

Stairway to Baker Street

by
Howard Ostrom

Sherlock Holmes in disguise as a priest. Illustration for the story “The Adventure of the Final Problem.”



My decrepit Italian friend

I may be on the side of the angels, but don't think for one second that I am one of them. BBC “Sherlock”

Every writer owes something to Holmes. T.S. Eliot

Russian Sherlockian, Alexander Sedov, wrote an excellent article titled “How Father Brown Ended Up on Color TV”. It is an in depth look at the 1974 U.K. TV series “Father Brown”, starring Kenneth More as Father Brown. He prefaces his look at that classic English film adaptation with the statement, “The great Sherlock Holmes had a follower no less great, though not as conspicuous as the lanky detective from Baker Street. Father Brown is a short Catholic priest, the hero of the stories of the English writer of the first third of the twentieth century, Gilbert Keith Chesterton. It is a pity that he is not often remembered, and filmed even less often.” Certainly every character in literature has appeared on screens less often than Sherlock Holmes, but how often has

Father Brown, and similar men of the cloth for that matter, made compelling and fascinating detectives? I would lean towards more often, so let's take a look.

The following men of the cloth all may be on the side of the angels, but don't for one minute think they are not Sherlock Holmes. So we will present you with an ecumenical list of clerical mysteries presented on screens, any of which could be classified as a quasi-Holmes production.

The only Father Brown film made in G.K. Chesterton's lifetime (he passed away in 1936) was **"Father Brown, Detective" (1934)**. Walter Connolly played Father Brown. The plot has amateur-sleuth priest Father Brown recovering a diamond cross and edifying its thief Flambeau (Paul Lukas). Not a lot in the way of deducing but there is a canonical reference, just watch for Flambeau's ruse with a smoke bomb borrowed from Doyle's "A Scandal in Bohemia". The well rounded Walter Connolly played Nero Wolfe in "The League of Frightened Men" (1937) and Charlie Chan on NBC radio (1932-38). Halliwell Hobbes, Sir Leopold Fischer here, played Sherlock Holmes on stage in "The Speckled Band" (1911). E. E. Clive, Sergeant Dawes here, played a Cabby in "The Hound of the Baskervilles" (1939) and Inspector Bristol in "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" (1939), with Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes.



Walter Connolly

A year later we move up in rank from a crime-solving Catholic priest to a crime-solving Catholic bishop, in the movie **"The Bishop Misbehaves" (1935)**, featuring Edmund Gwenn as the Bishop of Broadminster. The bishop is into detective stories. One day when he and his sister are out on an adventure they go to a pub where they find three people tied up. The bishop is intrigued by their explanation on why they are tied up, and decides to solve the crime. Throughout the movie many Sherlock Holmes like deductions are made by him.



Edmund Gwenn



Walter Connolly, Father Brown in "Father Brown, Detective" (1934) created the role of the Bishop of Broadminster in the first Broadway production of Frederick Jackson's 1934 play of the same name, on which the film was based. Reginald Owen, Guy Waller in the film, played Sherlock Holmes in "A Study in Scarlet" (1933), and he played Dr. Watson in "Sherlock Holmes" (1932), with Clive Brook as Sherlock Holmes. Melville Cooper, Collins here, played Dr. John H. Watson in TV's "Your Show Time" presentation of "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (1949), with Alan Napier as Sherlock Holmes. Lumsden Hare, a Constable here, played Dr. Watson on stage in "Sherlock Holmes" (1902), with Cuyler Hastings as Sherlock Holmes, and he played Dr. Leighton in the silent film "Sherlock Holmes" (1922), with John Barrymore as Sherlock Holmes.

"The original title of **"The Detective"** (1954) was "Father Brown", and it was based on the first of G.K. Chesterton's "Father Brown" stories.



"Not Smith?"

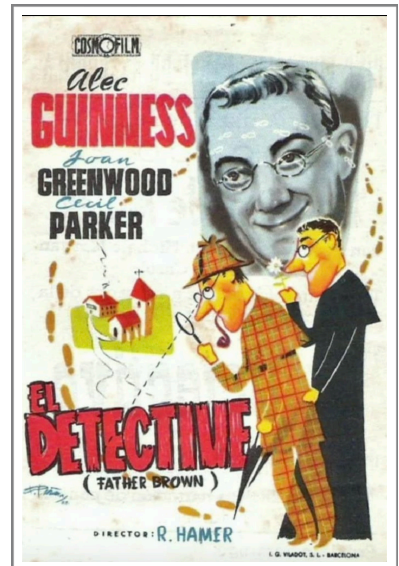
"No. Brown. Ignatius Brown. After St. Ignatius of Loyola"

It featured Alec Guinness, who millennials might only know as Ben 'Obi-Wan' Kenobi, in his one time appearance as Father Brown. Amateur sleuth Father Brown and policeman Wilkins (John Horsley) are summoned before the bishop (Cecil Parker), and told of the plan to protect a valuable old cross from theft. Father Brown takes it upon himself to transport the cross to Rome to prevent its theft. When he boards the London train he meets a handsome bearded priest (Peter Finch), who is actually the master thief Flambeau. When the cross disappears it's up to Father Brown to pursue Flambeau.



Peter Finch and Alec Guinness

In a movie poster for the film, the character of Father Brown is in full Sherlock Holmes costume. With a pipe in mouth, magnifying glass in one hand, and his signature umbrella in his other hand, one wonders how he manages to maintain the pipe with both hands full in the movie poster on the right.



The Detective (1954)

Next we travel to West Germany, where the German TV series, “Die Galerie der großen Detektive” (“The Gallery of the Great Detectives”) (1954-55), had each episode covering a different story from popular crime writers which included Conan Doyle and G. K. Chesterton. In 1954 a featured episode was “Sherlock Holmes liegt im Sterben” (“Sherlock Holmes Lies in Death”) with Ernst Fritz Fürbringer as Sherlock Holmes and Harald Manni as Dr. John Watson. The next year would featured a Father Brown episode.



“Pater Brown findet Daniel Boom” (“Father Brown finds Daniel Boom”) (1955), starring Walter Janssen as Pater Brown. I don’t have a synopsis for this episode, but let me take a wild guess that Daniel Boom is missing?



Walter Janssen

Staying in West Germany in the early 60's German film legend Heinz Rühmann played Father Brown in a pair of films. In **“Das Schwarze Schaf” (1960)** Father Brown is dispatched to a rural backwater by the bishop for making too many headlines in cracking cases.



Heinz Rühmann and Siegfried Lowitz

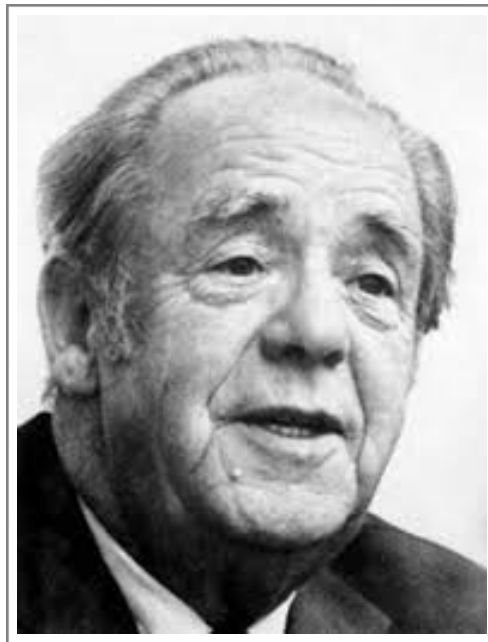
“Das Schwarze Schaf” in English is **“The Black Sheep”**, but France more aptly titled it **“Fais ta valise Sherlock Holmes”** (“Pack Your Suitcase Sherlock Holmes”). In his new locale (Ireland) Brown attempts to prove the innocence of a man accused of murder, by finding the real murderer. It co-starred Fritz Rasp as Lord Kingsley. Heinz Rühmann was Dr. Watson/Macky McPherson in “Der Mann, der Sherlock Holmes war” (1937) with Hans Albers as Sherlock Holmes. Fritz Rasp was Barrymore in Der Hund von Baskerville (1937) with Bruno Güttner as Sherlock Holmes . Heinz Rühmann would reprise his Pater Brown role in **“Er kann's nicht lassen”** (1962), in English **“He Can't Stop Doing It”** . In his second effort he would find himself recovering a stolen Van Dyck painting, resolving an aristocratic feud and trailing a gang of smugglers to Dublin.



Heinz Rühmann

Much like the German TV's “Die Galerie der großen Detektive” (“The Gallery of the Great Detectives”) from earlier, the BBC had its own anthology series featuring adaptations of detective stories, titled **“Detective” (1964-69)**. Also like the German anthology series it would give us both a Sherlock Holmes and a Father Brown sampler. The Sherlock Holmes offering was “The Speckled Band” with Douglas Wilmer as Sherlock Holmes and Nigel Stock as Dr. Watson, which became the 1st episode of Wilmer's 1964 “Sherlock Holmes” 13 episode TV series. The Father Brown offering was

“The Quick One” (1964), featuring Mervyn Johns as Father Brown. In the “The Quick One”, the antagonistic cocksure John Raggley (William Kendall) is murdered in a pub. Father Brown deduces that a mysterious customer known as ‘the quick one’ holds the key to the mystery. Naturally it’s Father Brown who deduces the mysterious customer was James Grant (Ian Anders), who turns out to be an unknowing customer, who ran in for a quick drink and was served by the actual murderer, and became the star eye witness. Sam Kydd, whose role was Willis here, had played a Scotland Yard Sergeant in “The Detective” (1954), with Alec Guinness as Father Brown. Kydd also had played Perkins in “The Hound of the Baskervilles” (1959), with Peter Cushing as Sherlock Holmes and the Unimpressed onlooker, in “The Empty House” episode of the mini-series “Sherlock Holmes” (1951), with Alan Wheatley as Sherlock Holmes. Terence Rigby, a police constable here, would go on to play Detective Sergeant Bates in the “A Message from the Deep Sea” episode of “The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes” (1971), with John Neville as Dr. Thorndyke. He would also play Dr. Watson in “The Hound of the Baskervilles” (1982), with Tom Baker as Sherlock Holmes, and Inspector Layton in “The Sign of the Four” (1983), with Ian Richardson as Sherlock Holmes.



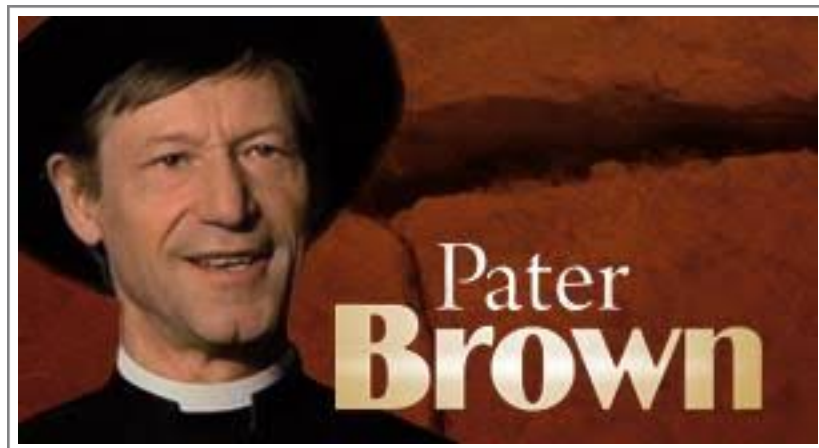
Mervyn Johns

Next Father Brown would show up in 39 episodes of an Austrian/West German TV series titled **Pater Brown (1966-72)**. Austrian actor Josef Meinrad would play the role of Pater Brown. Once again Pater Brown was a crime-solving Catholic priest based on the Father Brown stories of British author G.K. Chesterton. Known more for carrying an umbrella than a pipe or magnifying glass, he still showed up with a magnifying glass on

occasion. Ernst Fritz Fürbringer had a recurring role as Inspektor Gilbert Burns. Fürbringer had a previous direct Sherlockian connection, having played played Sherlock Holmes on West German TV in "Die Galerie der großen Detektive - Sherlock Holmes liegt im Sterben" (Sherlock Holmes Lies In Death) (1954) and in "Dr. med. Hiob Praetorius" (1958).



Georg Lehn and Josef Meinrad



Josef Meinrad - Pater Brown

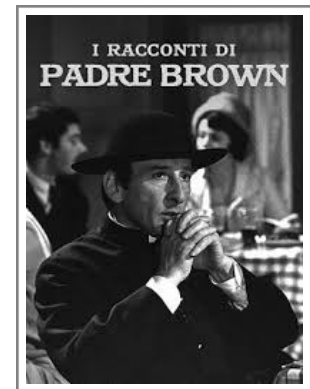
Heinz Rühmann obviously hadn't finished his vows as he would return as Cardinal Erik Braun in the Italian comedy film **"Operazione San Pietro"** (**"Operation St. Peter's"**) (1967). A film released in France as **"Au diable les anges"** (**"To Hell With the Angels"**), and West Germany, where it was released as **"Die Abenteuer des Kardinal Braun"** (**"The Adventure of Cardinal Brown"**). A film in which Vatican police and diverse cardinals, priests, and monks are in pursuit of a gang who stole

a valuable statue. Cardinal Braun seems to have a particular interest in the thieves. It turns out that Cardinal Braun was old friends with the Mafia before he saw the light.



Heinz Rühmann - The Adventure of Cardinal Brown

How can we talk about Father Brown and not have an Italian entry? Well the six episode Rai miniseries series **“I racconti di Padre Brown”** (**“The Tales of Father Brown”**) (1970-71) remedies that. It starred Renato Rascel in the role of Father Brown and Arnaldo Foà, in the role of Flambeau. In the series, based on “The Blue Cross”, Father Martin, actually the elusive thief Flambeau, is converted and brought back on the right path by Father Brown to become his trusted and valuable companion in adventures. The show met such success that, it was rerun as recently as 2010.



Arnaldo Foà and Renato Rascel

Not to be left out of televising the popular Father Brown, who after all was a British Catholic priest, Britain's ATV televised a 13 episode series simply titled **“Father Brown” (1974)**. It featured Kenneth More as Father Brown, with occasional appearances by Dennis Burgess as Hercule Flambeau.



Kenneth More

In depth information about Kenneth More as Father Brown can be found on “The Kenneth More Official Website”. From a piece by David Parkinson on that site we find out that Kenneth More had to be persuaded to take on the role of Father Brown. Kenneth More recalled the efforts of ATV's Lew Grade to pitch the project in his only mention of the series in his 1978 autobiography, ‘More or Less’:

‘For two or three years before I went on holiday I used to have a telephone call from time to time at half past eight in the morning. It went like this.

‘Good morning, Ken. This is Lew Grade speaking/’

‘Good morning, Lew.’

‘Good morning, father?’

‘What?’

‘Good morning, father.’

‘What do you mean, father?’

‘You are going to be Father Brown for me, Kenny,’ he said.

‘I don’t know anything about that.’

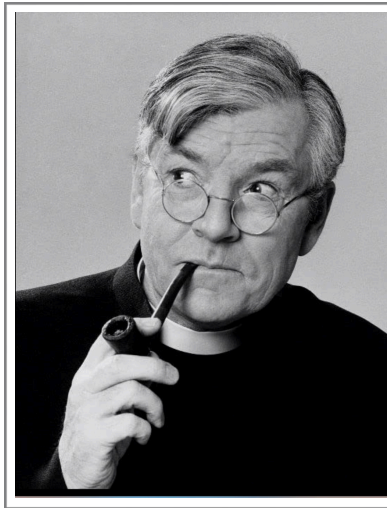
‘Oh yes. We have the rights to Father Brown.’

‘I can’t play Father Brown.’

‘Oh yes, you can...father.’

He kept on ringing to say, ‘Good morning, father. How’s father this morning?’

Finally I said to my agent, 'What do you think about the idea?'
He had discussions with Lew – now Lord – Grade and that is how I became television's Father Brown."



Only a one pipe problem Father?

You might have caught some of these "Father Brown" episodes on "Masterpiece Mystery!", an anthology series which featured various predominately British mystery stories. You may even be familiar with the most prominent series featured by "Masterpiece Mystery!" - a little show depicting adventures of Sherlock Holmes, starring Jeremy Brett. In 1982 "Masterpiece Mystery!" aired four Kenneth More Father Brown episodes; "The Secret Garden"; "The Eye of Apollo", "The Head of Caesar" and "Three Tools of Death".



Kenneth More and Angela Douglas

We did state this was an ecumenical list, so we will leave the priesthood momentarily and focus on a rabbi. **Lanigan's Rabbi (1976 -1977)** which gave us a duo of crime fighters, not Holmes and Watson, but Rabbi David Small and Police Chief Paul Lanigan. Small and Lanigan were friends and both solved crimes in the small town of Cameron, California. Bruce Solomon would play Rabbi Small and Art Carney, no longer a New York City sewer worker on “The Honeymooners”, would play Police Chief Lanigan. Small's ability in this area was attributed to his ‘rabbinic mind’. Stuart Margolin actually played Rabbi Small in the pilot for the series but was replaced by Bruce Solomon for the series. If you blinked you may have missed this series as it was broadcast on a rotating schedule under the title NBC Sunday Mystery Movie, which got cancelled and thus only 4 episodes aired.



Bruce Solomon and Art Carney



Art Carney and Stuart Margolin

Russians love Sherlock Holmes, so of course they must have a Father Brown? да! Lithuania's **"Face on Target" ("Veidas taikinyje") (1978)** a 2 part TV miniseries fills that void. Povilas Gaidis plays Father Brown (tevas Braunas) in a psychological detective drama which takes place in the 1920s. A secret Masonic society has gathered in an abandoned castle. The meeting is interrupted by the murder of the owner of the castle. It turns out that a double was actually killed. This is then followed by a new series of murders. The screenwriter Rimantas Šavelis tied the plots of six short stories into a clever knot, and so cleverly that while the crime from one story ends, the second one is being performed in parallel. The list of the six Chesterton stories used fragmentary used is, "The Face in the Target", "The Queer Feet" "The Fad of the Fisherman" "The Miracle of Moon Crescent" "Flying Stars" and "The Blue Cross". Juris Strenga, who plays Jenkins in the film, is a famous Latvian actor who played Sherlock Holmes in the TV movie "Here Is My Village" (1972). The very first minutes of that movie had boys reading Sherlock Holmes and imagining him pursuing Moriarty. Laimonas Noreika played Moriarty and Vitaly Solomin, the beloved Dr. Watson to Vasily Livanov's Sherlock Holmes, was the headmaster who reads the the Sherlock Holmes book confiscated from the boys. Quite the Sherlockian, Juris Strenga played the Inspector in "Goluboy Karbunkul" (1979), with Algimantas Masiulis as Holmes, and he played Moriarty in "Sherlock Holmes" (1979-82), a musical based on the Gillette play, with Valentin Skulme as Sherlock Holmes.



Povilas Gaidis

How about we have Father Brown in ‘The Big Apple’. That’s just where our Father shows up in the film **“Sanctuary of Fear” (1979)**, filmed in New York City. Barnard Hughes as Father Brown lends aid to a damsel in distress, a young actress Carol Bain (Kay Lenz), entangled in strange events and unable to find a sympathetic ear among the police. I believe this TV movie was the pilot for a Father Brown series which was never green-lighted. Donald Symington, who played Russell Heyman in the film, had played Dr. Watson on stage in Gillette’s “Sherlock Holmes” (1975), with John Colicos as Sherlock Holmes.

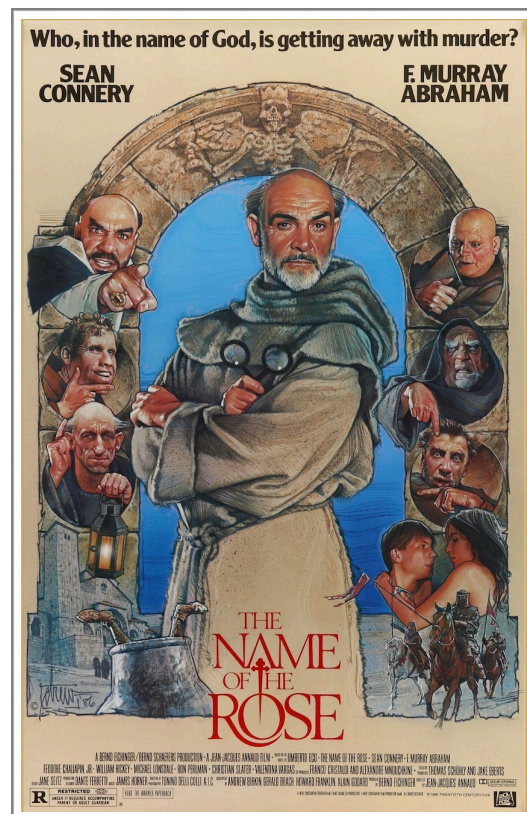
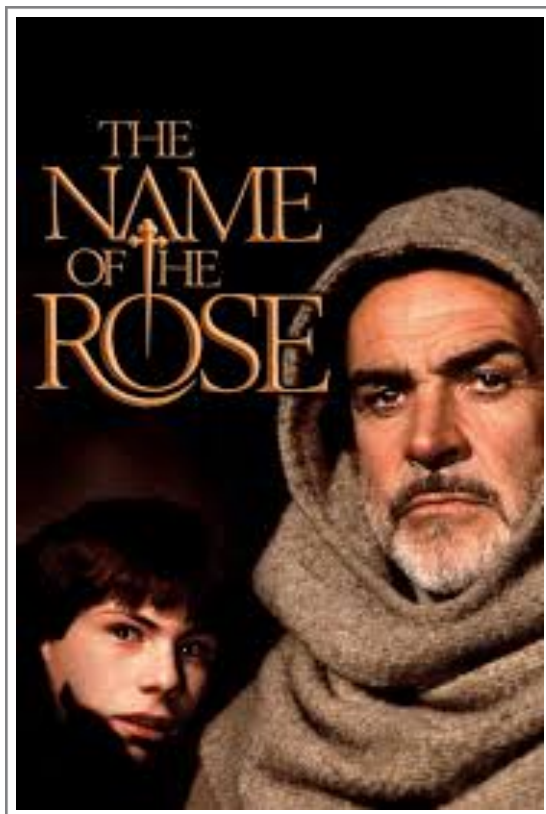


Bernard Hughes and Kay Lenz



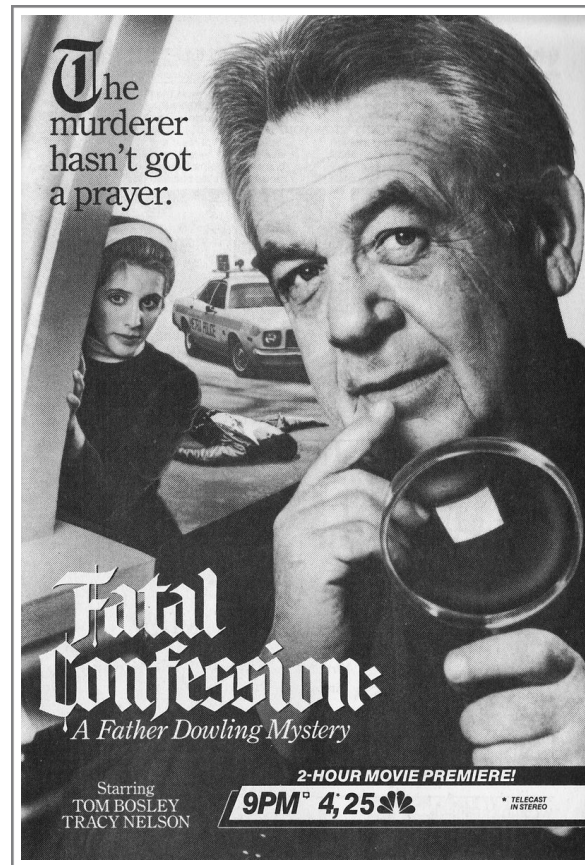
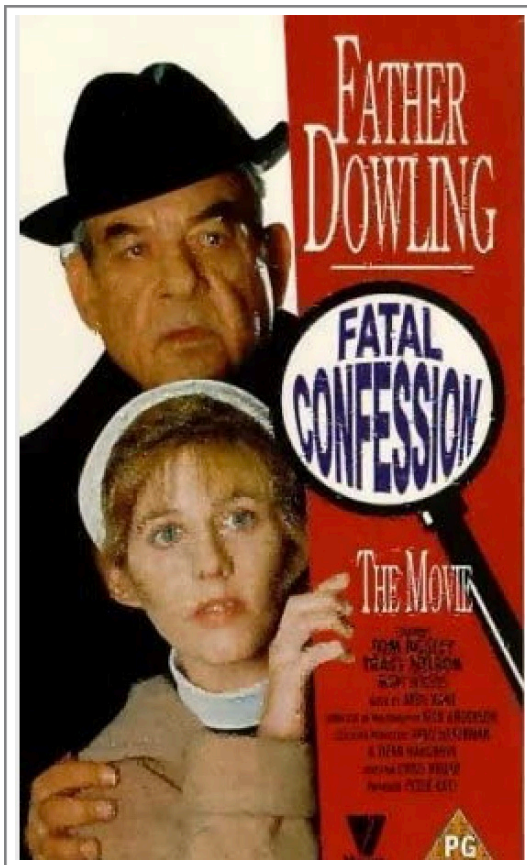
Bernard had the scarf before Benedict

Let us now switch momentarily from the priesthood to an intellectual nonconformist friar who investigates a series of mysterious deaths in an isolated abbey. The film is the critically acclaimed **“The Name of the Rose” (1986)**, featuring Sean Connery as William von Baskerville and Christian Slater as Adso of Melk. From the story perspective William of Baskerville and Adso of Melk are take-offs of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. “The Hound of the Baskervilles” is the best known Sherlock Holmes novel, and particularly in the novel “The Name of the Rose”, William is presented as master of deductive reasoning from evidence. Meanwhile, Adso is his ignorant sidekick who writes down the stories. In one scene, William of Baskerville is amazed when he discovers a book by Umberto of Bologna, a nod to Umberto Eco, who teaches at the University of Bologna, and is the author of the book on which the movie is based. Robert De Niro auditioned for the role of William, but director Jean-Jacques Annaud changed his mind, because De Niro wanted to have a sword duel between William and Bernardo Gui. One of Christian Slater’s earliest roles was as Billy the page boy in “Sherlock Holmes: The Strange Case of Alice Faulkner” (1981) with Frank Langella as Sherlock Holmes.



Sean Connery as William von Baskerville

In the United States the priest detective would be named Father Dowling, and based on the literary series of Father Dowling Mystery books authored by Ralph M. McInerney. He was introduced to the viewers in a made-for-TV movie on NBC titled **“Fatal Confession: A Father Dowling Mystery” (1987)**. Father Frank Dowling would be played by actor Tom Bosley, best known for playing Howard Cunningham, Richie’s Dad, for a decade on the hit sitcom Happy Days (1974-1984). This priest detective would have a Watson, in the form of Sister Stephanie ‘Steve’ Oskowski, played by Tracy Nelson (the daughter of singer Ricky Nelson). His first investigation occurs when he is summoned to speak to a young parishioner who has threatened to leap off a window ledge unless some one can tell him who his real parents are. After the boy leaps, Dowling’s anguish and feeling of guilt has him investigate the dead boy’s wishes. This investigation leads Dowling to a politician (Leslie Nielsen) and a syndicate matriarch (Sada Thompson), and possibly a trail of murder.



Tom Bosley and Tracy Nelson

First we will make a second stop in Italy, before the pilot film for Father Dowling was made into a series, RAI and Téléfrance released a Padre Brown miniseries titled **“Sei delitti per padre Brown” (“Six Crimes for Father Brown”)** (1988). It featured Emrys James, a Welsh Shakespearean actor as Father Brown, with Elio Pandolfi doing the necessary voice dubbings. This Father Brown was a wandering and homeless priest, so the ninety minute episodes were set in very different countries, from England to Bavaria, to Austria, to the monster garden of Bomarzo in Italy. Prior to this series Emrys James had played Inspector Athelney Jones in the TV movie “The Sign of Four” (1987), with Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes.

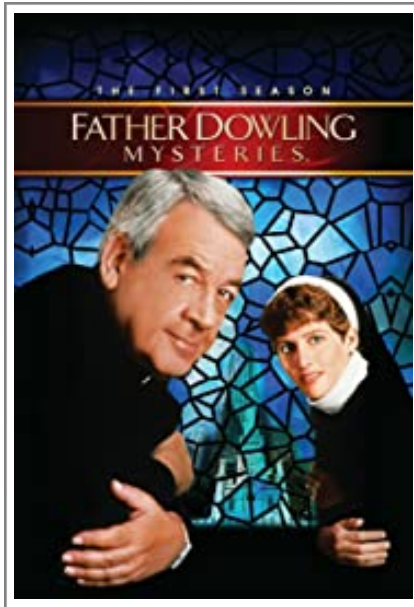


Emrys James



Six Crimes for Father Brown

Why the delay between the Father Dowling pilot movie and the start of the **“Father Dowling Mysteries” (1989-91)** TV series? Well the answer is simple, the series was originally set to premiere in October 1988, but pushed to 1989 due to the 1988 Writers' Strike. Once again, like the pilot film, the show features a Catholic priest, Father Frank Dowling played by Tom Bosley, who solves murders, abductions and other mysteries in his Chicago parish, assisted by a young streetwise nun, Sister Stephanie Oskowski, better known as ‘Steve’, played by Tracy Nelson. Besides the problems the crimes present, Father Dowling and Steve are constantly facing interference from the Bishop's representative, Father Prestwick, who was not in the pilot movie, and was played by James Stephens.



Tom Bosley and Tracy Nelson

Of biggest interest for Sherlockians is the episode of “The Father Dowling Mysteries” titled **“The Consulting Detective Mystery” (25 April 1991)**, since in this episode Father Dowling meets Sherlock Holmes! Lloyd Eastland (Kurt Fuller) is shot in the act of hiding papers in a candlestick by a man who is unable to retrieve the papers before security guards arrive. A short time later, a candlestick is stolen from Father Dowling's church. Stains on the floor, metal shavings and a footprint, lead Dowling to deduce the thief's identity. Sergeant Clancy (Regina Krueger) compares Dowling to Sherlock Holmes, and arrests the thief. Meanwhile, Dowling discovers a thief in the process of stealing another candlestick. Dowling must confess that he arrested the wrong man. Martin Kowecki (Richard Roat), an ex-con and the man Dowling accused, loses his job as a result. Concerned that his powers of logic and reasoning are failing him, Dowling gives away his copy of "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" (his second favorite book to the Bible) to Sister Stephanie (Tracy Nelson). That evening Dowling is awoken by a vision of

Sherlock Holmes (Rupert Frazer). He tells Dowling that his belief in him made him real, and that should Dowling lose his faith in his methods, Holmes will cease to exist. He has appeared to restore Dowling's faith, and to help solve the mystery. He continues appearing, although only Dowling can see him. Dowling's friends start to doubt his sanity, that is until he solves the mystery. Tom Bosley was best known as Richie Cunningham's father, Howard Cunningham, on the hit show Happy Days and Tracy Nelson was the daughter of teen idol and early TV star Ricky Nelson and Kristin Harmon, older sister of NCIS star Mark Harmon. NBC canceled the series after the first season. ABC picked up the show as a mid-season replacement and then aired another full season before it was canceled for good in 1991.



Rupert Frazer and Tom Bosley



Rupert Frazer

Certainly the most unusual, yet quite entertaining, Pastor Brown comes from the puppet cartoon **“Проклятая книга” (Cursed Book) (1990)**, based on the story “The Blast of the Book” by G. K. Chesterton. Professor Openshaw tells Pastor Brown the story of the book that belongs to Dr. Hankey which has the ability to make people disappear. Psychic Professor Openshaw is so detached from real life that he confuses the military alarm with a signal from the other world. Pastor Brown, with his characteristic irony, brings the carried away professor back to the real problems of today. Pastor Brown smokes a pipe, uses a magnifying glass, and the men sit in chairs discussing things, reminiscent of the abode at 221B Baker Street. Professor Openshaw very much resembles the Sidney Paget illustrations of Sherlock Holmes. Hmm, could Psychic Professor Openshaw’s detachment be a dig at Arthur Conan Doyle’s spiritualism beliefs? Or is it a reference to Holmes’ drug habits? I wonder? Near the end is an inspection of a hat, by Pastor Brown, which reminds me of the scene in “The Blue Carbuncle”. Thanks to Alexander Sedov I was able to watch this video with English subtitles.



Pastor Brown and Professor Openshaw



Vsevolod Abdulov voices Pastor Brown and all the characters.

Is the next entry Sherlock Holmes? Cadfael's a detective like no other, he is a scientist, a man of action, with a keen deductive mind and a sense of justice. Sounds like Sherlock Holmes! But wait, Brother Cadfael also happens to be a Benedictine monk in 12th Century England, mainly at the Benedictine Abbey in Shrewsbury where he lives. The show was titled **“Cadfael” (1994-1998)** with Derek Jacobi donning the monk's robes as the heroic sleuth. The show titles were from books by Ellis Peters, who wrote “The Cadfael Chronicles”. The television program was filmed in Hungary, since the original abbey in Shrewsbury no longer stands. Derek Jacobi would later voice Sherlock Holmes in an audio version of “The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes” (2013) and play Sherlock Holmes in the radio play “Sherlock Holmes: The Hellhound” (2017). Sean Pertwee, Hugh Beringar in the show, would play Gareth Lestrade in the TV show “Elementary” (2013-14).



Derek Jacobi



Derek Jacobi and Sean Pertwee

When we think of Catholic priests, we usually think of Italy. When Italians think of a Catholic priest detective, they think of Don Matteo. Why Don Matteo? Well the TV show **“Don Matteo” (2000-present)** has given them an ordinary Catholic priest with an extraordinary ability to read people and solve crimes for going on 20 years, and 256 episodes at last count. In the first episode he opens his suitcase at his new parish and takes out his childhood keepsakes, one of which is a drawing he made of Sherlock Holmes, by way of demonstrating his passion and inspiration as a detective. Don Matteo, played by Terence Hill, is a parish priest who never met an unjustly accused person he didn't want to help. Matteo has his Watson too, Marshal Antonio Cecchini, a middle aged Carabinieri, who also happens to be Matteo's best friend. Cecchini is played by Italian comedian Nino Frassica. As is the formula for many of priest detective productions (as well as Sherlock Holmes adventures), the plot revolves around the titular character, aiding the local police, or in this case the Carabinieri, in solving crimes (usually murder cases). And of course besides the crimes, the titular character must deal with a dissenting direct superior of that police force, in this case Captain Flavio Anceschi (and later Giulio Tommasi and Anna Olivieri), who has little tolerance for their ‘interference’ with the investigation. The series has a Polish version “Ojciec Mateusz” which we will discussing later.



Terence Hill



Terence Hill and Nino Frassica

Next up is the American TV series **“Monk”**(2002-09), featuring Tony Shaloub as Adrian Monk. Adrian Monk is a brilliant San Francisco detective, whose obsessive compulsive disorder just happens to get in the way. If there is a list of Quasi-Holmes, that is, brilliant investigators who resemble Sherlock Holmes, the honorary place on such a list is to be taken by Adrian Monk. In the very first episode, "Mr. Monk and the Candidate", Sharona, his Watson, sets the stage for the viewers on what to expect from Adrian Monk in future episodes. While cops at a crime scene are staring with confused looks, and one cop asks her "what's he doing?", Sharona responds, "I love this part, he does this zen Sherlock Holmes thing."



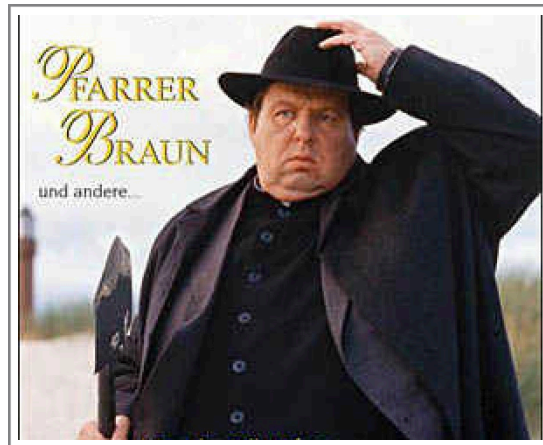
Monk



Tony Shaloub

No! Wait just a dang minute!!! This might be a Monk and a detective, but he is no man of the cloth! He is not a man belonging to an order... just because he suffers from obsessive compulsive disorder... that's a dis-order! Who slipped this entry in on us? Take it out. Remove this Monk immediately! What...he is your favorite Monk detective, even over Sean Connery and Sir Derek Jacobi? Okay, we will be merciful and leave him in just for you. But say a repentance of 221 'Our Fathers' and 221 'Hail Marys' my child.

Next we return to Germany, but will we be able to find competition for Heinz Rühmann, as he was the idyllic Father Brown to them. **Pfarrer Braun (2003-2014)** was a humorous German priest crime series, loosely based on the character of Father Brown with Ottfried Fischer in the lead role. The portly pastor with the support of his sacristan Armin Knopp (Antonio Wannek), his housekeeper Margot Roßhauptner (Hansi Jochmann) and the clumsy Kommissar Geiger (Peter Heinrich Brix), solve the cases, despite the express prohibition by his Bishop Hemmelrath (Hans-Michael Rehberg). Do we see a pattern or a formula in the majority of these Father Brown entries? The sacristan or friend, or a nun replicates the Dr. Watson role, the housekeeper replicates the Mrs. Hudson role, and the police person who is aided and often takes the credit replicates the Inspector Lestade role. And of course with the priest detectives there is always a superior who inevitably clashes with our hero over his methods or involvement. After 22 episodes over an 11 year span, the series was discontinued due to the progressive health problems of Ottfried Fischer. The creative took the liberty of killing poor Pastor Guido Braun at the end of the 22nd episode.



Ottfried Fischer



Hansi Jochmann - Ottfried Fischer - Antonio Wannek

On Twitter, I read the comment, “Growing up in Poland, we don't have Sherlock Holmes, we have Ojciec Mateusz”. Well my tweeting friend, without Sherlock Holmes we would not have had “Don Matteo”, the Italian series you were based on, which means Ojciec may never had existed. **“Ojciec Mateusz” (2008-present) (“Father Matthew”)** is a Polish television series, which features Artur Żmijewski as the titular character, a Roman Catholic priest who, after returning from a mission to Belarus, is sent to work in a small parish. He has a talent for solving crimes, which leads him to delve into many mysteries. He is extremely brilliant, intelligent and perceptive. The show is set in Sandomierz, although scenes in the church are recorded in Glinianka near Otwock, the vicarage in Anin in Warsaw.

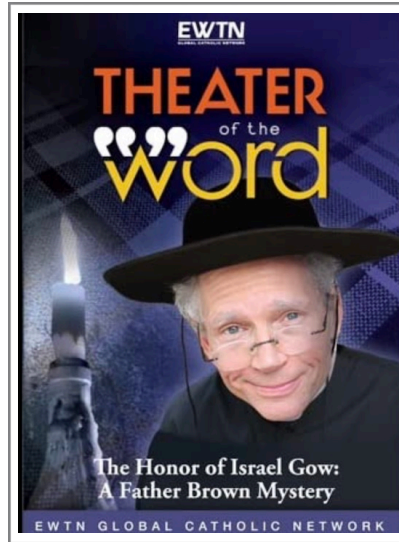


The Solitary Cyclist Ojciec Mateusz



Artur Żmijewski

Kevin O'Brien, president of Theater of the Word, Inc., would play Father Brown himself when he presented a drama, in a Masterpiece Theatre type production, for EWTN Global Catholic Network. The film was titled **"The Honor of Israel Gow"** (2009). In the film, Flambeau (Julian Ahlquist), now a private detective, and Father Brown are at Glengyle Castle in Scotland, helping Inspector Craven (Joshua Thomas) of Scotland Yard to investigate the peculiar death and burial of the late Earl, a reclusive man who lived as a hermit with only one servant: the silent Israel Gow (Frank C. Turner).



Kevin O'Brien



Eric Kaiser Johnson and Kevin O'Brien

Thus far, regarding ‘detectives in a cassock’, we have only seen only gentlemen on the list, but we have not seen the ladies. To cure this we offer you the Russian 8-episode TV film **“Pelagia and the White Bulldog”** (“Пелагия и белый бульдог”) (2009).

Sister Pelagia, played by actress Polina Kutepova, is an Orthodox nun who is investigating the crimes in Zavolzhsk, in the Trans-Volga province, during the Russian Empire in the late 19th century. No dates are given, but references to Sherlock Holmes, the Olympics and Madam Curie make it clear that the action is set in the late 1890s or in the early 1900s. Bishop Mitrofaniy is approached by his aunt, who lives in the Drozdovka estate, with a request to help find an intruder who is planning to exterminate her white bulldogs, a rare breed that she is breeding. Instead of dealing with the problem himself, the Bishop assigns the task to the nun Pelagia, an extremely perceptive and distinguished young woman with an extraordinary mind. Sister Pelagia is capable of unraveling even the most difficult crime. At the same time, Inquisitor Bubentsov (Timofei Tribuntsev), from the Holy Synod in St. Petersburg, comes to the provincial center in order to eradicate manifestations of paganism in the local Christian environment. Initially unrelated storylines intertwine in unexpected ways. The film was adapted by Russian director Yuri Moroz from Boris Akunin’s trilogy of Sister Pelagia novels, specifically his first novel “Pelagia and the White Bulldog” (2006).



Polina Kutepova

Okay BBC lets cash in on the cash cow created by the Guy Ritchie, Robert Downey “Sherlock Holmes” film and the Stephen Moffat, Mark Gatiss, Benedict Cumberbatch “Sherlock” TV series. America has “Elementary”, what can we do... why roll out Father Brown again, of course. All we need to do is replace the deerstalkers, the ulsters and Ben’s jacket, with a clerical collar and robes, the magnifying glass and pipe, with glasses and an umbrella, the hansom cab, with a bicycle, Watson with a nun, Lestrade with a constable, Mrs. Hudson with a new housekeeper, London with the Cotswolds, and we have the perfect crime solving priest program. No one will think he is Sherlock Holmes, he is Father Brown. The show was of course the new and shiny version of Father Brown, aptly titled **“Father Brown” (2013-present)**, and features Mark Williams as Father Brown. Set in the 1950s, it doesn’t always have murders, but there is a lot of crime. It is basically a reboot of the 1970s series of the same name, but extremely popular nevertheless.



The British Heinz Rühmann: Mark Williams cycles through the kingdom as Father Brown for the BBC.



The cast of Father Brown

An unusual independent Polish film **“Sherlock Holmes i Ludzie Jutra” (Sherlock Holmes and the People of Tomorrow) (2014)** has Tomasz Gwincinski play ‘Rabbi, Sherlock’. According to creator Joanna Gwincinska (5 august 2014): “The film itself is highly metaphorical and is not based on any book of Sir Conan Doyle. I took only the name of Sherlock and used it in a title. The film and the script, which I wrote, is totally my own author vision. However, ‘Rabbi Sherlock’ is a character in the movie, but not a main one. Nowadays in Poland people are leading an investigation about the Smolensk catastrophe and the film relates to that. We are fans of Sherlock Holmes and that is why the director and the author of the script wanted Sherlock to be a part of it.”



Sherlock Holmes and the People of Tomorrow



Tomasz Gwincinski as Rabbi Sherlock

Also set in the 1950s, in the Cambridgeshire village of Grantchester, the ITV show **“Grantchester (2014-present)”** is a British detective drama based on James Runcie’s “Grantchester Mysteries”. However, unlike the Father Brown series which feature a Catholic priest, the story centers on a sleuthing Anglican vicar. It features Vicar Sidney Chambers played by James Norton and his partner in crime-fighting, Detective Inspector Geordie Keating, played by Robson Green. Unlike his Father Brown, Sidney Chambers is young, and attractive. Having served in the Scots Guard during the war, Sidney is haunted by nightmares and even flashbacks, really now Watson? Sidney’s friend Inspector Geordie is your usual over-worked police detective. His analytical approach to cases balances well with the vicar’s instinctive style. Leonard Finch, played by Al Weaver is Sidney’s gay curate at the church. Mrs. Maguire, played by Tessa Peake-Jones is the obligatory housekeeper, ah yes Mrs. Hudson no? The heart of the show however is the deep friendship between Sidney and Geordie. Whether they are solving crimes, or dealing with personal problems, they always come through for one another, sound familiar Holmes and Watson admirers? Note: for the 2019 season James Norton chose to leave the show, so was replaced by Tom Brittney as Reverend Will Davenport.



Robson Green and James Norton



Tom Brittney and James Norton

What no Canadian entry? Well I adore Yannick Bisson as Detective William Murdoch in the fantastic **“Murdoch Mysteries” (2008-present)**, and he professes to almost becoming a priest and is a devout Catholic throughout the series, but he is a police detective and, and a forensic scientist, not a man of the cloth. Wait a minute someone mentioned to me that Canada has a crime drama television series **“Cardinal” (2017-present)**. Let me check that one out... The series adapts the novels of crime writer Giles Blunt, focusing on police detective John Cardinal, played by Billy Campbell and his partner Lise Delorme, played by Karine Vanasse, who investigate crimes in the fictional city of Algonquin Bay. There is even a Detective Musgrave and a Dr. Bell, which screams out Sherlock Holmes. But, oh Canada, you’ve fooled me, he is a Cardinal, but not a religious one. I gave it the college try Canada, but I don’t have an entry for you. There must be a white collar out there in the great white north somewhere, "Eh?"



Murdoch Cast



**Lise Delorme and Billy Campbell
Cardinal**

Thus far the men of the cloth detectives have been exactly one thing, almost entirely men. Here we present a woman who qualifies on behalf of the spiritualist movement (And coincidentally who was the biggest proponent of that religious movement? A fellow named Arthur Conan Doyle, who is often associated with a certain detective himself). In Russia's **"Detective Anna"** (**"Anna-detektiv"**) (2016-17), Aleksandra Nikiforova plays Anna Mironova and Dmitriy Frid plays Detective Yakov Platonovich Shtolman. Anna Mironova is a spiritualist who solves crimes, living at the end of the 19th century (and no one does 19th century settings as well as the Russians). In the town of Zatonsk, the spirits of the dead literally haunt her, begging to help. Aided by her visions, Anna manages to investigate and solve mysterious crimes which have the police baffled. An experienced detective, Police detective Yakov Shtolman, unwillingly teams up with and/or crosses paths with Anna while hunting down criminals. Initially, Shtolman is rumored to have transferred from St. Petersburg for the inappropriate behavior of visiting opium dens (how about that Sherlock). But in reality he is a top notch detective, who has a Watson, in his assistant Anton Korobejnikov (Sergey Druzyak) and a Moriarty in Prince Razumovsky (Algis Arlauskas). A detective and a spiritualist, doesn't that conjure up Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle? "Detective Anna" won the Best TV Series (more than 24 episodes) award in 2017 by the Association of Professional Film and Television Producers.



Detective Anna



Dmitriy Frid and Aleksandra Nikiforova

The Name of the Rose (2019), sound familiar? Why of course there was that 1986 film with Sean Connery as William von Baskerville and Christian Slater as Adso of Melk. This time however Rai 1 of Italy commissioned a TV miniseries which was also based on the novel “The Name of the Rose” by Umberto Eco. John Turturro now assumed the role of William of Baskerville, with Damian Hardung as Adso of Melk, and Rupert Everett as Bernard Gui. We travel back once again to Northern Italy in the early 1300s., where Franciscan friar William of Baskerville (Guglielmo da Baskerville), with young novice Adso of Melk, travels to an isolated Benedictine abbey to mediate in a dispute between representatives of the Avignon papacy and those of his Franciscan Order. When they arrive in the abbey they become involved in a chain of mysterious deaths. Peter Davidson narrates the events of the series from the point of view of an old Adso. Rupert Everett had played Sherlock Holmes in the movie “Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Silk Stocking” (2004). John Turturro had appeared occasionally as Ambrose Monk, Adrian Monk’s older brother, on the afore mentioned TV show “Monk”, a role that was a homage to Mycroft Holmes, the older brother of Sherlock Holmes.



John Turturro and Damian Hardung



The Name of the Rose

With Sherlock Holmes taking the Far East by storm in the past decade, it comes as no surprise that South Korea would come up with a detective priest of their own. **“The Fiery Priest” (2019-present)**. A Catholic priest Kim Hae Il with anger management issues played by Kim Nam-gil teams up with detective Goo Dae Young from the Gudam Police Station played by Kim Sung-kyun to solve the murder of an elderly priest and they get caught up in the plans of a criminal group known as the ‘devil’s cartel’. Kim Hae-il is a priest who can’t control his anger whenever he sees injustice and swears freely at evil people who live comfortably despite their crimes. his character was a National Intelligence Service agent before he entered priesthood. He became a priest due to a traumatic incident in his past, which will be a key point in the drama.

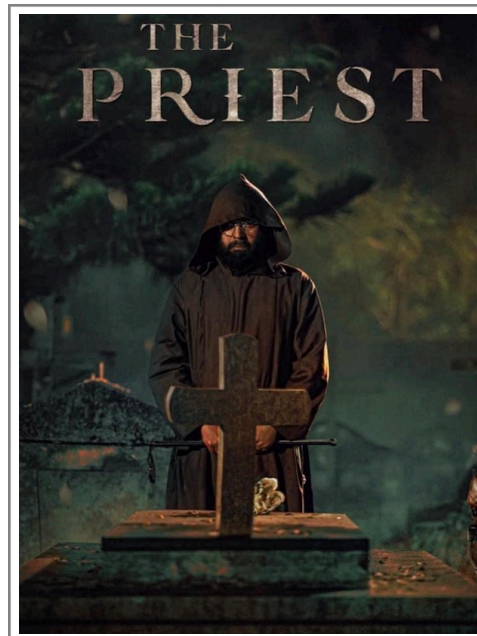


Kim Nam-gil and Kim Sung-kyun



Kim Sung-kyun, Kim Nam-gil and Honey Lee

Indian mega-star, Mammooty plays Father Carmen Benedict in the film **The Priest** (2021). A priest and a police officer are trying to solve a set of mysterious suicides. As their investigation closes in, they discover another crime with even farther-reaching consequences. A review by movie critic Gautaman Bhaskaran in the India News Republic, titled "Mammooty Plays Sherlock Holmes in a Bad Script" tells us: "...The film in Malayalam has Mammooty essaying the title position as Father Carmen Benedict. Now think about him because the hooded character from a Dan Brown thriller, and top this up by giving him the traits of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes. ... Benedict does not dwell in London's 221 Baker Street, however in a distant place in Kerala. He, not like Holmes, does not have Watson as his sounding-board, however strikes round with his pet canine, which seems to be imply and menacing. Benedict within the true Holmes' type helps the native police, headed by Deputy Superintendent Shekhar (Sivadas Kannur), crack crimes. This man (very like Inspector Lestrade in Sherlockian tales) follows the Father faithfully, at all times a step behind, meek and obedient. After all, Benedict does not take credit score for fixing instances, gifting this honor to the lads in khaki. ...Benedict is not any odd sleuth, like Holmes, who relied on his unbelievable powers of scientific deduction. The priest does make use of science, however goes past it, firmly satisfied that logic and cause can not clarify all the pieces that occurs on this world. ...It is definitely humorous to see a Mammooty sporting an impeccable hat going round with a magnifying glass, and his inquiries to the cops about forensic studies and the like appear extra like a joke than any try at critical sleuthing."



Mammooty (Muhammad Kutty Panaparambil Ismail)

We will finish up with a pandemic delayed upcoming series, in production (?) **“The Sister Boniface Mysteries” (2021?)**. What we do know about the series is that BritBox announced the commission of ten 45 minute episodes for the series in February 2020. Set in 1960s rural England, the series of light-hearted murder mysteries follows the investigations of Sister Boniface, crime scene investigator, played by Lorna Watson. Watson will be reprising her role as Sister Boniface from “The Bride Of Christ” (2013) episode of the Father Brown series. Sister Boniface possesses an I.Q. of 156, a Phd in forensic science, and a fully equipped crime laboratory. She will work alongside a detective inspector played by Sam Gillespie and a detective sergeant played by Felix Livingstone.

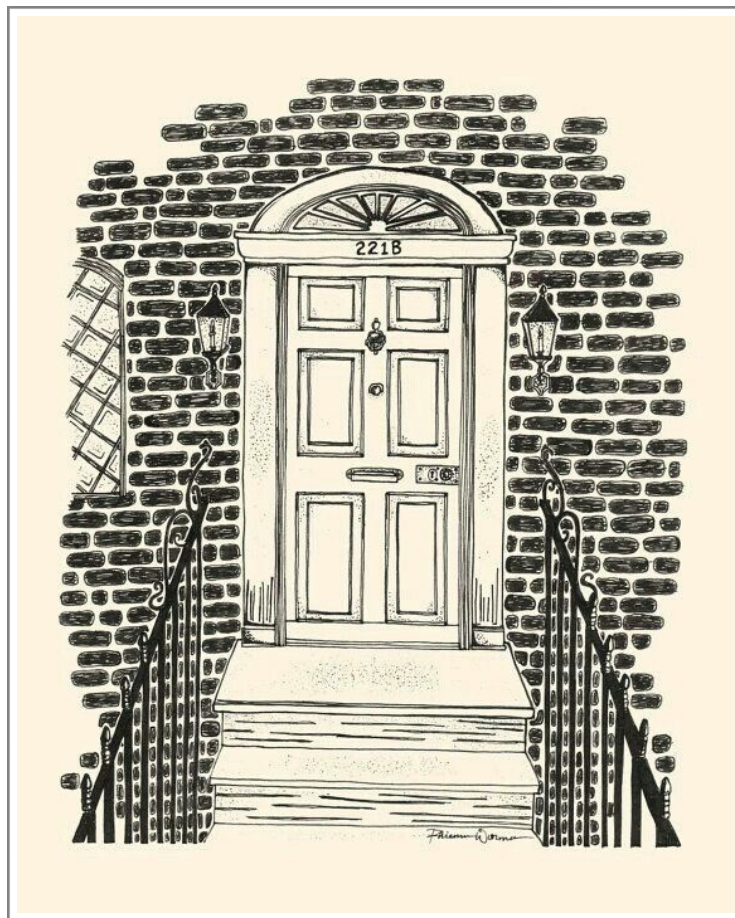


Mark Williams, Hugo Speer and Lorna Watson



Lorna Watson

We have read that G.K. Chesterton received inspiration from St. Francis of Assisi, Dickens's "The Mystery of Edwin Drood", and the cases of C. Auguste Dupin and Sherlock Holmes. However, unlike the deductive Sherlock Holmes, Father Brown's methods tended to be intuitive rather than deductive when directly taken from Chesterton's Father Brown stories, "The Blue Cross" (1910), "The Innocence of Father Brown" (1911), "The Wisdom of Father Brown" (1914), "The Incredulity of Father Brown" (1926), "The Secret of Father Brown" (1927); and "The Scandal of Father Brown" (1935). The same can't be said in the cinematic world of men of the cloth as detectives, where we have witnessed in most instances the scale tipped more to the deductive side. Our cinematic priests seem to be building a stairway to Baker Street, not to heaven.



17 Steps to 221B