

The Adventure of the Snitch in Time - Snit
The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction, July, 1953
A Praed Street Dossier

Date

Copper
Patrick

Quotes

- Parker: *Pons, I swear I have never put pen to paper.*
- Pons: *But you will Parker, you will.*

The Case

Pons is visited by Agent Tobias Athelney of the Terra Bureau of Investigation, Planet Terra, of the Solar System League. He is from 2565 A.D. He explains that there are an infinite number of alternative universes (which differs from time travel). He has come to ask Pons for help in battling the Club Cerise, a gang led by Professor Moriarty. They have been invading alternate universes and stealing art treasures. Pons provides the solution without leaving Praed St.

Comments

- In 1953, Mack Reynolds submitted a Holmes pastiche to *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*. It was deemed a good sci-fi story, but not in the Holmes style. It was given to August Derleth who reworked it and *The Snitch in Time* was published in the July, 1953 issue.
- Three more attempts were made in this series, but only one was published (*The Adventure of the Ball of Nostradamus*) and the idea simply faded away. It should be noted that this story falls clearly within the science fiction genre, while *The Ball of Nostradamus* is a supernatural detective story.
- Pons first suggests that they arrest Moriarty and his band on tax evasion charges. This is the same technique used to put Al Capone in jail, as severely dramatized in *The Untouchables*.
- Athelney mentions that Moriarty has acquired the services of Randolph Mason. Largely forgotten today, *The Strange Schemes of Randolph Mason* was the first real example of the legal-fiction genre. Mason was an unscrupulous lawyer who used his considerable skills to defeat the ends of justice, though his character improved in some stories.

Pons counters by referring Athelney to a rising young Los Angeles lawyer named Perry Mason. This is a nice touch, as Randolph Mason has been cited as a source for Perry Mason.

- This case takes place before Parker has written up any of Pons' adventures. It is amusing to read the exchange as Parker denies that he has chronicled any of the adventures while Pons tweaks him about the matter.