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Murder in Transit: Supplement

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Kindly Post in a Conspicuous Place

United States of America
POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

ON OCTOBER 11, 1923, A SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY TRAIN WAS BLOWN UP NEAR SISKIYOU, OREGON, U. S. A. THE MAIL CLERK WAS KILLED AND HIS BODY BURNED, AND THREE TRAINMEN WERE SHOT AND KILLED. CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE OBTAINED SHOWS THAT ROY, RAY AND HUGH DE AUTREMONT, THREE BROTHERS, WHO LIVED IN EUGENE, OREGON, COMMITTED THE CRIME. THEIR PHOTOGRAPHS AND GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS ARE SHOWN ON THIS POSTER.

Help in locating the criminals who committed this terrible crime.

\$15,900 REWARD IN GOLD!



ROY A. A. DE AUTREMONT.
(Photos taken only in 1923.)

Roy A. De Autremont, alias R. A. Harris, alias R. A. Burton, age 23 in 1923, weight 155-160 pounds, height 5 feet 9 inches. Complexion swarthy light-blue medium light brown. Fine peculiar looking, nose very straight, light brown. Hair wavy golden in coloring. Face broad at the cheek bones. Nervous and "bravado." Likes to appear before the public. Long, pointed up nose and prominent nostrils. Throat has been removed. Good reader. Wears No. 2 shoes. Headful and ragged. Clips his words. Forward and promising with women. First upper right molar tooth has undergone filling, as have both first right and left lower molars.



RAY CHARLES DE AUTREMONT.
(Photos taken in 1920. He was arrested shortly before October 1923.)

Ray De Autremont, alias R. C. Burton, alias William Elliott, alias Chas. E. Joseph, age 23 in 1923. Height 5 feet 4 inches. Weight 125 to 130 pounds. Complexion medium light. Hair medium light brown. Round face. Prominent nostrils. Short cut wavy. Eyes, prominent. Light brown, small and dark. No. 2 shoes. Features who smile. High low wall on left foot turned up. One inch at tip of left forefinger (index) and at back of second joint right middle finger, also round cut near back of hand. Good fall in upper left molar, second upper. Amalgam filling, upper left first molar, circular surface. Good teeth, upper right molar, second and incisor angles.



HUGH DE AUTREMONT.
(Photos taken in 1923.)

Hugh De Autremont, alias R. H. James, alias Hugh DeWay, alias Hugh DeLaurion, alias Hugh DeCoy. Age 23 in 1923. Height 5 feet 7 inches. Weight about 155 pounds. Complexion fair, eyes blue. Nose straight and thin. Hair medium light, slightly wavy and curly. Amalgam filling right and left molars, and some in first upper right molar. Likes to appear and to meet in hotel. Fond of sports, particularly boxing and racing. Experienced driver for traveling, and has benefited trips he has made by riding freight trains. He is bright and alert and has a high school education. Little fingers turn outward at first joint.

\$5,300 Reward For Each Man!

REWARDS TOTALING \$15,900 WILL BE PAID FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE ARREST AND CONVICTION OF THESE MEN. THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS HAVE CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE AND WILL TAKE CARE OF THE PROSECUTION.

ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING THE WHEREABOUTS OF THESE MEN SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED IMMEDIATELY TO THE NEAREST POLICE OFFICER. IF CONVINCED THE SUSPECTS ARE THE MEN WANTED, NOTIFY THE PERSONS NAMED BELOW BY WIRE.

C. RIDDIFORD,
Post Office Inspector in Charge,
Seattle, Wash., 1923.

D. O'CONNELL,
Chief Postal Agent,
Siskiyou Post Office, Oregon,
U. S. A.

from [Smithsonian National Postal Museum blog](#)

Just the Facts: Cents-Less Killing (continued)

by Jim Doherty

Further Reading

At least three books devoted exclusively to the D'Autremont case were published in the 1970s. The first of these three to appear was **Oregon's Great Train Hold-Up** (Ye Galleon, 1974) by Bert Webber. A slender book, less than 100 pages long, it was bulked up somewhat in a revised edition published by Webb Research in 1988, on which Bert Webber collaborated with Margie Webber.

All for Nothing (BLS, 1976), by Larry Sturholm and John Howard, was written with some cooperation from Ray D'Autremont, who was befriended by Howard in 1960.

Tunnel 13 (Pine Cone, 1977) by Art Chipman rounds out the trio of D'Autremont books, all put out by local Oregon publishers, possibly to take advantage of growing interest in the case arising

from the 50th anniversary of the crime.

Eugene R. Block, a former police reporter for both the San Francisco *Post* and the San Francisco *Call-Bulletin*, has perhaps made the most frequent use of the case in his true crime publications. His first book, **The Wizard of Berkeley** (Coward-McCann, 1958) was a biography of Edward Oscar Heinrich, the pioneering scientific investigator whose forensic examination of Roy D'Autremont's overall eventually led to the identification of the Tunnel 13 bandits.

Block's next book, the Edgar-nominated **Great Train Robberies of the West** (Coward-McCann, 1959), includes a detailed chapter on the Siskiyou robbery, stressing the contributions to the case made by both Daniel "Hardrock" O'Connell and Edward "The Edison of Crime Detection" Hein-

rich. **Famous Detectives** (Doubleday, 1967) is a collection of thirteen chapter-length biographies of well-known investigators, including one each on Heinrich and O'Connell; it also includes information on the D'Autremont case. **Science vs. Crime** (Cragmont, 1979), a history of forensic criminal investigation, also discusses Heinrich and his part in solving the Siskiyou robbery.

Other books that contain accounts of the case include **Bandits and the Southern Pacific** (Stokes, 1929) by C.G. Glasscock; **Southern Pacific—The Roaring Story of a Fighting Railroad** (McGraw-Hill, 1952) by Neill C. Wilson and Frank J. Taylor; **The Railroad Police** (Thomas, 1955) by H.S. Dewhurst; **Train Robbery** by Richard Patterson (Johnson, 1981); and those two closest friends of the true-crime researcher, **The Encyclopedia of American Crime** (Facts on File, 1982) by Carl Sifakis and **The Encyclopedia of World Crime** (CrimeBooks, 1990) by Jay Robert Nash.

Shorter articles on the case include “The Great Siskiyou Train Robbery” by Fred E. Green, found in the Summer 1994 issue of *The Dogtown Territorial Quarterly*; “The Last Great Train Robbery” by Paul Fattig, first published in the October 11, 1998, issue of the Medford, Oregon, *Mail-Tribune*, and since reproduced on several different Internet sites; and “The Siskiyou Outrage” by J.D. Chandler, found on his internet site, www.jdchandler.com.

“Murder on the Gold Special” is a particularly interesting article by M. Constance Guardino III, who knew Ray D'Autremont when they both worked as part-time custodians at the University of Oregon, and was flabbergasted to find that this apparently gentle soul was “the most infamous man on campus.” The article can be found on a website Guardino operates with her companion, Rev. Marilyn A. Reidel, at <http://users.wi.net/~maracon/>, and includes a poem about the case by Guardino and Reidel.

The D'Autremont Manhunt In Fiction

The earliest fictional treatment of the D'Autre-

mont case I've been able to find was a two-part episode of the long-running cops-and-robbers radio drama *Gangbusters*. Chapter One of “The Capture of the D'Autremont Brothers” was first broadcast on April 22, 1936, and the conclusion a week later on April 29.

Milton M. Raison's **Tunnel 13** (Murray & Gee, 1948), not to be confused with Art Chipman's non-fiction account, is described as a “powerful suspense novel,” clearly based on the D'Autremont case, in which the number of brothers involved in the crime is lowered to two, and the number of murder victims increased to seven. Raison is better known for a series of lighter-hearted mysteries featuring a crime-solving New York drama critic named Tony Woolrich.

A year later, a film version of Raison's novel was released. *Special Agent* (Paramount, 1949), directed by William C. Thomas from a screenplay by Whitman Chamber and Lewis R. Foster, was made in the semi-documentary style popularized in such post-war police films as *The House on 92nd Street* (20th/Fox, 1945), *T-Men* (Eagle-Lion, 1947), and *The Naked City* (Universal, 1948). It starred William Eythe as Railroad Detective Johnny Douglas, hot on the trail of the two “Deveraux” brothers, one of whom is played by George Reeves, who, in two years, would achieve his greatest success as TV's Superman. Filmed on a limited budget (which perhaps accounts for the fact that most of the actual train robbery takes place off-screen), it is, nonetheless, a solid, entertaining movie bouquet to cinder cops. Interestingly, in the film, and the novel from which it derives, the two brothers actually get away with their loot, though they never get to actually spend it.

That same year, *White Heat* (Warner Brothers, 1949), perhaps the greatest of all American gangster films, was released. James Cagney, in one of his most powerful performances, starred as mother-fixated criminal mastermind Cody Jarrett. The film opens with the hold-up of a Southern Pacific train. In almost all respects, this robbery

parallels the D'Autremont crime.

The trainmen are forced at gunpoint to stop the train just as it's emerging from a tunnel, so that the engine, tender, and part of the mail car have exited, but most of the train is still in the tunnel. The tunnel is seen to be just a bit north of the California border. The State of Oregon is not specifically mentioned, but we are told that the robbery occurred roughly 300 miles north of Lake Tahoe, which, as the crow flies, is just about where Siskiyou is.

The mail clerk, the engineer, the fireman, and another trainman are all ruthlessly murdered, obviously replicating the murders committed during the Tunnel 13 robbery. And the robbers are identified by the analysis of forensic clues reminiscent, deliberately reminiscent, of the analysis provided by Heinrich in real life. There are also some parallels between Cody Jarrett, who is depicted as a mentally deteriorating psychotic who has a nervous breakdown in prison, and Roy D'Autremont, who was transferred from prison to a mental hospital after a real-life nervous breakdown just a year prior to the film's release.

The major difference between the actual train robbery, and the film version, and it's *quite* a major difference, is that in *White Heat* (as in the novel **Tunnel 13** and the movie *Special Agent*), the bad guys get away with a substantial haul.

As far as I've been able to determine, no one else has ever made a connection between the Siskiyou robbery and the opening scene of *White Heat*. Perhaps that's because, once the train robbery is completed, there are no further parallels (aside from Jarrett's mental illness) between the D'Autremont case and the plot of the film. I don't know whether the idea for basing the movie's beginning on the D'Autremont crime originated with Virginia Kellogg, who wrote the original, Oscar-nominated screen treatment; with Ivan Goff and Ben Roberts, who developed that treatment into a full-fledged script; or with Raoul Walsh, the two-

fisted filmmaker who directed the film with his usual nuts-and bolts expertise; but I'm certain the similarities are not just coincidental. Whoever came up with the idea, the sequence, like the rest of the film, is pure gold.

In a JTF column some years ago, I suggested that the famous British forensics investigator, Sir Bernard Spilsbury, might have been the prototype for R. Austin Freeman's pioneering scientific sleuth, Dr. John Thorndyke. In this chapter, I'm tempted to speculate that Professor Heinrich might have been the inspiration for Thorndyke's American counterpart, Professor Craig Kennedy. Little-remembered by contemporary readers, Kennedy, the creation of journalist Arthur B. Reeve, was once the most popular fictional detective in the country.

Reeve first conceived the character, who debuted in the short story collection **The Silent Bullet** (Dodd, Mead, 1912), after writing a series of articles about "scientific crime detection." It seems likely that Reeve would at least have heard of Heinrich while preparing those articles. Certainly there are a number of parallels. Both were professors at major universities (the real-life Heinrich at UC Berkeley and the fictional Kennedy at Columbia), both were masters of a variety of scientific disciplines useful in criminal investigations, and both operated private crime labs which they put at the disposal of official law enforcement. Interestingly, both were known by the same sobriquet, "The American Sherlock Holmes." As I say, this is all speculation, and whether or not those parallels are deliberate or coincidental we'll probably never know for sure.

Note: This is a very slightly revised version of an article that first appeared in Jim's collection of true-crime articles *Just the Facts—True Tales of Cops & Criminals* (Deadly Serious, 2004), which reprinted many of his "Just the Facts" columns from MRJ, as well as several original chapters, of which this was one.

Cops in Training – the Decalogue (continued)

by Jim Doherty

Short Stories

1. “The Second Challenge” (*Real Detective Tales and Mystery Stories*, Feb. 1929) by MacKinlay Kantor.

Years before winning a Pulitzer Prize for **Andersonville** (World, 1955), Kantor honed his craft in the pulps. In this early story, set in a small railroad town south of Chicago, Illinois Central R/R Special Agent Chuck Noel has gotten a bulletin to be on the lookout for a fugitive cop-killer possibly headed his way from Omaha. When he spots a trespasser on the yards he patrols who fits the description, he winds up in a murderous shoot-out. Action, tough talk, and irony, the three hallmarks of pulp crime fiction, are all present in this expert yarn, since reprinted in **The Fantastic Pulps** (St. Martin’s, 1979) edited by Peter Haining.

2. “You Pays Your Nickel” (*Argosy*, 22 Aug. 1936) by Cornell Woolrich.

When a murderous robber takes it on the lam inside of a subway tunnel, one lone transit cop figures out where he’s going and tries to chase him down. All the suspense, action, pace, and (amazingly for a man who never rode the subway) sense of place one expects of the haunted figure who practically invented noir. Reprinted as “Subway” in Woolrich’s own collection **The Blue Ribbon** (Lippincott, 1949) under his William Irish pseudonym, and, as “The Phantom of the Subway,” in the anthology **Midnight Specials** (Bobbs-Merrill, 1977) edited by Bill Pronzini.

3. “Bull Trouble” (*Railroad Magazine*, Aug. 1947) by Edmund E. Pugsley.

Another “railroad cop chases a criminal in the yards” story, this time from the point of view of the criminal who’s trying to avoid bull trouble. Pugsley was a frequent contributor to this spe-

cialty pulp that published articles and fiction for rail buffs.

4. “Tramps’ Christmas Eve” (*Thrilling Detective*, Dec. 1948) by Johnston McCulley.

A hard-nosed railroad detective is looking to celebrate Christmas Eve by busting a hobo, or maybe even several. He comes upon a group of four enjoying a modest holiday party over a campfire on railroad property. Will he have a change of heart and let himself be guided by the spirit of Christmas, or will he follow his hard-nosed cop’s instincts? Shamelessly sentimental, but I’m Irish and we’re partial to that.

McCulley, best known for creating the immortal swashbuckling avenger Zorro, was a railroad buff, and he used train settings quite a bit in a career lasting almost six decades. In 1908 he wrote five short stories for *Railroad Men’s Magazine* featuring Richard Hughes, Railroad Detective. From 1918 to 1960, he wrote dozens of stories for various magazines about a pickpocket with a lisp named “Thubway Tham,” who stalked victims in New York’s transit stations. And railroads often figured in his many westerns.

5. “Red Over Yellow” (*Short Stories*, June 1949) by William Rhode.

“Mohawk” Daniels, top sleuth for the A&N Railroad, takes a rookie under his wing as he pursues a gang of freight car thieves. The rookie’s the son of an executive in the railroad, and he thinks he’s got something to prove to the Old Man. Daniels thinks the kid has the makings of a decent cop, if he dials back the attitude a few degrees. Could be if the kid takes Daniels’s advice, he’ll get his wish and prove himself to his dad.

6. “Complete Results” (*Short Stories*, Nov. 1949) by William Rhode.

“Mohawk” Daniels returns in a short, tight yarn that manages, in less than 5000 words, to combine elements of both the murder of Martha Virginia James on the Southern Pacific’s *West Coast Limited* in 1943, and the robbery of the SP’s *Gold Special* by the D’Autremont brothers in 1923. I know I’m breaking a self-imposed rule by including two works by the same author in a single list, but Rhode’s a writer who deserves to be better known.

7. “Yard Bull” (*Manhunt*, Aug. 1954) by Frank Selig.

The titular railroad cop in this short-short is not exactly the hero. The product of an abused childhood, he has no children that allow him to pass the abuse along to the next generation, so he passes it on to the kids he finds trespassing on the yards he patrols. Grim and depressing, but tremendously effective.

8. “Manhattan Castaway” (*Saturday Evening Post*, 28 Sep. 1957) by Thomas Walsh.

The hard-nosed Irish lieutenant who stood guard over Manhattan Central Depot (i.e. Grand Central Station) in **Nightmare in Manhattan** returns in this superb novelette, only now he’s Robert “Rowdy Robbie” McTiernan instead of William “Tough Willie” Calhoun. But we won’t let a li’l ol’ name change fool us, will we? Coming upon an apparently abandoned little girl in the station, he questions her as gently as a guy with McTiernan’s imposing demeanor can, and learns that the kid’s mom may be in the clutches of a pair of murderous con artists who’ve been bilking and killing young widows all over the country (clearly modeled on real-life “Loney Hearts” killers Raymond Fernandez and Martha Beck). The kid disappears when McTiernan’s back is turned, and now he’s got to race against that proverbial clock to save her

Movies

1. *The Flying Ace* (Norman Film, 1926), written and directed by Richard Norman.

and her mom.

Walsh had a standard recipe, tough but sentimental cops, classy but sweet “girl next door” types for the cop to lose his heart to, helpless but appealing victims, and vicious villains, but, like a great cook, he turned that recipe into a splendid dish over and over again.

9. “Ghost Station” (**A Woman’s Eye**, Delacorte, 1991, edited by Sara Paretsky) by Carolyn Wheat.

Sgt. Maureen Gallagher, a recovering alcoholic who’s returning to duty with the NYC Transit Police after taking a medical leave to dry out, wants to be put on the task force searching for a serial killer, or killers, who are setting homeless people on fire in the labyrinthine tunnels of the City’s subway system. Instead, she’s taking a rookie who “can’t stand lady drunks” with her to hunt graffiti artists in the system’s “ghost stations,” long-abandoned passenger platforms that no one but bums and taggers use anymore. But, as she discovers, if you’re a serial killer trolling for derelicts to burn to death, a ghost station’s a pretty good place to find them. Excellent portrayal of a cop fighting a compulsion that can derail her career, who’s given a chance to redeem herself.

10. “The Right Track” (*Women’s World*, 26 Oct. 2009) by R.T. Lawton.

An AMTRAK detective gets a rare opportunity to investigate a murder, when a passenger is apparently pushed out of a moving long-haul train. Both a police procedural and a fair-play whodunit, this short-short was nominated for a Short Mystery Fiction Society Derringer award. I think it should have won. Lawton, by the way, was never a railroad detective, but he was a cop, having spent over thirty years as a federal narcotics agent.

Despite its title, this is not a war picture, but the story of a vet who returns from military service, hoping to get his old job as a railroad detective back. He is immediately rehired, and put on the trail of a gang who stole a payroll from a railroad

depot. This film, years before 1970s “blaxploitation,” was a “race” picture, a film made with an all-black cast deliberately pitched at black audiences. “Race” films were, in their day, about the only kinds of movies in which blacks could play non-stereotyped characters. Surprisingly sophisticated silent film, with, lots of flying action, notwithstanding its railroad background.

2. *Midnight Limited* (Monogram, 1940), written by Harrison Carter and Charles Williams, directed by Howard Bretherton.

A crook dubbed the “Phantom Bandit” has been robbing trains of jewelry, cash, and other valuables. One of his victims has actually seen him, though masked, so she agrees to work with the railroad detective hero to track him down. Entertaining despite its “Poverty Row” origins.

3. *The Great Train Robbery* (Republic, 1941), written by Olive Cooper, Robert T. Shannon, and Garnett Weston, directed by Joseph Kane.

A gang of bandits hijacks an entire train, skillfully hiding it so they can rob the gold locked in its vaults at leisure. The bandit leader’s brother is a crack detective for the railroad, and he’s got the family honor to uphold. Plus both he and his criminal brother are in love with the same woman, and right now she’s in the bad guy’s clutches. Fast-moving action film with expert model sequences provided by the legendary Lydecker brothers. Old pro Milburn Stone (Doc on *Guns Smoke*) registers strongly as the bandit brother, while B-movie cowboy star Bob Steele holds his own as the cop. The gimmick for hiding the train was lifted, without credit, from the short story “The Lost Special” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

4. *Special Agent* (Paramount, 1949), written by Whitman Chambers and Lewis R. Foster, based on the novel *Tunnel 13* by Milton R. Raison, directed by William C. Thomas.

The real-life D’Autremonts, who became the Darcys in Raison’s novel, change their names one more time, to Devereaux, as railroad police get the semi-documentary treatment that the FBI got in

The House on 92nd Street (20th/Fox, 1945). William Eythe, who played the FBI undercover informant in *92nd Street*, plays the main railroad cop in this one, while George Reeves, a few years away from enduring fame as TV’s Superman, plays one of the Devereauxs.

5. *Western Pacific Agent* (Lippert Pictures, 1950), screenplay by Fred Myton, story by Milton R. Raison, directed by Sam Newfield.

Another B programmer, but nicely done, as Kent Taylor, playing the titular Western Pacific Agent, goes on the trail of the guy who murdered two railroad employees in the course of robbing a station. Enjoyable, but Sid Melton’s comic relief role is entirely dispensable.

6. *Union Station* (Paramount, 1950), written by Sidney Boehm, based on the novel *Nightmare in Manhattan* by Thomas Walsh, directed by Rudolph Maté.

The little boy kidnap victim becomes a beautiful (well, at least uncommonly pretty), blind, teen-aged girl. New York City becomes (apparently) Chicago. And Grand Central Station becomes Chicago’s Union Station (although Los Angeles’s Union Station was actually used as the location), but all in all, this is a very faithful adaptation of Walsh’s novel, and perhaps my single favorite railroad cop picture. William Holden is “Tough Willie” Calhoun. Barry Fitzgerald is Inspector Donnelly of the City Police, channeling his Lt. Muldoon characterization from *The Naked City*. Nancy Olson is the girl Calhoun finds himself falling for. Allene Roberts is the victim. And, in a chilling performance, Lyle Bettger is the chief kidnapper.

Best scene? The rail cops have got one of the kidnapers in custody, but he refuses to talk. Fitzgerald, looks at the scumbag, shakes his head sadly, and in that charming, kindly Irish brogue says, “Make it look like an accident.” The cinder cops act as though they’re going to throw him in the path of a passing train when he starts to suddenly spill his guts. Ah, those were the days.

7. *The Narrow Margin* (RKO, 1952), screenplay by Earl Felton, story by Martin Goldsmith and Jack Leonard, directed by Richard Fleischer.

Stretching a point again, because, though it takes place on a passenger train going from Chicago to Los Angeles, the main cop (Charles McGraw) is not a railroad special agent, but an LAPD detective, guarding a mobster's widow who's set to testify before a Grand Jury in California. There is a railroad cop in the movie, though he's only a supporting character. But he's an *important* supporting character. This is probably the best crime film set on a train ever made, and, filmed as it was on a limited budget, it's a primer on how to get the most out of your money. A film noir classic.

8. *Terror on a Train* (MGM, 1953), written by Kem Bennett, directed by Ted Tezslaff.

When railway police in Birmingham, England, discover that a bomb has been planted in a load of sea mines bound for the Navy Yard in Portsmouth, a local resident, former Canadian Army Major Peter Lyncott (Glenn Ford) is approached. He was a bomb disposal expert in the war. Would he be willing to disarm the device if it can be found? He agrees to help. Meanwhile, the Transport Police try to track down the saboteur. Suspenseful, well-made, well-acted. A fine job on all levels. Released in Britain under the title *Time Bomb*.

9. *Time Table* (United Artists, 1956), written by Aben Kandel, directed by Mark Stevens.

A carefully planned robbery on board a train relieves the railroad of \$500,000 in payroll cash. Assigned to find the robbers are railroad cop Joe Armstrong (King Calder) and insurance investiga-

tor Charlie Norman (Mark Stevens). Armstrong and Norman are old friends who've worked together before, but this time it's different. Norman was actually the mastermind behind the timed-to-the-second heist, so now he's in a position to sabotage the investigation if Joe seems to be getting too close. Will plodding, patient Joe figure out that his old buddy is the man he's hunting? Expertly made film noir by an actor-director who's something of a noir icon.

10. *The Taking of Pelham One-Two-Three* (United Artists, 1974), written by Peter Stone, based on the novel by John Godey, directed by Joseph Sargent.

An armed gang of hoods, led by "Mr. Blue" (Robert Shaw) hijack a New York subway train, take eighteen passengers and crew members hostage, and demand a ransom of a million dollars from the already financially strapped city. Meanwhile Transit Police Lieutenant Zac Garber (Walter Matthau), sitting behind the mike at the Transit Authority's control center, is trying to negotiate the hostages' release. It's a classic suspense situation, but it has seldom worked better. Matthau and Shaw are terrific, and they get great support from a splendid cast that includes Martin Balsam, Hector Elizondo, Jerry Stiller, and in a small but memorable part, Doris Roberts as the mayor's wife. It's been remade twice, once as a TV-movie (ABC, 1998) with Edward James Olmos as the cop and Vincent D'Onofrio as the gang leader, and as a theatrical release (Columbia/MGM, 2009) with Denzel Washington in the cop role (only he's a train dispatcher rather than a cop in this version), and John Travolta as the senior hijacker.