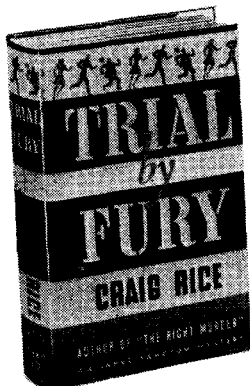



 Murder being our business, we frequently startle people with our more placid discussions. About six months ago we had a spot of trouble with a visitor who overheard a spirited argument about the comparative virtues of throat-slitting and wrist-slicing. This hysterical eavesdropper was later competently dealt with by physicians and psychiatrists (or incompetently—that detail escapes us at the moment).

The point is that it was a distracting interruption to the very serious business on hand—the manuscript of CRAIG RICE's *Trial by Fury*, then in work and now just published.



 Fortunately, it was all for the best. The incident convinced CRAIG RICE that all methods have their uses (even death by shock was briefly considered). As a result, there is a happy impartiality about the *modus operandi* of *Trial by Fury* that should please the most case-hardened reader. Shooting, arson, drowning, throat-slitting all have their part, to say nothing of the proverbial blunt instrument for the diehards.

 Naturally, CRAIG RICE's famous trio—JAKE JUSTUS, his bride HELENE, and criminal lawyer JOHN J. MALONE—are the center of this homicidal cyclone. Operating for the first time outside their native Chicago, they are vacationing in a small town notable for its excellent fishing, nasty sheriff, and family skeletons. Translated into the CRAIG RICE vernacular, these elements add up to an expert blend of homicide and hilarity in *Trial by Fury*.

 Those who've read CRAIG RICE's earlier books—*8 Faces at 3*, *The Corpse Steps Out*, *The Wrong Murder*, *The Right Murder*—don't need any needling from us. For the others, we'll let CRAIG RICE speak for herself, at your nearest book store, in

TRIAL BY FURY

by Craig Rice

AN INNER SANCTUM MYSTERY • PRICE \$2.00

poem of untried youth, which he had attempted to revise. But it was now 1930 and the poem had first been written in 1917. So the new last verse reads:

After the thirteenth year, the water runs as before,
The gemmed wave in the water, the starlight on the gem,
All but the crew who sailed there, and they return no more,
But the words are as they were written. I cannot alter them.

That too I find characteristic of Steve; for one of his virtues is loyalty—not blind, not sentimental, but considered, wise, and final. He has something in his character like a rampart. It cannot be moved. Five or six years later, in "Burning City," which contains his great poem against dictators, he gives us several fiery glimpses of what it is to be a real poet.

He had written his new novel, "James Shore's Daughter," and now at last he launched selected "Stories of Several Worlds" in "Thirteen o'Clock." Among them stands "The Devil and Daniel Webster" (now appearing on the screen), "The King of the Cats," and "Daniel Webster and the Sea Serpent." Already his wife and he had collaborated on a gay book in rhyme concerning historic Americans. In a second volume of short stories came other fantastic masterpieces like "Johnny Pye and the Fool-Killer" and "Doc Mellhorn and the Pearly Gates." But there is moving realism too, concerning the vile tyranny of our time, in "The Blood of the Martyrs" and "Into Egypt." And there is in certain others that deep understanding of

youth that made Steve so admirable an editor of the Yale Series of Younger Poets, where his unerring judgment has turned up such fine rebellious talent as Paul Engle's, Muriel Rukeyser's, or that of Joy Davidman. Other critics than I, who am no fit critic of my brother's work, have praised his art in the short story. You have only to read them.

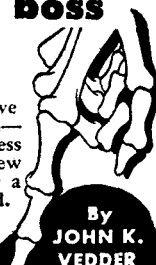
By now I have had to regard my younger brother as by way of becoming an American institution! "Stephen Benét Wins O. Henry Story Prize"—"Roosevelt Medal Awarded Stephen Benét"—"Re-elected Vice President of National Institute"—"Member of the American Academy"—and so on *ad infinitum*! One source of pale envy on my part, incidentally, has been the way Steve has always collected prizes. Every time they put one up, they decide to give it to him! He was always lucky with slot-machines, too, I remember.

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The Last Doorbell

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
TRIAL BY FURY Craig Rice (Simon & Schuster: \$2.)	Killer with catholic taste in weapons upsets quiet Wisconsin town and spurs lawyer-detective Malone to noblest of efforts.	With Helene and Jake Justus as first-class foils quick-witted Chicago mouth-piece turns in amusing and exciting job.	Grade A
EXIT A STAR Kathleen Moore Knight (Crime Club: \$2.)	Observant girl press-agent saves stage-struck deb from death and writes finis to murderous career of Long Island triple slayer.	Highly atmospheric item, with stage and publicity personalities well handled, nearly guess-proof plot, and gobs of action.	High voltage
MURDER IN OKEFENOKEE Cecile Hulse Matschat (Farrar & Rinehart: \$2.)	Deaths of "swamper" and two guests from North turn Georgia Christmas party into criminal hunt with eugenics expert in lead.	Family-skeleton affair. Better than average as mystery and especially good for portrayal of strange green swamp-land and inhabitants.	Recommended
PRESCRIPTION FOR MURDER Hannah Lees (Random House: \$2.)	Death of diabetic directress of nurses in Penna. hospital arouses suspicions of young doctor who, with girl's help, solves clever crime.	Rates well up with best as suspenseful mystery and has special interest for vivid treatment of hospital life—and loves.	Full marks

Frank Morley once organized the "Brothers Club," because his brother Christopher was getting altogether too famous. I am a charter member of that organization—just because of Steve!

There are three children now, an older daughter who is, indeed, no longer a child, but a young lady; a son at Exeter; a younger daughter of highly original gifts. There is Rosemary, Steve's wife, who was born to understand just why he has wished to write exactly as he has written. She lends his household infinite charm, collaborates with him on the portraits of other writers that they do for Irita Van Doren's *Books*, translates Colette from the French, and judges children's books with rare ability. And now there is the Whistler House in the old whaling port of Stonington, Connecticut, where Steve and Rosemary hope to spend years that are sure to be anything but "declining"! In town, there is the large old-fashioned house in the East Sixties, with a more secluded air-conditioned study now, on an upper floor, where work upon a pioneer epic, among other projects, goes steadily forward.

If one has been at one time pretty hard hit by arthritis, one does not stand quite as straight as one has in the past, even though one's spirit may be like a lance. But one does not lose, for all that, the persistent twinkle, the drawlingly American sense of

humor, the keen appraisal of the follies and crimes of the times. There is a southron tinge to the hospitality too—a courtesy and kindness at once apparent, a consideration that caused a young in-law of mine once to remark, "Why good Lord, he was asking me my opinion!"

Steve has developed in a manner I can thoroughly admire. Perhaps it is true, as he avers, that once I was in a position to read to him most of Bryant's translation of the *Iliad*, or to write a foreword and draw a cover for an early unpublished work then known as "Poems and Battle Songs." I can, indeed, remember the time when I actually used to tell him stories. Today, how utterly preposterous that seems!

I have said elsewhere and before this that my brother early developed a habit of gritting his teeth and being thrilled by tales of heroic exploits. He will never quite lose that faculty. And he still absorbs pulp-magazines dealing with horror, mystery, and marvel, with as great a relish as he did in his youth. For instance, he was entirely familiar with the work of H. P. Lovecraft long before that little-known master of horror was brought to the attention of the critics. That is one aspect. And then there has been the radio work and there have been the speeches before the National Academy and elsewhere. There has been advisory lecturing in the art of writing. There has been book-reviewing. There was the making of a Lincoln picture with David Wark Griffith, and the making of "The Devil and Daniel Webster" into a light opera, with the aid of his old friend, now head of the Columbia School of Music, Douglas Moore. Steve also collaborated with Mr. Moore on a picture, "Power and the Land," put out by the Rural Electrification Administration, and has prepared for the screen at least one novel by another writer. Life has been rich in effort and opportunity. And sometimes, in spite of that, the driven body has needed badly, and found, what my brother early wrote of as "The Quality of Courage."

Steve has not been spared his full share of the acerbity of contemporary criticism. But he can usually tell exactly what is eating the critics and why. He drawls, "Oh we-ll—!" He does not take himself too seriously. He has enjoyed his work, and the rewards thereof. He could calculate to a nicety just when he knew he was hitting the ball, and when he wasn't. Lately, it has seemed to one admiring relative, he has hit it pretty consistently right upon the nose. "Wait till you come to forty year!" warned Thackeray. But today we know that that is just when life begins. Steve is three years past, and but only coming into

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his own. What matters is what he himself has written in "Thanks":

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And I can still go muttering down the street
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Nor the ape-faces, only the live coal
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