1929) and Henry "William H. Bonney or Billy the Kid" McCarty (23 Nov 1859–14 Jul 1881).

After they ran out of real-life Wild West figures to sensationalize came the total fictional one whose exploits bordered on traditional Tall Tales. Science-mined novelists Jules Gabriel Verne (08 Feb 1828–24 Mar 1905) Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle (22 May 1859–07 Jul 1930) and Herbert George "H.G." Wells (21 Sep 1866–13 Aug 1946) not only upped the ante but spawned the "Fantastic Voyage", "Great Detective", "Lost World" and "Science Fiction" genres. Dime novelists gleefully combined all of these genres and more within a single story with wild abandon.

Francis Scott Street (20 Oct 1831–15 Apr 1883) and Francis Shubael Smith (19 Dec 1819–01 Feb 1887) began their publishing partnership as Street & Smith Publications, Inc.in 1855 when they took over a broken-down fiction magazine, then bought the existing *New York Weekly Dispatch* in 1858. From offices at 29 Rose Street, 81 Fulton Street, 238 William Street and finally a six-story building at 79–89 Seventh Avenue, just above 14th Street, Street & Smith published inexpensive novels and weekly magazines from 1880 to 1959.

Street & Smith introduced its own "Young Detective" hero, Nicholas Carter, in a thirteen-week serial in *New York Weekly*, Vol. XLI, No. 46 "The Old Detective's Pupil; or, The Mysterious Crime of Madison Square" (18 Sep 1886), conceived by Ormond Gerald Smith (30 Aug 1860–17 Apr 1933), son of Street & Smith co-founder Francis Smith, and realized by John Russell Coryell (15 Dec 1851–15 Jul 1924).

Nicholas "Nick" Carter is notable for having the same "origin story" as Doc Savage and elements of The Avenger. He was trained from infancy by his father, world renowned Symington "Old Sim" Carter, to be a perfect mental, physical and ethical human specimen, his first case to b ring the criminals who murdered his father to justice. Of average height and build, he nevertheless had the strength and stamina of a man twice his size, earning him the nickname "The Little Giant" due the quality, not quantity, of his musculature.

The character proved popular enough to headline its own dime novel with *Nick Carter Detective Library Weekly Magazine* No. 1 "Nick Carter, Detective" (Aug 1891). This became *Nick Carter Weekly*, (23 Oct 1897–21 Sep 1912), for an 819-issue run, when it was replaced by the anthology pulp *Detective Story Magazine* (15 Oct 1915–Summer, 1949), an impressive 1,057-issue run.

There was a brief unsuccessful attempt at reviving Carter in *Detective Story Magazine*, Vol. LXVII, No. 6 "Nick Carter's Sealed Case" (23 Aug 1924) to Vol. XCII, No. 4 "Nick Carter Dies" (14 May 1927).

In 1933, Street & Smith bought titles from Clayton Magazines, including *Astounding Stories*. In 1934 they put out 35 different magazines, looked after by about a dozen editors, including John Leonard Nanovic (07 Oct 1906–09 Feb 2001), Frank Engs Blackwell (c. 1878–28 Apr 1951), Daisy Bacon (23 May 189–01 Mar 1986) and Frederick Orlin Tremaine (07 Jan 1899–22 Oct 1956).

In addition to *Doc Savage Magazine* (Mar 1933–Summer 1949), Street & Smith released a *Nick Carter Detective Magazine* (Mar 1933–Jun 1936), which updated the character to an urban "hardboiled" detective. Which was canceled after an anemic 40-issue run. He did better as the suave, sophisticated, smart-mouthed "Thin Man" type *Nick Carter, Master Detective* on film with a movie trilogy "Nick Carter, Master Detective" (13 Dec 1939), "Phantom Raiders" (07 Jun 1940) and "Sky Murder" (27 Sep 1940) followed by an eponymous radio show (11 Apr 1943–25 Sep 1955) with a 722-episode run.

He later morphed yet again into 007-style superspy *Nick Carter Killmaster* (Feb 1964–May 1990) for a 261-book run but he could never go back to his roots because Doc Savage had stolen his origin. Or had he? In the Epilogue to *The All-New Wild Adventures of Doc Savage*, Book VI (No. 195) "Skull Island" (26 Feb 2013), William Patrick "Will" Murray (28 Apr 1953—) makes a good case that Doc's rigorous scientific upbringing was inspired by the Nicholas Carter dime novels that his father had read in his youth and wholeheartedly approved by his mother.

As Oscar Fingal O'Flaherty Wills Wilde (16 Oct 1854–30 Nov 1900) famously wrote in his 1889 essay *The Decay of Lying*, "Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life."

Fiction Can Be Both True and Not Real and Real but Not True

The earliest known RPF was written by William Shakespeare (26 Apr 1564–23 Apr 1616) as *Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies* (the "*First Folio*") published in 1623, dramatizing the lives and times of the English Kings Richard II (6 Jan 1367–c. 14 Feb 1400), Henry IV (15 Apr 1367–20 Mar 1413), Henry V (16 Sep 1386–31 Aug 1422) Henry VI (06 Dec 1421–21 May 1471) and Richard III (02 Oct 1452–22 Aug 1485) followed by the tragic lives and deaths of Caius Martius Coriolanus (c. 400–500 BC), Gaius Julius Caesar (13 Jul 100 BC–15 Mar 44 BC), Marcus Antonius (14 Jan 83 BC–01 Aug 30 BC) and Cleopatra VII Philopator (c. 69 BC–12 Aug 30 BC).

Following that, the Brontë sisters Charlotte (21 Apr 1816–31 Mar 1855), Emily (30 Jul 1818–19 Dec 1848) and Anne (17 Jan 1820–28 May 1849) wrote RPF between 1826 and 1844 based on their *roleplaying game* (!) about the Napoleonic Wars (18 May 1803–20 Nov 1815). The series featured Arthur Wellesley, First Duke of Wellington (01 May 1769–4 Sep 1852) and his two actual sons Arthur (03 Feb 1807–13 Aug 1884) and Charles (16 Jan 1808–09 Oct 1858) and their nemesis Alexander Percy, partly based on Napoleon Bonaparte (15 Aug 1769–05 May 1821). Over the years, Arthur evolved into an amazingly charismatic and powerful "Duke of Zamorna" while Percy became a tragic villain, partly inspired by Satan as envisioned by John Milton (09 Dec 1608–08 Nov 1674) in *Paradise Lost* (1667). These stories were subsequently published circa 1930, giving insight on how the sisters developed the writing skills and renewing interest in RPF.

Perhaps the oddest RPF of all time is *Edison's Conquest of Mars* (1898) by Garrett Putnam Serviss (24 Mar 1851–25 May 1929). It was unauthorized sequel to a newspaper serial *Fighters from Mars, or The War of the Worlds* published in the *New York Evening Journal* between Sunday, 05 Dec 1897 and Tuesday, 11 January 1898, itself an unauthorized edited revision of the authorized *The War of the Worlds* serial that appeared in the *Cosmopolitan Magazine* between April and December 1897.

Foreshadowing the 1938 Mercury Theater of the Air "War of the Worlds" radio adaptation by 40 years, the newspaper version changed the settings to the local areas where it was on sale, but also edited out most of the passages containing, scientific details or problematic actions by the narrator and widened the scope of the war to encompass all the scientifically advanced nations by name.

As the title suggest, *Edison's Conquest of Mars* features then-fifty-year-old Thomas Alva Edison (11 Feb 1847–18 Oct 1931) as the protagonist even though neither Edison nor Wells were involved in its creation. Set after the devastating Martian attack in *Fighters from Mars*, it depicts Edison leading a group of scientists studying derelict Martian equipment who are able to develop an anti-gravity device powered by electric repulsion as well as some notable "firsts" in science fiction: alien abductions, "air-tight suits" (spacesuits), aliens building the Pyramids, space battles, oxygen pills, asteroid mining and disintegrator rays (the first use of the terms "disintegrator" and "disintegration").

Edison and company fight the aliens in space and on Mars, eventually causing a flood that defeats the enemy and forces an end to hostilities. Serviss wrote himself into the story as a professor whom Edison consults. Also appearing are celebrated scientists Edward Emerson "E.E.," Barnard (16 Dec 1857–06 Feb 1923), William Thomson, First Baron Kelvin (26 Jun 1824–17 Dec 1907), Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen (27 Mar 1845–10 Feb 1923) and Silvanus Phillips Thompson (19 Jun 1851–12 Jun 1916), and heads of state Queen Alexandrina Victoria (24 May 1819–22 Jan 1901), President William McKinley Jr. (29 Jan 1843–14 Sep 1901), Kaiser Wilhelm II (27 Jan 1859–04 Jun 1941), and Emperor "Meiji" Mutsuhito (03 Nov 1852–30 July 1912).

In any case, there' was an ample sample of examples of writing fictional accounts of real people and giving highly exaggerated if not sensationalized accounts of their know accomplishments prior to 1932.

During the Forties, the Whitman Publishing Company released authorized editions of RPF to boost to the careers of the Hollywood stars of that era. “The Newest, Up-To-The-Minute Mystery and Adventure Stories for Boys and Girls, featuring your favorite characters” showcased Orvon Grover "Gene" Autry (29 Sep 1907–02 Oct 1998), Ginger Rogers (born Virginia Katherine McMath; 16 Jul 1911–26 Apr 25, 1995), John Howard Payne (23 May 1912–06 Dec 1989) , Clara Lou “Ann” Sheridan (21 Feb 1915–21 Jan 1967), Elizabeth Ruth “Betty” Grable (18 Dec 1916–07 Jul 1973), Therese Ann Rutherford (02 Nov 1917–11 Jun 2012), Edna Mae “Deanna” Durbin (04 Dec 1921–17 Apr 2013), Bonita Gloria Granville (02 Feb 1923–11 Oct 1988) and Jane Withers (12 Apr 1926—).

The hardcover publications had colorful dustjackets with a photo of the celebrity on the front, and several illustrations of the actor or actress inside the volume. Liberties were taken with the identities of the celebrities. In *Ginger Rogers and the Riddle of the Scarlet Cloak*, "Ginger Rogers" is not a movie starlet but rather a humble telephone operator who becomes involved in a mystery.

The first thirty-one of the forty-three volumes of "The Three Investigators" children's crime series (1964–1987) were originally titled *Alfred Hitchcock and the Three Investigators in the Mystery/Secret of (Adjective Noun)“*, with the then-sixty-five-year-old Alfred Joseph Hitchcock (13 Aug 1899–29 Apr 1980) as mentor to the young heroes.

And so it goes, unto this very day.

“Bigger Than Life” Meets “Truth is Stranger Than Fiction”

Celebrities with demonstrable physical talents routinely portrayed themselves on stage, radio, and film as well as in print throughout the early Twentieth Century.

Perhaps the most successful Turn of the Century self-promoter to portray himself fictionally was stage illusionist and “escape artist” Harry Houdini (born Erik Weisz, later Ehrich Weiss or Harry Weiss; 24 Mar 187–31 Oct 1926). Granted that he only played himself in his first film, *Merveilleux Exploits du Célébre Houdini à Paris* [“The Marvelous Exploits of the Famous Houdini in Paris”] (1909), one could argue that “Harry Houdini” was also just role he played, and all his appearances were thinly disguised versions of himself.

He appeared as “Quentin Locke” in the fifteen-episode silent Rolfe Photoplays serial *The Master Myste*ry (18 Nov 1918–17 Feb 1919), “Harvey Handford” in *The Grim Game* (25 Aug 1919), “Harry Harper” in *Terror Island* (Apr 1920), “Howard Hillary” in *The Man from Beyond* (02 Apr 1922) and “Heath Haldane” in *Haldane of the Secret Service* (30 Sep 1923, but no one was fooled. The name “Houdini” topped the bill wherever and whoever he played).

Rodeo champion Thomas Edwin “Tom” Mix (born Thomas Hezekiah Mix; 06 Jan 1880–12 Oct 1940) was Hollywood's first Western star and helped define the genre as it emerged in the early days of the cinema. His first appearance was in a short comedy film, *The Cowboy Millionaire* (21 Oct 1909), about a poor cowpoke named Bob Noble who inherits the estate of a millionaire relative in Chicago. Hilarity ensues.

In 1910, then-thirty-year-old Tom Mix appeared as himself in a short documentary film, *Ranch Life in the Great Southwest*, in which he displayed his skills as a cattle wrangler. He appeared in 291 films under his own name, all but nine of which were silent. His last screen appearance, at the age of 55, was the 15-episode sound Mascot serial, *The Miracle Rider* (12 Apr–19 Jul; 1935).

In 1933, Ralston Purina obtained his permission to produce the radio series *Tom Mix Ralston Straight Shooters* (25 Sep 1933–12 Jun 1950) which, but for one year during World War II, was popular throughout

most of the Thirties through the early Fifties, well after his death. Mix never appeared on these broadcasts and was impersonated by radio actors Artells Dickson (early Thirties), Jack Holden (from 1937), Russell Thorsen (early Forties), and Joe "Curley" Bradley (from 1944).

The demand for the radio premiums offered on the program began strong and stayed high for the nearly 20 years the series was on the air. Virtually every type of premium was offered: guns, rings, airplanes, books, lariats, coins, bandanas, badges, stationery, cowboy clothes, make-up kits, telegraph sets, periscopes and even branding irons—on par with radio powerhouse *Radio Orphan Annie*.

He was first featured in eleven issues of Dell's *The Comics* (1937–1938). Ralston Purina produced nine issues of *Tom Mix Comics* (Sep 1940–Mar 1942) and three issues of *Tom Mix Commandos Comics* (May–Sep 1942). Fawcett Comics published 61 issues of *Tom Mix Western* (Jan 1948–May 1953). Comics featuring Tom Mix were also published in Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, and Sweden, including L. Miller and Son's *Tom Mix Western Comics* (1948–1951), which ran eighty-five issues.

Then-fifty-year-old Frank Howard Buck (17 Mar 1884–25 Mar 1950) played a fictionalized version of himself in *Bring 'Em Back Alive* (19 Apr 1932) and the main feature of the eponymous NBC radio program (30 Oct–12 Dec 1932 and 16 Jul–16 Nov 1934) promoting that film. He then produced and starred in "Wild Cargo" (06 Apr 1934), represented by New York literary agent George Thurman Bye (born Bindbeutel; 21 Oct 1887–24 Nov 1957), who also represented First Lady Anna Eleanor Roosevelt 11 Oct 1884–07 Nov 1962).

Then thirty-year-old Clyde Beatty (10 Jun 1903–19 Jul 1965) turned his circus act into a lifestyle, portraying himself as a wild animal trainer in *The Big Cage* (01 May 1933), the twelve-chapter Mascot serial *The Lost Jungle* (13 Jun–29 Aug 1934), the fifteen-chapter Republic serial *Darkest Africa* (16 Feb–10 May 1936), released as a feature 21 May 1936), Abbot and Costello's *Africa Screams* (27 May 1949), *Perils of the Jungle* (20 Mar 1953) and *Ring of Fear* (24 Jul 1954).

Beatty was also the star of his own 52-episode weekly syndicated NBC radio series, *The Clyde Beatty Show* (11 Dec 1950–1952), sponsored by Kellogg's Cereals. The weekly programs featured adventures that had him in an underwater battle with an octopus; captured by Amazonian headhunters, opposing an African voodoo cult and investigating reports of a living unicorn as well as dramatized accounts of actual experiences. Beatty was impersonated by Victor Herbert "Vic" Perrin (26 Apr 1916–04 Jul 1989), who also served as narrator and later became famous as the "Control Voice" of *The Outer Limits* (16 Sep 1963–16 Jan 1965).

The then-fifty-four-year-old Beatty infamously performed his animal act on *The Ed Sullivan Show* (19 May 1957) on a stage too small it, only regaining control of the lions with a blank-firing revolver to keep them out of the audience on live television.

Not coincidentally, both Buck and Beatty launched their media careers with semi-autobiographical books—*Bring 'Em Back Alive* (1930), *Wild Cargo* (1932) and *The Big Cage* (1933)—all co-written by Edward Anthony (04 Aug 1895–16 Aug 1971). In 1933, Anthony filed suit in Brooklyn Supreme Court to recover two percent of the motion picture profits Buck had earned on the film adaptation *Bring 'Em Back Alive* (19 Aug 1932), effectively ending their collaboration. He went on to become publisher of *Woman's Home Companion* from 1942 to 1952 and *Collier's* from 1949 to 1954.

But print was key. Becoming world renown requires rave reviews in newspapers and a bestselling book.

Or an eponymous national-syndicated pulp magazine.

All the Noose That's Print to Print!

It makes a cock-eyed sort of sense for The Shadow, who first made his name on radio as the anonymous eerie voice on the radio hosting the *Detective Story Hour* radio program, broadcasting stories from Street & Smith's *Detective Story Magazine* that promoted his oft-repeated notion that "Crime Does Not Pay!"

We would later learn that he used the radio to broadcast secret messages to his legion of agents while remaining a nameless and faceless chilling voice over the radio, his macabre laughter designed to unnerve and startle all who heard it.

The unexpected popularity of that voice, more compelling than any of the stories he introduced, took everyone by surprise. People forgot the story but intrigued by the individual who called himself The Shadow and clearly *knew* what others at most only suspected. The went to their newsstands and asked not for *Detective Story Magazine* but "That *Shadow* magazine!"

So strong was the demand that Street & Smith felt compelled to create *The Shadow Magazine* to satisfy it.

But even Street & Smith struggled to find a way to depict a never seen and literally invisible character worthy of that voice. They used a sinister shadow cast by others or someone out of view. They used the radio program's image of a gaunt man in a monk's cowl. The first pass at Man in Black wearing gloves, a slouch hat and red-lined black cape appeared on *The Shadow Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 5 (Issue 5) "Gangdom's Doom" (Dec 1931), the fifth issue and the only third issue published monthly.

The iconic hatchet-faced, steely-eyed man with his lower face hidden behind a scarlet scarf didn't appear until the eight issue, Vol. II, No. 2 (Issue 8) "The Black Master" (Mar 1932). The "Hooded Monk" imagery was still used to indicate the title and would grace the cover of the ninth before being retired on the tenth. There was a nine-month hiatus from October 1932 to June 1933 during which no issues were published, but then it returned "Twice-a-Month" with The Shadow has we now know him front and center of Vol. II, No. 3 (Issue 15) "Green Eyes" (01 Oct 1933) and become Street & Smith's best-selling pulp magazine for the next sixteen years.

But The Shadow remained anonymous, hidden behind several false personae: Black Eagle, Dark Eagle, John Halverson, Henry Arnaud, Lamont Cranston, George Clarendon, Fritz, Clifford Gage, Ying Ko, Terry Blake, and numerous others. Even his "true" identity has been given as both Kent Allard and Cropton Moore. The Master of Darkness was also a master of misdirection and subterfuge. Everything printed could be false or misleading, designed to obscure not reveal the truth!

No one believed that The Shadow real. This was sometimes even true within the stories themselves.

Doc Savage, on the other hand, the world's most famous "International Man of Mystery"—a paradox matched only by OO7 James Bond, the world's lest secret agent—whose exploits could be followed monthly in the pages of his own eponymous nationally syndicated pulp magazine.

The Doc Savage pulp novels were soon published internationally beginning with English (but not French) reprints in Canada. There were, in fact, two distinct Canada pulp runs. *Doc Savage Magazine Canadian Edition*, (Aug 1933–Dec 1936) ran for forty-one issues. *Street & Smith's Doc Savage* (Jul 1941–Feb 1945) ran for another forty-four, for a total run of eighty-five issues.

They were translated into Spanish and published in Spain and Argentina by the Editorial Molino in the first 101 issues of the anthology *Collecion Hombres Audaces* ("Bold Men Collection") along with Street & Smith's *The Shadow*, aviation hero *Bill Barnes* and Western hero *Pete Rice*, *Doc Savage* wasn't always the cover feature but appeared in every issue from No. 1 "El Hombre de Bronce" (Apr 1936) to No. 101 "El Aguila Verde" (Jul 1945) and reprinted in subsequent issues until 1953.

Open Secrets and Hidden Agendas

From the outset, *Doc Savage Magazine* made public many of Doc's most closely held secrets.

From Chapter II, "A Message from the Dead" in Vol. I, No. 1 (Issue 1) "The Man of Bronze" (Mar 1933):

> *He did not explain where he had been, did not mention his "Fortress of Solitude," his rendezvous built on a rocky island deep in the arctic regions. He had been there.*
>
> *It was to this spot that Doc retired periodically to brush up on the newest developments in science, psychology, medicine, engineering. This was the secret of his universal knowledge, for his periods of concentration there were long and intense.*
>
> *The Fortress of Solitude had been his father's recommendation. And no one on earth knew the location of the retreat. Once there, nothing could interrupt Doc's studies and experiments.*

This "secret" would become moot five years later in Vol. XII, No. 2 (Issue 68) "Fortress of Solitude" (Oct 1938).

From Chapter XXII, "Treasure-Trove":

> *"That is true," King Chaac admitted slowly. "It is the cause to which goes the gold from the treasure-trove of ancient Maya. Have you any further instructions about how the wealth should be moved? We will send it by burro train to Blanco Grande, to whoever you designate as your agent—"*
>
> *"To Carlos Avispa, President of Hidalgo," Doc supplied. "It would be difficult to find a more honorable man than he. I shall designate him my agent."*
>
> *"Very well," nodded the Mayan.*
>
> *Doc repeated the other details. "A third of the gold I shall use to establish a gigantic trust fund in America. It shall be for the Mayan people, to be used should they ever have need of it. One fifth goes to the government of Hidalgo. The rest is for my cause."*
>
> *Preparations for departure now got under way.*
>
> *Long Tom, the electrical wizard, at Doc's command, rigged a radio receiving set in the palace of the Mayan sovereign. The current for this was supplied by a small generator and water wheel which Long Tom installed beside the stream flowing from the pyramid top. He made the work very solid. The set should function perfectly for years. He left spare tubes.*
>
> *With long-lasting ink, Doc made a mark on the radio dial. This designated a certain wave length.*
>
> *"Tune in at that spot every seventh day," Doc commanded King Chaac. "Do so at the hour when the sun stands directly above the Valley of the Vanished. You will hear my voice sometimes. But not always, by any means. I shall broadcast to you at that hour—but only when we are in need of more gold. Then you are to send a burro train of the precious metal to me."*
>
> *"It shall be done," agreed the Mayan ruler.*

From Chapter XIV. "The Race" in Vol. I, No. 2 (Issue 2) "The Land of Terror" (Apr 1933):

> *The police never received a single one of Kar's villains for trial and sentence to the penitentiary. Instead, Doc sent his prisoners to a certain institution for the mentally imperfect, in a mountain section of up-State New York.*

All criminals have a defective mental balance, otherwise they would not be lawbreakers. A famous psychologist would treat Kar's men. It might take years. But when released, they would be completely cured of their criminal tendencies.

From Chapter V, "The Bronze Rescuer" in Vol. I, No. 3 (Issue 3) "Quest of the Spider" (May 1933):

He walked swiftly, for he was in a hurry to get back to New Orleans and place his four additional prisoners with the two in a drugged sleep in the hotel room. There would be six of them to go to his amazing criminal-reforming institution in up-State New York.

No doubt more than six would be resting in the room before this affair was settled. For Doc Savage had as yet hardly started to fight the Gray Spider!

From Chapter XI: "Swamp Encounter":

Doc and Johnny added Bugs to the growing collection of sleepers in the hotel room. In fact, so extensive was his conquest becoming, Doc engaged an additional room. He made sure each of the villains was properly under the influence of the drug which kept them slumbering and out of mischief.

"Twelve, thirteen, fourteen," Johnny counted them. "If this keeps up, you'll have to hire a special train to up-state New York. They'll be a lot of bother and expense [sic]*."*

"But they'll be fourteen upright citizens when they're turned loose from that institution," Doc replied.

"I don't understand how it's done!" Johnny chuckled. "I mean—how one of these rats can be taken and made into an honest man. And that whether he wants to be made an honest man or not!"

"It's too complex to go into now," Doc told him. "It is done by many methods. Most undergo intricate brain operations that wipe out all memory of their past. Then they are taught a trade by which to make a living, as well as upright citizenship.

"In other words, we merely reduce their minds to a blank and give them the sort of training they should have had. When they're released, crime does not occur to them—simply because they don't know they've ever been criminals."

They left the hotel where the prisoners slept.

From Chapter XI. "The Well-Known Egg":

They added Lefty to the ever-growing collection of sleepers waiting transportation to the up-state New York criminal-curing institution.

From Chapter IV. "The Blind-Man Hunt" in Vol. I, No. 4 (Issue 4) "The Polar Treasure" (Jun 1933):

Ham did not ask Doc what they were going to do with the prisoners. He already knew. The senseless criminals would be taken to Doc's skyscraper office. In a day or so, men would call for them and take them to a mysterious institution hidden away in the mountains of upstate New York. There they would undergo a treatment which would turn them into honest, upright citizens.

This treatment consisted of a delicate brain operation which wiped out all knowledge of their past. Then the men would be taught like children, with an emphasis on honesty and good citizenship. They would learn a trade. Turned out into the world again, they were highly desirable citizens— for they knew nothing of their own past and had been taught to hate criminality.

The mysterious institution where this good, if somewhat unconventional, work went forward, was supported by Doc Savage. The great surgeons and psychologists who ran it had been trained by Doc.

From Chapter IV. “More Pop-Eyed” in Vol. IV, No. 4 (Issue 22) “The Annihilist” (Dec 1934):

Monk fell silent, for there was one subject which Doc Savage and his men did not discuss publicly. That was the matter of their unique "college" in the remote wooded mountains of upstate New York.

As far as they knew, none beyond those immediately concerned knew of that "college," those concerned being Doc Savage, his five aides, Pat Savage, and the attendants in the institution itself. The students who enrolled in that college and, later, were graduated, did not even know its whereabouts.

For the students entered unwillingly, usually under the effects of a stupor-inducing drug. When they left after graduation, they were also drugged.

The students were criminals, and the "college" was a fantastic place which turned them into honest men whether they wished it or not. The world did not know about the place. The world would probably have been shocked.

In charge of the criminal-curing institution was a man named Robert Lorrey, a scientific surgeon of fabulous skill whom Doc Savage himself had trained.

What Robert Lorrey did to the criminals that made them honest men was known only to himself and to his chief assistant at the institution - or rather, the man who had been his chief assistant - Leander Court, the man shot down in cold blood in the reception room of the Association of Physical Health. What he did had to do with intricate surgery, chemical rehabilitation, and there was also a long course of training. Doc Savage, of course, knew.

When criminals emerged from Doc Savage's unique university, they did not remember their pasts; for some strange reason they hated crime in any form, and they had been taught a trade wherewith to make an honest living.

Had the existence of this place become known, it would have been a newspaper story unparalleled. Doc Savage also knew it would excite many misguided reformers who would stir up government investigations, for the criminals had no choice about taking the treatment.

Doc Savage, in the final analysis, was a private individual, and such are not supposed to mete out their own brand of justice. The courts are for that. And Doc Savage had never sent a crook before an American court.

If news of his "college" got out, there would be all kinds of trouble, he well knew, and for that reason he had refused to tell the two-fisted tough guy cop, Hardboiled Humbolt, of murdered Leander Court's connection with himself.

And it was to keep news of the institution from leaking out that the bronze man now requested Monk not to speak of it. What Monk was wondering was perfectly plain anyway. Was the "college" in some way connected with this fantastic affair?

Polite Fictions and Inconvenient Truths

The Shadow Club was introduced in *The Shadow Magazine*, Vol. II, No. 6 (Issue 12) "The Crime Cult" (Jul 1932). Its silvered brass lapel pin emblem is based on George Jerome Rozen (16 Oct 1895–14 Jul 1973) cover for *The Shadow Magazine*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (Issue 32) "The Ghost of the Manor" (15 Jun 1933)

The Doc Savage Club was introduced in *Doc Savage Magazine*, Vol. II, No. 1, (Issue 7) "The Lost Oasis" (Sep 1933). Its bronzed brass lapel pin emblem is based on Walter Martin Baumhofer (01 Nov 1904–23 Sep 1987) cover for Vol. I, No. 3 (Issue 3) "Quest of the Spider" (May 1933).

The Doc Savage Club Emblem rubber stamp was introduced in *Doc Savage Magazine*, Vol. III, No. 2 (Issue 14) “The Monsters” (Apr 1934).

The Doc Savage Award was introduced on page 79 of *Doc Savage Magazine*, Vol. IV, No. 5 (Issue 23) “The Mystic Mullah” (Jan 1935). Its gilded bronze “medal charm” was based on Paul Orban (23 Jun 1896–Apr 1974) “Doc” interior line art, itself loosely based on the Baumhofer cover for the first issue, published on page 5 of *Doc Savage Magazine*, Vol. III, No. 6 (Issue 18) "The Squeaking Goblin" (Aug 1933), then cropped to a “head shot” for the Award. The head shot without the frame and banner was subsequently printed above the "Comrades in Adventure" sidebar on page 1 of *Doc Savage Magazine*, Vol. V, No. 5 (Issue 29) "Quest of Qui" (Jul 1935).

“The Code of Doc Savage” was published as a foundational principle of the Doc Savage Club. In addition to inspiring young readers to voluntarily embrace the precepts that the graduates had had to learn the hard way, it also provided moral support and a rallying point for the graduates as they went on with their new lives.

They were, in fact, honorary and honored members of the Doc Savage Club, carrying its bronze emblems to identify themselves to one another or to one of Doc Savage’s investigative agencies. On the back of each emblem was a unique number and instructions to call a Manhattan telephone number if it were found. In an emergency, they could call that number to report or request immediate assistance for any trouble that they might encounter.

Those calls connected to Doc’s private detective agency office, directly below his own office and reception room, where operators, many also Graduates of the College, coordinated the activities of his various agents around the world. Every graduate, even those who worked far afield from any of Doc’s many enterprises, were encouraged to report any wrongdoing they saw or suspected to that office. They effectively became Doc’s eyes and ears in any place in the world that they happened to find themselves.

I explained this my one and only foray to fan fiction, Leghorn Books *The Fantastic Adventures of Doc Savage*® Series 2 *The All–New Adventures of Doc Savage*® No. 193 “Pyramid Peril” (12 Nov 2013), as explained in *Now It Can Be Told!: How Doc Savage® “Pyramid Peril” Became Dare Devlin™ “Stormbirds!”* (05 Sep 2025).

From Chapter XXXI. “With All Guns Blazing and All Blazes Gunning” in “Pyramid Peril”:

> *“You give them a crime-curing brain operation?” Walton-Jones sputtered. “Preposterous! And if such a thing were even remotely true, it would be—”*
>
> *“Intolerable, yes, we know!” Long Tom grinned, showing both gold teeth. “But of course, it’s not true. It’s pure fiction. It’s just a wild yarn published repeatedly in Doc Savage Magazine.”*
>
> *“But Old Nick said—” Walton-Jones stopped short, suddenly realizing that Old Nick was not a reliable source when it came to either benign or incendiary information. “But you, Johnny Littlejohn and Pat Savage just told me—”*
>
> *“Yes, we did,” Pat confirmed, serving him his simple supper, “and every word of it is true.” She gave him a cheery smile that should have lit up the cave like a Broadway opening. “But you can never repeat a word of it to anyone, anytime, anywhere in the world, not because of what it might do to our reputations, but because of what it might do to yours.”*
>
> *Walton-Jones blinked owlishly. “I could report it to the newspapers—”*

"They couldn't print it," Pat cut him off smoothly, expecting that objection. "Doc Savage's Crime College is known to be fictional, a long-running gag in a nationally syndicated magazine. Without hard physical evidence—names, case histories, dates, places—you'd just be claiming that Doc Savage was doing something that everyone already believes is just a legend."

"When we were planning the Expedition," Long Tom took up the tale enthusiastically, "do you remember Old Nick wondering about the Doc Savage Magazine and radio program?"

"Indeed, I do," Walton-Jones confirmed. "I, too, have often wondered why someone as secretive and attention-shy as Doc Savage would authorize fictionalized adventures that way."

"The operatively significant adjective is 'fictionalized'," Johnny interjected. He laid a bony hand on his old friend's shoulder and continued softly. "Just as many a truth is spoken in jest and many a legend is based on historical fact, so too may inconvenient facts be publicly professed in the guise of popular fiction. It not only allows one to test the waters of public acceptance of radical ideas but may also make people skeptical of anyone who later claims them to be true."

"I like to think of it as a verbal vaccine," Long Tom commented around a bite of biscuit. "You but an idea out there in small doses, people build up a tolerance or resistance to it and thereafter you're immunized against the possibility of a subsequent outbreak of public outrage."

"That's ... actually quite diabolically clever," Walton-Jones smiled as he sipped his coffee, trying to pretend that it was tea. "He's applied a medical technique to matters of public opinion!"

"Oh, it goes way beyond just that," Pat beamed, raising her coffee mug in a toasting gesture. "The biggest problem with journalists is that they often just make things up just to make a name for themselves, scoop the competition or throw up a splashy headline. Even for a skilled attorney like Theodore Marley Brooks, it's not easy to win a libel or slander suit. Copyright infringement and trademark violation, on the other hand, are highly actionable and relatively easily proven."

"Unless a newsman can prove that every single word he prints or broadcasts it absolutely true," Long Tom continued, "we can make the case that he's published or broadcast as work of fiction featuring our privately-owned copyrighted and trademarked characters and we can sue the pants off him." He grinned, showing both gold teeth. "And if he includes such obvious fiction as a 'crime-curing brain operation conducted in a secret location' with no actual evidence...!"

"Oho!" Walton-Jones crowed. "And those gilded Doc Savage Club emblems identify—"

They, of course, identify "Graduates" of Doc's "College" in upstate New York, famously known as Doc Savage's rehabilitation clinic for amnesiacs, patterned on the famous "cure cottages" of Saranac Lake used to treat tuberculosis by exposing patients to as much fresh air as possible under conditions of complete bed-rest by physicians who were often by the patients themselves.

These facilities were heavily quarantined to prevent the spread of the disease to those who didn't have it or recovered and developed immunity to it, although many who had done so were shunned by those who feared that they might be "carriers" who could infect others like the infamous "Typhoid Mary" Mary Mallon (23 Sep 1869–11 Nov 1938), even though there was vaccine to treat typhoid developed and successfully used in 1896 by the British during the Second Boer War in South Africa.

I had personal experience with such shunning when a neighbor discovered that both my parents had been hospitalized and cured of TB in the hospital where they met 1941 and confirmed that I had inherited their immunity when I was born as decade later. In 1962, when I was ten going on eleven, that neighbor served notice that no one who lived in our house could get closer to their house than a hundred feet (thirty meters, 33⅓ yards, six rods, 1½ chains). They irrationally feared "carriers" like it was the plague. (ahem)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cure_cottages_of_Saranac_Lake

From Chapter XXXIII. "Dancing With the Devil in the Moonless Night":

> *In addition to inspiring young readers to voluntarily embrace the precepts that the graduates had had to learn the hard way; it also provided moral support and a rallying point for the graduates as they went on with their new lives.*
>
> *They were, in fact, honorary and honored members of the Doc Savage Club, carrying gilded emblems to identify themselves to one another or to one of Doc Savage's investigative agencies.*
>
> *Many took them to be the prestigious Doc Savage Award medal. which required one to be nominated by notable members of their local community with seven others serve as references, but Doc Savage bestowed them personally when he deemed them ready to return to society as an honest and independent citizen.*
>
> *On the back of each emblem was a unique number and instructions to call a Manhattan telephone number in the event that it was found. In an emergency, they could call that number to report or request immediate assistance for any trouble that they might encounter.*
>
> *Those calls connected directly to an office on the eighty-fifth floor of Doc's skyscraper headquarters, where operators coordinated the activities of his various agents around the world.*
>
> *Every Graduate, even those who worked far afield from any of Doc's many enterprises, were encouraged to report any wrongdoing or suspicious activity they saw to that office. They effectively became Doc's eyes and ears in any place in the world that they happened to find themselves.*

There you have it in a nutshell: why Doc had both a magazine recounting his "adventures" in the most positive light, establish that his "College" was benign even it weren't a renowned rehabilitation clinic for amnesiacs, a Doc Savage Club that offered bronze Doc Savage Emblems free but for postage to identify members, gold Doc Savage Awards to people who had done public service deeds deserving special recognition for which one had to be nominated by a citizen in good standing with seven more serving as references and could be used to identify his Graduates to one another serving as his eyes and ears around world and to report what they saw or heard directly to him, his five aides, or his private detective agency.

Suddenly, the inexplicable makes perfect sense when looked at from the perspective of Doc Savage!

—END—