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Classic tales from *Little Lulu*, drawn by Irving Tripp and written by **Virginia Hubbell**, including never-before-seen thumbnail sketches and typewritten scripts.

<<http://www.cartoonart.org/>>

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<<http://news.google.com/news/story?ncl=http://reviews.libraryjournal.com/2012/01/collection-development/graphic-novels-prepub-alert-guy-delisle-alison-bechdel-the-graphic-cannon/&hl=en&geo=us>>

1/17/2012

Crime Does Not Pay Archives. Vol. 1. Dark Horse. Apr. 2012. 280p. ISBN 9781595822895. \$49.99. F Behold some of the comics that ticked off Dr. Fredric Wertham and other censors of the 1950s: frankly lurid and wildly entertaining pulps of crime and criminals, supposedly based on real cases. Lavishing overspiced detail on a smorgasbord of violence and vileness, issues sold in the hundreds of thousands. (According to David Hajdu's *The Ten-Cent Plague*, many of the scripts were ghostwritten by a bright, pleasant woman named **Virginia Hubbell**.) Ironically, it was J. Edgar Hoover who had kicked true crime comics into legitimacy with a 1930s *War on Crime* newspaper strip, supposedly based on FBI files. Yet *CDNP*'s gruesomeness is not explicit by modern standards, in terms of either sex or gore, and this volume is publisher-rated for ages 14 up. Indispensible for historical and pop culture collections.

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Golden Age/Silver Age (1930s to approx. 1970)

- [Nina Albright](#) : Artist for comics packager [Bernard Baily Studio](#)^[7]
- [Ruth Atkinson](#) a.k.a. Ruth Atkinson Ford, R. Atkinson: Artist, [Fiction House](#), [Timely Comics](#), [Lev Gleason Publications](#)
- Olive Bailey: Artist, [Land of the Lost](#)
- [Violet Barclay](#): Timely/[Atlas Comics](#) inker
- [Toni Blum](#): Writer, [Eisner & Iger](#) studio
- [Linda Fite](#): Writer, [The Cat \(Marvel Comics\)](#)
- [Ramona Fradon](#): Artist, [Aquaman](#) and [Metamorpho \(DC Comics\)](#); also, [Brenda Starr comic strip](#) (1980–1996)
- [Ray Herman](#)^[8]: 1940s editor at [Holyoke Publishing](#) and elsewhere.^[9]
- [Patricia Highsmith](#); [Nedor/Standard/Better Comics](#) and others
- [Fran Hopper](#): Fiction House artist^[citation needed]
- [Virginia Hubbell](#): [Charles Biro](#)'s ghost writer, [Lev Gleason Publications](#)' *Crime Does Not Pay*^[10]

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Comic Book Hero

by [Jay Blotcher](#), March 30, 2009

I have to tell you, there was someone I was trying to reach the whole time I was working on the book, who was in Woodstock. And I couldn't get to her. I couldn't find her. And she was literally a few miles away from me. It was maddening, because I had really taken pride over the years in interviewing people who were hard to find. I interviewed Thomas Pynchon for *Positively 4th Street* – it's the only interview he ever did. I interviewed the guy who was driving the motorcycle that Richard Farina died on. Like the actual guy – the guy who was driving. For *Lush Life*, I found people who were working with Strayhorn in Pittsburgh before he met Duke, who nobody knew existed. And here, **Virginia Hubbell**, who's the ghostwriter for [notoriously violent comic book] *Crime Does Not Pay*, was living in Woodstock. I didn't find it out until she died. I was looking for someone named **Virginia Hubbell**, but I didn't know she was down the road from me for years. It was heartbreaking.

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COMICS WRITER VIRGINIA BLOCH DIES

Posted on [June 5, 2006](#) by [maggie](#) in [Comics News and Notes](#).

Virginia Bloch died April 15, 2006, at her home in Woodstock at the age of 92.

Born March 23, 1914, she settled in Woodstock in 1943 with her first husband, **Carl Hubbell**, and they worked in the comics industry for years. Under the name **Virginia Hubbell** she wrote much of the later content of Charles Biro's **Daredevil** and **Boy** comics. (Carl Hubbell drew comics including **Daredevil** for Biro.)

Her obituary credits her with creating the characters of Witch Hazel and Little Itch for Dell's **Little Lulu** stories during the 1950s.

She is survived by two sons, **Jonathan and Craig Hubbell**.

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Among the happier tidbits Kitchen discloses: Biro (like one of his characters, Crimebuster) had a pet monkey that sat on his shoulder as he worked, "and the way the monkey behaved was said to be a clue to Biro's mood that day." And **Harvey Kurtzman's** acclaimed war stories for EC were influenced by the unemotional realism of Biro's crime stories, which Biro may, or may not, have written all that many of. Kitchen alludes to David Hajdu's *The Ten-Cent Plague*, in which Hajdu (who has not yet impressed me with the acumen of his observations) claims the principle writer of *Crime* was **Virginia Hubbell**.

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*Classic tales from Little Lulu, drawn by Irving Tripp and written by **Virginia Hubbell**, including never-before-seen thumbnail sketches and typewritten scripts.

The Grand Comics Database [www.comics.org] credits Biro with the writing of the Little Wise Guys stories in that final edition. However, according to the information posted by my dear pal Maggie on the CBG forums [www.cbextra.com], Bloch wrote "much of the later content of Biro's DAREDEVIL and BOY COMICS under the name **Virginia Hubbell**." **Carl Hubbell**, her first husband, drew comics, including Daredevil. Bloch's obituary also credits her with creating Witch Hazel and Little Itch for Dell's LITTLE LULU comics.

BLOCH, VIRGINIA

Source (some data)

Arthur Lortie and Mike Evans June 2006

Name and vital stats

BLOCH, VIRGINIA [1914-2006]
(writer)

Biographical

VIRGINIA HUBBELL

Family in arts

First husband: Carl Hubbell

Additional biography

Women and the Comics 1985

Co-creator; Writer

WITCH HAZEL AND LITTLE ITCH in
Little Lulu

ARCHIE PUBLICATIONS

ARCHIE (wr/) 1943-44 > 43 44

GLOOMY GUS (wr/) 1943 > 43

DELL PUBLICATIONS

LITTLE LULU (wr/) early-1950s > 50 51 52 53

YO-YO'S, THE (wr/) 1950s > 50 51 52 53 54 55 56
57 58 59

GOOD COMICS

Various features (wr/) 1955 > 55

LEV GLEASON

BOY MOVIES (wr/) 1940s > 40 41 42 43 44 45 46
47 48 49

CRIME DOES NOT PAY~ (wr/) 1940s > 40 41 42 43 44 45 46
47 48 49

CRIMEBUSTER (wr/) 1940s > 40 41 42 43 44 45 46
47 48 49

DAREDEVIL (wr/) 1940s > 40 41 42 43 44 45 46
47 48 49

SWOOP STORM (wr/) 1940s > 40 41 42 43 44 45 46
47 48 49

YOUNG ROBIN HOOD (wr/) 1940s > 40 41 42 43 44 45 46
47 48 49

MARVEL COMICS

Various features (wr/) c1953 > 53

ST. JOHN PUBLISHING

Various features (wr/) 1953

their close attention to characterization, and that element of dramatic sophistication, more than all the red ink devoted to blood in the panels, was the tyranny of *Crime Does Not Pay*. Few other comic-book makers dedicated so much space and applied such care to the delineation of character as the writers and editors working under Lev Gleason. "The Wild Spree of the Laughing Sadist—Herman Duker" is a typical six-page story. It opens with a three-quarter-page drawing of a man clutching a gorgeous blonde by the hair with his left hand; she has one black eye and blood drooling from her lips onto the smoking revolver the man is holding with his other hand. To their right on the page, we see the head of a dead man on a table; the eyes are rolled back in their sockets, and blood pours from a bullet hole in the middle of the forehead and from a knife slash across the face. The man with the gun is giggling, "Hee, hee, ha, ha, hee, hee!" A preface boxed within the panel tells us, "Some fools commit crimes for money—some because of jealousy or a sudden rage. But Herman Duker was one of those queers who robbed and killed out of sheer pleasure—experiencing delight in others' terror and agony, he laughed his way through crime until fate refused to crack a smile."

Why did he commit the horrors we see? That is the theme, and the story to follow, a psychological inquiry, traces the sadist's life in unnerving detail. In the first few panels, he is a boy, killing the family parakeet and the goldfish. He grows to adolescence, advancing to drowning the dog and setting the cat on fire. We then get two and a half pages of the sadist as a teenager, shooting willy-nilly until he is sent to reform school, where he starts on his fellow delinquents. We do not see him as a young man until the fifth page—after quite some time, by the comic-book clock. Nearly everyone he meets tries to help him or puzzle him out, for as long as they live. There is no plot to speak of, just the jagged outline of a life. In its forty-four panels, the story has almost three thousand words of text and dialogue. The writing is simple but plentiful, and its primary concern is the character of its protagonist, an irredeemable sadist.

As comics historian Maurice Horn noted in *The World Encyclopedia of Comics*, "Not until [Biro] joined the Lev Gleason group in 1941 did his real talent become known . . . Biro proved to be the most innovative and certainly most advanced writer in the comic book field." Biro's transformation is striking, and he never explained how it had come about. While he drew upon his hardscrabble youth to give *Crime Does Not Pay* a coarse authenticity, he also applied the creative technique he learned as a child: He cheated. As several artists who worked closely with Biro would recall, many if not most of the scripts for which Biro took credit were ghostwritten by a woman he had met at MLJ, Virginia Hubbell.

"Biro was an egomaniac," said Pete Morisi. "Look at the covers—his autograph was the biggest type on the cover. He wanted everybody to think that he was the whole show, and he was the whole show, in the sense that he ran everything. He was very good at that. He knew what he wanted. He liked to let on that he wrote everything, but he didn't. Ginny Hubbell wrote just about everything that Charlie Biro took credit for. I didn't think anybody really cared who wrote anything, except Charlie. He cared a lot, and he was the boss."

Hubbell was a bright, earthy woman, fair and smallish, with light brown hair that she wore in a pageboy. She reminded Rudy Palais of Doris Day, in buoyant spirit as much as in appearance. She had grown up in Brooklyn and began writing poetry as a teenager in the late 1920s, then went to college (Boston University and New York University) with the goal of becoming a gym teacher, an idea she abandoned for writing after graduation. She lived with her husband, Carl Hubbell, a minor comics artist with a prosaic style, in Woodstock, where she kept a menagerie of pet woods animals such as possums, snakes, and frogs. To get to Manhattan, the Hubbells sometimes took the train and sometimes worked on a Hudson River barge. Carl Hubbell would usually deliver his artwork and his wife's scripts, lingering around Gleason's office long enough to get the couple's checks, although that could take several hours, during which he would sometimes sketch

for pleasure, standing. Morisi once watched him draw a vintage automobile from memory and several months later noticed the same vehicle in a Prohibition-era story. Hubbell drew for *Crime Does Not Pay*; Morisi then recognized the car as the jalopy that the Archie character drove, drawn identically in both comics. Both Virginia and Carl Hubbell had done humor for MLJ, as well as some of the adventure and mystery stories that the Archie publisher then slipped between the hormonal goings-on at Riverdale High.

"She was a real smart cookie—college-girl, coed type," said Palais, who came to work for his boyhood competitor in the mid-1940s after stints with Quality, Fiction House, and Harvey. "Bundle of energy, pretty. I didn't see much of her. Charlie tried to keep her out of the picture. But I remember sitting with her someplace, we must have been having coffee at a coffee shop, and she asked me a million questions—never got around to talking about her. She was that kind of person who was really interested in other people, and I think that's why she wrote the way she did. She really wanted to know what made you tick. Charlie didn't give a crap. Charlie couldn't do what she did in a million years."

It was as an editor that Charles Biro distinguished himself. A fervent taskmaster, he imposed exacting and idiosyncratic demands such as the strict prohibition on chiaroscuro. "He insisted that everything had to be outlined—no blacks," said Fred Kida, a Manhattan-born artist, Japanese-American, who had worked at the Eisner and Iger Studio after Eisner's departure, then for Busy Arnold. "I couldn't stand it, because I like to use a lot of blacks, and I think that blacks are just right for the kind of stories he was doing in that magazine of his. What's crime without long shadows and dark skies? Who goes out in the middle of the street and robs people in broad daylight? Biro wanted everything outlined in a thin line, so it could be colored in, and that was it. He said that colors were important, and they are, but not above everything, every time. I always thought that he didn't know

how to use blacks—he only knew how to draw with a little thin line, so he decided that was best."

Chief among Biro's requisites was literal realism. "Charlie didn't want to know anything about symbolism or any of that," said Tony DiPrea, who drew for *Crime Does Not Pay* and also tried writing for it, under Biro's encouragement. "He wanted very precise realism, exactly the way things looked. What I learned to do, working for him, was, if there was a machine gun in the story, I went out to find a real machine gun. Now, a lot of people working for other guys, if there was a machine gun, they'd make one up. Well, he didn't want us to do that. I remember, on the guns, there was a gun dealer in New York that Charlie knew, and I went to the place, and I went and got my hands on the guns I was supposed to draw. Cars, I did the same thing. I went out on the street and found the kind of car the story called for, and I'd open the door and look inside—real fast, before I got arrested myself."

To Biro, realism and violence were inextricable. In addition to demonstrating this through the relentless savagery in the stories he produced, he articulated the idea explicitly to his readers in an odd meta-vignette in the November 1943 issue of *Crime Does Not Pay*. Biro and Bob Wood appear as themselves, discussing the "Who Dunnit" mystery tale in the reader's hand. (Departing from realism on one detail, the drawing did not include Biro's pet monkey.) Wood asks, "Do you think this crime story is too bloody and gory, Charlie?" Biro responds, "It's bloody all right, but it's true! That's the important thing. We want our readers to see all the horror of the crooked path to crime."

His method of showing the horror of crime in whole was to fixate on its minutiae. "Charlie used to yell at me, 'I don't want art—I want detail!'" said Bob Fujitani. "That's what people look for. That's what impresses them." He published a cover that had a criminal showing a woman's face into a lit gas burner on the stove, and he showed it to me. He said, "Look at that! Look at that detail! See that gas burner?"

CRIME

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The TELEPHONE Book



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Rrrrr-ring! What's that? Did you hear a telephone ring? Rrrrr-ring! There it goes again. Who do you think could be calling? Daddy? Uncle Bill? Grandma? The little boy next door? There's only one way to find out. Just pick up the receiver and say "hello."



Hello. This is Peter O'Neal. Who is this? . . .
Do you want to speak to Mom? . . . Just a
moment, please. I'll call her.



Written by Virginia Hubbel and Ken Sobol

Illustrated by Jason Art Service

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
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- Or ask the person to call back later...
- Or take a message and write it down.



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- Say who you are.
- Say why you are calling.
- Don't talk too long.
- Hang up carefully.



IN AN EMERGENCY ACT FAST!

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- Tell her what's wrong.
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