

HARDBOILED & HIGH HEELED

The Woman Detective in Popular Culture

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Kojak, gnarled little Baretta, Ironside in his wheelchair, sixty-something Buddy Ebsen as Barnaby Jones. Consider, too, that television has generously allowed middle-aged women all sorts of other roles—comedy, drama, and even amateur sleuthing à la Jessica Fletcher. Yet with the exception of *Cagney & Lacey*, American television hasn't extended this prime-time generosity to the world of professional investigation, opening it up to multiple kinds of female bodies.

Because the detective hero has been naturalized as male (the dick), his body can take all shapes, ages, and forms—Kojak to Ironside to Columbo. But a female dick is inherently unnatural. Not surprisingly, with a few exceptions such as *Cagney & Lacey*, the female investigator has been obsessively pictured as the full-bodied calendar girl or blonde knockout, reassuring us of a “natural woman” who knows how to wear high heels—the traditional joke and test of cross-dressing men in films from *Some Like It Hot* (1959) to *Tootsie* (1982).

THE SEVENTIES: TITLE SEVEN AND T&A

After *Honey West*, it was more than fifteen years before another woman on television had her own detective business. Instead, the next women investigators pictured in prime time were undercover police detectives, players on mostly all-boy teams. Unlike the solo private investigator, the police detective—no matter how maverick—is part of the legal establishment. More important, these are *male* establishments, where a woman is unlikely to be in charge. For television, the woman on the police squad can bring a titillating sexual difference to the picture without changing the big picture in threatening ways.

Yet in the early 1970s, the picture of the policewoman *did* pose the threat of major changes within a staid, traditional organization, and it was a threat of the worst kind: it came from outside and it pushed outsiders in. Congress passed Title VII of the Civil Rights Act in 1972, prohibiting discrimination in public law enforcement hiring. The next year, it passed the Crime Control Act, which mandated equal-opportunity employment policies for law enforcement agencies getting federal aid.

Police departments and federal agencies were radically jolted by these laws, which literally demanded reimagining the *bodies* on the force. Most police departments had height and weight minimums of 5 feet, 7 inches, and 140 pounds—standards that would have eliminated 70 percent of American women. Also, for women to be promoted as the laws required, they had to get experience on all levels of

the force. So in addition to changing the physical requirements, police forces also had to assign the women to the “men’s” duties of patrol work, undercover, and backup. A *New York Times* story described the resentment of male cops assigned to female partners: “It was like a shotgun wedding for a lifelong bachelor.”⁴

The uncomfortable coupling created immediate results, publicity, and drama. In 1971 there were only a dozen policewomen on patrol in the entire United States. By 1974 women comprised 6 percent of the police in Washington, D.C., while other major cities saw policewomen rise from nearly zero to 2–3 percent of the force. The public records, rumors, and perceptions were all drastically at odds. Most polls showed that residents preferred male cops and thought women were untrustworthy in the role. This contradicted the actual records, which found the policewomen were similar or equal to their male colleagues in terms of successful arrests and convictions, safety and driving records, and injuries sustained. And the problem most women cops complained about was not the hostility of the job but the hostility of their male colleagues. Meanwhile, in September 1974, headlines were made when a policewoman was shot and killed in the line of duty, the first such incident since the FBI began keeping records in 1960. But sexist rumors persisted, such as the circulating story of a woman cop who wouldn’t get out of the car in the pouring rain to direct traffic around a blazing building because she’d just come from the hairdresser.⁵

By the mid-1970s, American television was in the midst of a law-and-order revival, prompted by the unsettling endings of both the Vietnam War and the Nixon presidency. In the late 1960s, there had been few police dramas on television. For that matter, the darkest and most scandalous televised police drama had been the live coverage of the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968. Police violence against the protesters was part of the televised spectacle, and shocked audiences heard anchorman Dan Rather crying out in protest that the “thugs” were out of control. Throughout the later years of the Vietnam War, cops didn’t fare well in public opinion. Most often they were caught by news cameras as the helmeted riot forces pitted against unarmed college kids and hymn-singing protesters.

But sympathy for the police is never entirely absent, and even during the days of the most turbulent antiwar and civil-rights demonstrations, NBC held onto the documentary-style police drama *Adam-12* (1968–75) as one of its most successful series. By 1974, a law-and-order revival had clearly occurred, and sympathetic cops infused the networks. *The Rookies* (1972–76), *The Streets of San Francisco* (1972–77), *Kojak* (1973–78), *Columbo* (1971–77), and *Police Story* (1973–77) were

later joined by *S.W.A.T.* (1975–76), *Baretta* (1975–78), *Starsky and Hutch* (1975–79), and *CHiPS* (1977–83). The heroes of these series were tough guys, but they were also decent, fair, vulnerable human beings, obviously at odds with the counterculture’s fascist-pig stereotypes of the previous era.

So when ABC and NBC launched shows about women cops in the fall of 1974, they were responding to these conflicting trends of conservative backlash (love your police authorities!) and liberal, even threatening change (women are now police authorities!). NBC’s police drama *Amy Prentiss* lasted less than one season as part of the rotating stories on the *NBC Sunday Mystery Movie*, which more successfully launched *Columbo*, *McCloud*, and *McMillan and Wife*. The premise behind *Amy Prentiss* was that the police-detective chief of San Francisco dies unexpectedly, leaving the lovely widow Prentiss as next in line for the job. In the early 1990s, the PBS miniseries *Prime Suspect* would use a similar scenario of the lone woman in charge of a male squad, but for 1974, this may have been too bizarre. *Get Christie Love* with its black undercover cop also lasted only one season (1974–75), but *Police Woman* (1974–78) survived and thrived, offering a long-legged team-player in pinup-style, a way to allay the fears of having the woman in the job of the man.

Christie Love was the riskiest and most interesting character of these three, a hip, black L.A. undercover cop with advanced karate skills and a tough jive mouth: “You’re under arrest, sugah!” Christie was actually modeled on a veteran black New York police detective, Olga Ford, who had been on the job long before the 1970s federal mandates about minorities in law enforcement. Ford served as an advisor for the series’ premier episode, but the overall result was less gritty realism than comic-book Zap! Pow! and Whap! In that episode, Christie takes on six macho gang members, dispatching them easily with her bare hands and without streaking her mascara.

For her 1974 audience, Christie Love’s physical prowess and African-American beauty would have been immediately recognizable as a version of Pam Grier, knockout star of the 1970s black action flicks I describe in chapter 5. Like the Pam Grier heroines, Christie Love was bad-ass and brash. Everyone was out to “get” this cop, not only the bad guys but also her police-force superiors, frustrated by her independent style and mouthiness. Christie, who wore unusually brief miniskirts as her undercover disguise, was played by Teresa Graves, the bikini-wearing comedian from *Laugh-In*, and in one of the final episodes of her police series, her costars from *Laugh-In* showed up in cameo appearances as witnesses, fellow officers, and perps.



Fig. 6 Teresa Graves as the undercover cop heroine of *Get Christie Love* (ABC, 1974–75). Courtesy of Photofest.

The series was not renewed, but as a jive-talking woman cop who was *not* a team player, Christie Love probably wouldn't have lasted long on a real police force, either. Yet in comparison to the similarly low-rated *Amy Prentiss*, *Christie's* failure is more interesting. First, with so few black women on prime time in 1974, her very appearance, no matter how sexualized and one-dimensional, was remarkable. The show's executive producer, Paul Mason, had some high expectations or at least some idealistic marketing ideas: "I want to show a moral effect," he said in an interview about this character, "not only from the woman's point of view, but from the black point of view. How great it will be for young black women to see one of their sisters up there in Christie's position."⁶ Neither the writing nor the production values for the show ever lived up to this ideal. Christie's character didn't develop

beyond being cool and street-smart, and the poorly photographed chase scenes were nearly identical in every episode.

Yet the stereotype of the ultra-sexy woman cop was played out more successfully in its white, NBC version that year, *Police Woman*, starring Angie Dickinson. Dickinson portrayed Sergeant Pepper Anderson, who was, like Christie, an L.A. cop usually in undercover situations requiring cleavage, miniskirts, and stiletto heels. Pepper was far more feminine and vulnerable than Christie. In the premier episode, after she witnesses the death of a young male colleague (“And married with kids!”) she goes back to her desk and weeps. Later, she uses her womanly touch to turn the case, getting a rape victim to confide in her and befriending some children who give her a Big, Important Clue. If Christie was familiar from Pam Grier scenarios, Pepper was familiar from more mainstream fantasies, from *Playboy* to the nurturing “angel of the house.”

Critics panned both shows for bad writing, weak characters, and exploitation of the woman cop “gimmick.” Many pointed out that the “liberated” premise of these series was contradicted by plots in which the women repeatedly have to be rescued by their male colleagues. “The girls [*sic*] are simply not credited with, say, Columbo’s powers of ratiocination or Kojak’s ability to get off a cynical wisecrack,” *Time*’s Richard Schickel complained. *Variety* placed its bets on Christie Love, though, as the character that was more fun than Barbie-doll Pepper, and concluded that with its hackneyed scripts, *Police Woman* was bound to “die of boredom.”⁷

Instead, *Christie Love* was the one that faded away quickly, leaving behind only the echo of her trademark “You’re under arrest, sugar,” for pop culture trivia. (The phrase showed up in the movie *Reservoir Dogs* in 1992.) But *Police Woman* ranked among NBC’s highest rated programs for the 1974–75 season and continued with respectable ratings for another three years, with Angie Dickinson regularly hailed as the “hottest ticket” on television. A good pal of Johnny Carson, Dickinson was a regular guest on the *Tonight Show* during those years, so her presence in pop culture extended well beyond the fictional police precinct.

The racial difference between Christie and Pepper was surely significant in the overall impact of each show. Since the female cop in the 1970s was *per se* a potentially threatening character, a sign of social and gender change, glamorization of this character would go only so far. Christie was sexually alluring, but she was also smart-mouthed, disrespectful of rules, and African-American, proudly flaunting her ’fro. She triumphantly summarized two 1960s liberation movements—women’s and blacks’—as the powerful heroine who talks back. For



Fig. 7 Angie Dickinson as Sergeant Pepper Anderson in *Police Woman* (NBC, 1974–78). Courtesy of Photofest.

Pam Grier, this combination worked for films targeting an African-American market, but the formula didn't work for the white-dominated Nielsen audiences. Even the humor of *Get Christie Love* had to work against a triple threat: the *woman* doing the man's job, the *black* woman doing the man's job, the *smart-mouthed* black woman doing the man's job. In reviews of this series, the word that shows up constantly in describing Christie is "sassy," and this confrontational style for a black female character may have been the series' doom.

For *Police Woman*, the racial factor worked the opposite way. Angie Dickinson was one of the *blondest* women on television, a factor emphasized by the show's racially mixed cast. Unlike Christie, Pepper was an earnest team player, appropriately "womanly"—that is, noncon-

frontational and polite, with a low, husky voice that said sex, not sass. In the premier episode, when Pepper shot her first perp, she handled it bravely but emotionally. Her colleagues reassured her that it's part of the job, and she nodded and sniffed, "Someday, sometime, I'll be able to accept that." Coincidentally or not, that first dead perp was a shotgun-wielding black woman, a representative of Pepper's prime-time competition.

Throughout the series, Pepper functioned in traditionally feminine ways, making comforting bedside visits to victims, listening sympathetically to sad stories, and acting as a gracious hostess for visitors to her brightly furnished apartment. These traditional values aren't exclusively white and middle-class, but when personified by a leggy blonde, they add up to Nice White Girl, a universe away from Christie Love's karate chops and jive. Even the character name "Pepper" suggested either a four-legged or *Penthouse* pet, neither of them very dangerous. Dickinson often claimed in interviews that she had made up the name herself because she "couldn't imagine a woman police officer named Lisa" (Cameron, 105). That's a clue that neither a real-life character nor real-life occupation was at stake.

Picturing the female cop as Angie Dickinson was a mainstream fantasy of gender change in the workplace making no change at all. As one PR piece put it, Dickinson was "a soft, sexy dish with a dash of Pepper," or "an all-American sex symbol. A grown-up glamour girl." The key words here—*soft, all-American, glamour*—could take the sting out of "female cop." In interviews, Dickinson further allayed fears about the show's concept. "Pepper does her job, but don't forget that a man is her boss," she told a reporter in 1975. "The idea is to work with a man, but not threaten him. Everything's okay as long as you don't get in the way of his virility."⁸

Actually, as Dickinson rose to stardom through this show, her talk-show interviews revealed a personality and sense of humor much sharper than this fluffy quotation would suggest. If anything, the dreadful scripts and clichés of *Police Woman* were saved by the Dickinson persona, warm and mature. The most progressive aspect of Pepper was in fact her age. Angie Dickinson was forty-three years old when *Police Woman* went on the air, with a movie career that had taken off in 1959 when she was discovered by director Howard Hawks for a small role in *Rio Bravo*. A 1976 feature article compared her to another Hawks discovery, "Lauren Bacall...very feminine but very much a man's woman, easy to kid around with, pal around with—and as good as a man with a gun or a deck of cards."⁹ She was also an older woman with a past, which supposedly included liaisons with President John Kennedy, a rumor she heatedly denied but which undeniably heated up her star appeal.

Glamorizing the woman investigator and making her racially and culturally innocuous are fairly standard ways to picture this character. The most disturbing aspect of *Police Woman*, though, was its portrayal of the women surrounding Pepper Anderson, who were often sadistically treated victims or cold-hearted perps, like the woman Pepper blows away in the premier episode. That particular female villain was also shaded with lesbianism, since we see her sharing a motel room with a scantily dressed woman colleague from the evil bank-robbery gang. And just to layer the villainy of both these women, we find out later they were unblinking witnesses to a woman's rape by their male bank-robber buddies.

Rape victims abounded in this series. Pepper herself was constantly threatened with rape while teetering in the high heels that her undercover work required, but she was rescued each time by her male colleagues. Other women weren't as lucky. These minor characters were usually also attractive women, and creepy insinuations were made that they "were asking for it." Writing about this series, cultural critic Susan J. Douglas makes the point that at the very moment feminists were addressing issues of rape in the legal system, *Police Woman* "reinforced every negative stereotype about rape that perpetuated the system," including the portrayal of women "as being both responsible for male rage and violence and unable to escape from it."¹⁰

In a case of terrible poetic justice, this was exactly the fate of the character with whom Angie Dickinson was most famously identified after *Police Woman* ended: the chic victim in *Dressed to Kill*. In that film, the character is sexually humiliated when she picks up and sleeps with a stranger who has a venereal disease. Then she's stabbed to death by a tall blonde woman who is really Michael Caine in drag. *Dressed to Kill* was widely decried as a movie in which women's images and fashions were reviled and punished, providing a fitting coda for Dickinson's previous role in a supposedly liberated show that in reality punished women.

In 1995, at a Museum of Television and Radio event honoring the female-cop show *Under Suspicion*, clips from *Police Woman* were screened as funny reminders of the bad old days when a woman cop on television had to wear bikinis and serve coffee to the guys on the squad. The message of the screening was: well, we certainly won't go back *there*. Yet just a few years later, plans were being made in Hollywood to return to the 1970s for a campy but happier replay of investigators in bikinis. This of course was the 2000 movie version of *Charlie's Angels*, a series that ran from 1976 to 1981, overlapping with the last years of *Police Woman* and similarly providing a fantasy of women solving crimes and running very fast in high heels.

A generation after these series were aired, why is *Police Woman* a bad joke and *Charlie's Angels* a hip, campy one? For starters, the Angels never attempted the cardboard equality-in-law-enforcement pretense of the Dickinson vehicle. Because Pepper operated within the L.A.P.D., the show's supposed agenda was a look behind the scenes at the newly sex-integrated urban police force. *Angels* cheerfully dumped any affectation of realism and actual law-enforcement background. Each show's credit sequence reminded us that three gorgeous women were "rescued" from humdrum rookie police work and now worked for Charlie, a very private investigator thoroughly removed from accountability to taxpayers. Each episode took the heroines to an exotic locale—a race track, casino, dude ranch, beach, island, or ski resort—with maximum opportunities for wardrobe changes and cleavage.

If anything, the cleavage factor had escalated since the debut of *Police Woman* because prime-time television had developed the "jiggle



Fig. 8 Jaclyn Smith, Farrah Fawcett, and Kate Jackson in the "Angels in Chains" episode of *Charlie's Angels* (ABC, 1976–81). Courtesy of Photofest.

genre”—ironically, in response to complaints about the excessive violence of 1970s police shows. By the end of the decade, network executives were eagerly reviewing what they called “T&A” scripts for shows that substituted abundant female bodies for bullet-ridden ones.¹¹ This was the era of Loni Anderson on *WKRP in Cincinnati* (1978–82) and Suzanne Somers on *Three’s Company* (1977–84) as well as less successful shows about sexy stewardesses (*Flying High*, 1978–79), sexy journalists (*The American Girls*, 1978), and a sexy lawyer (*The Feather and Father Gang*, 1976–77). Aaron Spelling, who had previously bet on an action-heroine in *Honey West*, returned to the female action formula within the new jiggle milieu. His story idea, *Alley Cats*, was eventually fine-tuned, given a less aggressive title, and added a twist to the ensemble detective story (*77 Sunset Strip*) by having the trio of female troubleshooters work *together* in each episode.

All three of the original *Charlie’s Angels* cast—Kate Jackson, Jaclyn Smith, and Farrah Fawcett—became overnight stars, and Fawcett immediately became an icon responsible for oversized hair in certain subcultures for decades. The formula was tongue-in-cheek diversity: the smart one! the strong one! the one with the big hair!¹² The story formula was predictable, too. In every show, the invisible but omniscient Charlie phones or tapes the problem to his “girls”; the Angels dress up, get into danger, get wet if possible, and then use their combined wits and talent (flying a plane! race car driving! swimming!) to break loose and capture the villains. Even the series’ staunchest fans admit that after the first season, the *Charlie’s Angels* formula of undercover exoticism got stale and the dialogue and plotting got worse. Bad plots, one-dimensional characters, artificial settings—none of it mattered. For four years, the show was one of the highest-rated on television, faltering only in its final season.

The flimsiness of plots and costumes looked like scathing backlash to “women’s lib,” as it was still called then. Even critics who weren’t feminists objected to the show’s unabashed sensationalism. Yet women formed a majority of the audiences that kept the ratings high.¹³ Journalists guessed that the appeal for women was fashion and hairstyles, but later critics pointed out that Aaron Spelling had hit on a brilliant combination of feminism and antifeminism. On the one hand, the show delivered a conservative picture of men in charge and women obeying orders. Like God, Walter Cronkite, and powerful daddies everywhere, Charlie was the male voiceover and ultimate authority. The producers themselves had counted on this, as earnestly phrased by an executive producer explaining how the show preserved traditional values: “A series like *Charlie’s Angels* performs a very important and

valuable public service. Not only does it show women how to look beautiful and lead very exciting lives, but they still take their orders from a man.”¹⁴

On the other hand, the Angels worked without Charlie’s direct help and without competing for his approval. They *looked* like traditional sex goddesses or heavenly creatures, but their jobs and scripts were anything but traditional. Not only were they the agents of adventure, but their stories would not end in romance. Even more radical for the 1970s was their teamwork. As Susan J. Douglas explains, “It was watching this—women working together to solve a problem and capture, and sometimes kill, really awful, sadistic men, while having great hairdos and clothes—that engaged our desire” (215).

Never before had television (or cinema for that matter) featured an equivalent of the male buddy formula, which was flourishing at the time in most of TV’s police dramas—*Starsky and Hutch*, *Hawaii Five-O*, *Police Story*, and so forth. During the first season of *Charlie’s Angels*, one of the producers was Barney Rosenzweig, who didn’t last long with *Angels* but who later went on to produce *Cagney & Lacey*. Rosenzweig had heard about and later actually read the now-classic feminist film study Molly Haskell’s 1974 book *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies*. The women who handed him that book, self-described feminists Barbara Avedon and Barbara Corday, later became the writers of *Cagney & Lacey*.¹⁵

But in the 1970s, what intrigued all three of them was Haskell’s claim that a cinematic “female buddy” tradition simply did not exist. Rosenzweig’s plans for a film never materialized, and in fact, the female buddy adventure film didn’t emerge until the likes of *Desperately Seeking Susan* (1985) and *Outrageous Fortune* (1987) in the next decade, as I describe in chapter 6. Significantly, the formula worked on television—the glamorous version with *Charlie’s Angels*, the dramatic version with *Cagney & Lacey*—before it appeared at the movies, a good example of how the looser structures of television allow more flexibility for women characters.

Haskell’s main point about the male buddy film was that, by the 1970s, it had replaced the “woman’s film” and was a bad sign that women’s concerns and presence were truly being displaced in Hollywood by male couples à la Newman and Redford. But in explaining why women audiences enjoyed the Newman-Redford plotlines, Haskell also put her finger on the future uses of the buddy story for women. In the Newman-Redford films, she points out, what’s most appealing is their rapport and loyalty, “eroticism sublimated in action and banter...the willingness to die for someone,” all of which

were traditionally present in women's melodramas.¹⁶ This emotional formula later worked successfully in *Cagney & Lacey*, and most notoriously in *Thelma & Louise* (1991).

As for that "eroticism sublimated in action and banter"—part of the later controversy of both *Cagney & Lacey* and *Thelma & Louise* was that they could be read with lesbian undertones, to the horror of some audiences and the joy of others. And by the time *Charlie's Angels* appeared as a movie in 2000, the prevalence of "lesbian chic" in 1990s pop culture and the heightened campiness of the movie itself had made such a reading not only probable but fashionable, even with flashy signs of heterosexuality all through the script and *mise-en-scène*. The *Saturday Night Live* spoof of the movie pictured the three leads in ecstatic erotic play with each other on a talk show, paying scant attention to the shocked and besotted male talk-show host.

In the original *Charlie's Angels* series, the lesbian possibilities occasionally surfaced as part of the general soft-porn scenario, most notably in the famous "Angels in Chains" episode from the first season, in which the Angels are undercover at a women's prison run by sadistic Maxine, who insists that the imprisoned Angels strip to be disinfected, a shot the camera cues us to imagine. At other times, the Angels' female adversaries emerge as lesbian stereotypes—butch or high-heeled killers—in ways that reassured us of the Angels' absolute difference from such nasty women. That didn't stop a lesbian cult following for Kate Jackson in particular, who played the "smart" Angel, attractive but not as dazzling as Jaclyn Smith and without the sex-goddess appeal of Fawcett and Fawcett's blonde replacement, Cheryl Ladd.

In a 2003 TV Land retrospective, "Inside TV Land: Charlie's Angels," the nostalgic praise for the series included Camille Paglia's nagging remark that "All of the feminist nags in the world are never going to make that particular show go away." Time travel might take us back to 1970s feminists clucking their disapproval of *Charlie's Angels*, but later feminists have been far more intrigued by this show's early versions of girl power and female buddies—Nancy Drew and her friends grown up and still blissfully unattached at the end of every adventure.

INVESTIGATING COUPLES: THE 1980S

Nineteen eighty-two was surely the Year of the Woman Detective. That was the year Sue Grafton and Sara Paretsky introduced their long-running female P.I. novel series and the year Marcia Muller published a second Sharon McCone mystery, so that the first female detective literary series were under way. And even though television was still

- rather than a viable materialism. See Turnbull, “Bodies of Knowledge: Pleasure and Anxiety in the Detective Fiction of Patricia D. Cornwell,” *Australian Journal of Law and Society* 9 (1993):30.
35. As Walton and Jones point out about this popular subgenre, a major appeal of the female “private I/eye” is the very scandal of her embodiment and “an awareness that the body in question is a gendered body.” See *Detective Agency*, 187.
 36. Patricia Cornwell, *Cruel and Unusual* (New York: Scribner’s, 1993), 161; hereafter cited as *Cruel*
 37. Peg Tyre, “Come Out, Kay Scarpetta,” *Newsday* (20 July 1997), G14; Mark Harris, “Body Double,” *Entertainment Weekly* (17 July 1998), 75–76.
 38. Though this film focused on Beals’ bodily performance, it was later revealed that most of the dancing was done by Marine Jahan, an African-American dancer who was the uncredited stand-in for Beals.
 39. On one level, this only confirms theories that literary characters in the classic realist tradition are produced through contrasts with other characters. See, for example, Catherine Belsey’s summary of the construction of classic realism in *Critical Practice* (London: Methuen, 1980), 73–84. However, the cinematic body double, as a model for rethinking this device, foregrounds the issues of bodily coherence and reader/spectator desire that have particular implications for this genre and for the medical forensics of Cornwell. The reader of the crime novel, like the viewer in cinema, expects and desires characters who are consistently and identifiably embodied; the desire may have more specific investments in the case of the female investigator character.
 40. Patricia Cornwell, *From Potter’s Field* (New York: Scribner’s, 1995), 156; hereafter cited as *Potter’s Field*.
 41. The website offering a casting poll was <http://www.freevote.com/booth/ppcasting>. The article citing a television series is O’Briant, “Pistol-packing Author’s Dreams.”

Chapter 3: Jiggle, Camp, and Couples

1. Patricia Mellencamp provides a delightful analysis of this series in *High Anxiety: Catastrophe, Scandal, Age, and Comedy* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1992), 302–9. As Mellencamp points out, women in movies are usually allowed to be young or old, but television has always represented women in their middle years as well.
2. These generalizations come from feminist television scholarship. For an overview of these issues, see Mary Ellen Brown, ed., *Television and Women’s Culture: The Politics of the Popular*, ed. Mary Ellen Brown (London: Sage, 1990). Brown’s introduction, “Feminist Cultural Television Criticism: Culture, Theory, and Practice,” 11–22, explains television’s capacity to embrace contradiction and multiple agendas within a single series. Caren J. Deming’s essay in that volume, “For Television-Centered Television Criticism: Lessons from Feminism,” 37–60, elaborates on the “open” nature of the ongoing series. Also see Kathleen Rowe’s analysis of television’s female audiences and rebellious female characters in *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 78–81.
3. G.G. Fickling, *Dig a Dead Doll* (New York: Pyramid, 1960), 6.
4. Ted Morgan, “Women Make Good Cops,” *New York Times Magazine* (3 November 1974), 18+.
5. See “Arresting Preconceptions,” *Time* (27 May 1974), 8, and “No Longer Men or Women—Just Police Officers,” *U.S. News and World Report* (19 August 1974), 45–46.
6. Sue Cameron, “Police Drama: Women Are on the Case,” *Ms.* (October 1974), 104; hereafter cited in the text as Cameron.
7. Richard Schickel, “Viewpoints,” *Time* (21 October 1974), 126–27; review of *Charlie’s Angels*, *Variety* (September 18, 1974).

8. See Helen Van Slyke, "Calling on a Lady Cop," *Saturday Evening Post* (1 December 1975), 50–51.
9. "TV's Super Women," *Time* (22 November 1976), 67–71.
10. Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Random House, 1994), 211; hereafter cited in the text as Douglas.
11. See Todd Gitlin's account of this in *Inside Prime Time* (New York: Pantheon, 1983; reprint, 1985), 71–73.
12. Molly Haskell later commented that "the show offers only the choice between Beautiful and Strong (Smith), Beautiful and Smart (Jackson) and Just Beautiful (Fawcett)." See "Can 'Charlie's Angels' Still Fly in a 'G.I. Jane' World?" *New York Times* (10 September 2000), 70+. Haskell's point was that "Beautiful" was the primary message for young women at the time who were seeing their first female action heroines.
13. This was based on the estimate that women made up 60 percent of the audience tuned into that time slot. In its first year, *Charlie's Angels* regularly got up to 59 percent of its audience share, a number "usually achieved only by special events like the World Series." "TV's Super Women," 67.
14. Quoted by Gitlin, *Inside Prime Time*, 73. Both Gitlin and Douglas agree that the feminism/antifeminism balance was important to the show's formula. See Douglas, 213. A similar case was made years later by Emily Nussbaum, on the advent of the 2003 *Charlie's Angels* film, in "Misogyny Plus Girl Power: Original-Recipe Angels," *New York Times* (29 June 2003), sec. 2, 26. Also see Ric Meyers's account of this show's popularity and history in *Murder on the Air: Television's Great Mystery Series* (New York: Mysterious Press, 1989), 156–67.
15. The story of Haskell's influence on Avedon, Corday, and Rosenzweig is reported in Gitlin, *Inside Prime Time*, 73. It is also described in Julie D'Acci's *Defining Women: Television and the Case of Cagney & Lacey* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 16–17.
16. Molly Haskell, *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies* (1974; reprint, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 187–88.
17. Because the stakes involve female independence, these comedies on one level undercut conventional gender roles for the woman, even though her place in romance and marriage is inevitable in the end. Wes D. Gehring explains the split conservative-liberating position of the heroine in this genre in *Screwball Comedy: A Genre of Madcap Romance* (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 155. Also see Kathleen Rowe, "Comedy, Melodrama and Gender: Theorizing the Genres of Laughter," in *Classical Hollywood Comedy*, eds. Kristine Brunovska Karnick and Henry Jenkins (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 39–59. Rowe points out that "the stronger the presence of women, the more a romantic comedy is likely to undercut or problematize the heterosexual couple," 51. Rowe also discusses screwball heroines and gender ideology in *The Unruly Woman*, especially chapter 4.
18. See Maria DiBattista, *Fast-Talking Dames* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), especially the introductory discussion of the important power of female speech in these films, 5–35.
19. During this time, yet another couple-style police drama aired briefly on ABC in a more serious mode. This was *MacGruder and Loud*, featuring a secretly married police couple who, because of department regulations, had to hide their passionate attachment as they undertook dangerous assignments. The series lasted from January to September 1985.
20. This catty detail is reported in Joy Horowitz's essay, "The Madcap behind Moonlighting," *New York Times Magazine* (30 March 1986), 24+.
21. See Harry F. Waters and Nikki Finke Greenberg, "Sly and Sexy: TV's Fun Couple," *Newsweek* (8 September 1986), 46–52.
22. Quoted in David Handelman, "The Dark Side of the Moon," *Rolling Stone* (26 March 1987), 52+.

23. Frank Swertlow, "CBS Alters 'Cagney,' Calling It 'Too Women's Lib,'" *TV Guide* (12–18 June 1982), A-1.
24. *People* magazine covers (4 November 1985 and 11 February 11, 1985).
25. Eventually, D'Acci points out in *Defining Women*, the series was "transformed from a police drama to a combination police genre/melodrama/soap opera/comedy," with changes to each segment. See her chapter 3, especially 121–25.
26. Rosenzweig described this at the Museum of Television Broadcasting's Fifth Annual Television festival, March 25, 1988.
27. Karen Stabiner, "The Pregnant Detective," *New York Times Magazine* (22 September 1985), 82+.
28. This subverts the usual position of women as objects for the (male) camera. Danae Clark describes how this series subverts traditional treatment of women by the camera in other ways as well, by emphasizing voice over looks, for instance, and by refusing to show sensationalistic scenes. See Clark, "Cagney & Lacey: Feminist Strategies of Detection," in *Television and Women's Culture*, ed. Mary Ellen Brown, 117–33. Also see Lorraine Gamman, "Watching the Detectives: The Enigma of the Female Gaze," in *The Female Gaze: Women as Viewers of Popular Culture*, eds. Lorraine Gamman and Margaret Marshment (Seattle: Real Comet, 1989), 8–26. Gamman connects the women's exchange of glances to the show's overall philosophy that "doesn't presume there is one 'feminine' way of looking at the world," 23.

Chapter 4: Under Suspicion

1. This chapter focuses on the series that ran on the major networks. The profile of the enigmatic, noir detective heroine also fits the main character of *Veronica Clare*, a series that ran nine episodes on the Lifetime Network in 1991. See White, "Veronica Clare."
2. Quoted in Stabiner, "The Pregnant Detective," 103.
3. See Walton and Jones's discussion of this series and its origins in *Detective Agency*, 261–68.
4. Matt Roush, "'Anna Lee': Mystery with Unorthodox Energy," *USA Today* (4 October 1994), 3D. Roush's review discusses the 1994 American broadcast of a British three-part PBS miniseries *Anna Lee*, based on writer Liza Cody's P.I. series. *Anna Lee* was lighter in tone than *Prime Suspect*, but also less popular.
5. Sandra Tomc, "Questing Women: The Feminist Mystery after Feminism," in *Women's Detective Fiction*, ed. Glenwood Irons, 46–63.
6. Reported by John J.O'Connor, "Feminism on the Force in a Three-Part 'Mystery' Tale," *New York Times* (23 January 1992), 15C.
7. Quoted in William Grimes, "Detective Tennison Returns to PBS," *New York Times* (2 February 1993), B1–2.
8. Quoted in James Wolcott, "Columbo in Furs," *New Yorker* (25 January 1993), 102. The ambiguities of the Tennison character are discussed in Tomc, "Questing Women," and also in a superb discussion of this series by Walton and Jones in *Detective Agency*, 249–61.
9. Quoted by Daniel Cerone, "Making Waves in a Man's World," *Los Angeles Times* (8 September 1994), 1F.
10. Joe Rhodes, "Profile: Karen Sillas," *Los Angeles Times* (15 January 1995), 78; John J. O'Connor, "A Woman among Men: Just Call Her Phil," *New York Times* (13 October 1994), C20; Joyce Millman, "Latest Cop Series Commits Serious Dramatic Felonies," *Vancouver Sun* (20 September 1994), C10; Howard Rosenberg, "Promising Series Still 'Under Suspicion,'" *Los Angeles Times* (16 September 1994), F24.
11. Andy Meisler, "The Arbiters of TV Style: How to Fashion a Character," *New York Times* (4 September 1994), sec. 4, p.5.