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**THE CASE OF THE**



**WORTHLESS  
NEWSPAPERS**

**CALLING ALL IRREGULARS**

**Len Bakerloo**

Anticipated Reactions to  
**The Case of the Worthless Newspapers**  
and the shenanigans of Sherlock Holmes,  
Dr. John Watson, and the Baker Street Irregulars

“We paid billions of dollars in fines to avoid admitting guilt and put this issue behind us. How dare Sherlock Holmes suggest his Baker Street Irregulars reopen the case and ask if we are crooks and of low moral character?”

*- A crooked businessman of low moral character*

“Sure, we say we want our readers to comment on our stories but this isn’t what we had in mind.”

*- A newspaper publisher*

“We are the newspaper of record and to suggest that amateurs could do a better job of presenting the news or investigating the facts is preposterous. It would be like saying that if people organized themselves they could create a better encyclopedia than the Britannica. Poppycock.”

*- The owner of a supposed newspaper of record*

“Sure, news is the ‘first draft of history.’ But also ‘the customer is always right.’ Therefore any simpleton must conclude that it is our obligation to give our customers the first draft of whatever history they want to believe. Sherlock doesn’t understand this because he is an idiot.”

*- A media mogul and simpleton*

“Our first obligation is to the truth and if the truth is that if one person says one thing and another says the opposite then, as long as we report what they said, then we have reported the truth. To find out which person is telling the truth would mean we would have to know what they are talking about. We don’t know therefore it can’t be our job.

That's a job for Sherlock Holmes and if anyone isn't doing their job it is him."

*- A stenographer masquerading as a reporter*

"I sound like I know what I am talking about and Sherlock doesn't; therefore listen to me and not him."

*- A media pundit*

"Sherlock Holmes is a threat to our very existence."

*- From the book A Publicist's Call to Arms*

"*The Case of the Worthless Newspapers* should be banned as a threat to personal freedom because everyone has a right to control their own narrative and reputation regardless of the facts or their true character."

*- From a spin-doctor's sales brochure called*

*"Hire Me – I'm That Good."*

"Sherlock Holmes doesn't exist; therefore don't believe a word he says. I exist; therefore you should believe everything I say."

*- From a viral tweet by a nine-year-old who misheard a speech penned by a press agent and read by a politician that was reported as fact by the press.*

"Sherlock Holmes is incompetent to comment on the news and he is a terrible detective. If he had paid careful attention he would have realized that we did not report the tweet as fact. We reported the fact that there was a tweet."

*- From an editorial questioning Sherlock Holmes' competence as a detective.*

"Did I say that? I was reading from a teleprompter and I wasn't listening to what I was saying. You shouldn't hold me accountable for what I say if I don't write it or mean it."

*- The politician in question*

“Sherlock Holmes implies in this book that rich selfish bankers should know right from wrong and not blame regulators for their own misdeeds. Well, I am one of those bankers and what he says is slanderous so I’m going to sue him into oblivion.”

- *Name withheld out of fear of litigation*

“News flash! I’m screwed. I gutted my parents’ savings and took on \$95,000 in debt I cannot discharge in bankruptcy for a degree in journalism and now I find out that newspapers are worthless?”

- *A homeless waitress*

“Of course newspapers are worthless; any investigative reporter worth her salt should have been able to figure that out. If you could have pieced the story together then it isn’t our fault that you didn’t know it before you paid us to teach you how to piece it together. Caveat Emptor is the law of the land, even when it comes to selling our product.”

- *A President of the Moriarty School of Journalism*

“Our president was misunderstood. What he meant to say is that if we know that newspapers are worthless and aren’t hiring then we are committing fraud if we convince people to buy our product by saying otherwise. To admit that is bad. However, we are do-gooders, not do-badders, and therefore what I just said can’t be true.”

- *A spin-doctor for the same School of Journalism*

“The sole objective of a professional manager is to maximize the net present value of the wealth of the owners. Newspapers need to be owned by someone and that means the news must be managed to maximize the wealth of the owners. Yet, Sherlock Holmes thinks we all own the news and need to take responsibility for it. This sounds like communism to me and we’ve already done that experiment and it was a disaster. That makes this man and this book

more dangerous than Attila the Hun and his book, *Mein Kampf*, which is how Communism got started in the first place.”

- *Dean of the Moriarty School of Business*

“Sherlock must be stopped and his ideas suppressed because he is suggesting that a ragtag gang of young people might be able to distinguish the good guys from the bad guys. If they do that then where are we going to find minions to do our bidding?”

- *The president of a huge firm with a high-minded mission statement.*

“If it bleeds it leads. That is the first rule of journalism and if we stop making people feel fearful and helpless and, instead, show them how to take charge of their lives and be agents of change, then our advertisers won’t be able to help them feel better with retail therapy. Without sponsors we won’t be able to keep going and that will be the death of the news as we know it.”

- *Article in a trade journal for advertising executives*

“Bingo.”

- *Sherlock Holmes*

“How can newspapers be worthless? I just sold one for \$250 million.”

- *Someone who was worried and is now rich*

“We will become the new newspaper of record. We are patient but eventually if we want you to buy something we’ll make up your mind for you. Oops; did I just say that? I meant that whatever you want to buy you will be able to buy from us, including the news we choose to record.”

- *The new buyer of a paper for \$250 million*

“Buy our paper for \$300 million. Their paper had 474,767 subscribers and they sold them for \$526.57 each. We have

653,868 subscribers and you can buy them from us for a measly \$458.81 each. A bargain”

- *The owner of a rival paper*

“Holmes got it right in *The Case of the Worthless Newspapers*. You don’t own me; you work for me. Cancel my subscription.”

- *653,868 irate subscribers*

“All hands on deck. We must find a buyer before Midnight GMT December 31, 2015 (7:00 P.M. Eastern, 4:00 P.M. Pacific)”

- *Memo to staff from owner of a newspaper with  
653,868 soon-to-be irate ex-subscribers.*

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## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to the students and graduates of the Moriarty schools of business and journalism. They deserved better.

And to those yet unborn who will inherit planet Earth.

May Heaven and Sherlock Holmes help us all.

**THE CASE OF THE  
WORTHLESS NEWSPAPERS  
CALLING ALL IRREGULARS**

By Len Bakerloo

INTRODUCTION.....	i
CALLING ALL IRREGULARS.....	1
Excerpts from Holmes' Diary 1982-2014 .....	1
Backstory (by Dr. Watson) .....	12
Separation.....	20
Reunion .....	25
A New Game is Afoot .....	48
Puzzles and Mysteries for the Reader.....	55
Sharing Answers and Annotating this Book.....	61
ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S) .....	64
Next: A SHOT ACROSS THE BOW .....	66

**Make a New Year's Resolution to follow the truth  
instead of the money.**

This and subsequent books in this series are  
available at: <http://www.LenBakerloo.com>

Look for

**THE CASE OF THE  
WORTHLESS NEWSPAPERS  
A SHOT ACROSS THE BOW**

Available on January 1, 2016  
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## INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

This book is best described as a work of reader participation future historical fiction. I hope you will help solve its many mysteries, including what the prior sentence means.

### The Man Who Would Live Forever

On the first of December 1792, near the city of Nizhny Novgorod, a man was born who would become known for his work in hyperbolic geometry. Now, for the first time, it is revealed that at the age of twenty-nine he also discovered the secret of perpetual youth. Unfortunately, an evil professor also learned the secret and he is still active today consulting to the criminally inclined.

### The Duo Who Would Uncover the Truth

Luckily, Mr. Sherlock Holmes knew this secret of longevity and on 25 February 1856 he revealed it to Dr. John Watson, the man who would become his lifelong friend and confidant. This explains how they were able to fight crimes and pursue justice for more than a century without seeming to age.

By 1982 the world had stopped caring about learning the truth. Without consulting clients, Holmes transformed himself into a hedge fund manager making rich people richer, and Dr. Watson became a speech writer for many of the world's most influential people.

They assumed new identities and for three decades they lived separate lives as they became wealthy beyond

## INTRODUCTION

measure. However, they began to age rapidly and in the fall of 2015 Holmes rented 221b Baker Street where he hoped to live out his final days. They reunited just as Holmes was about to apply the “seven percent solution” to his problems. But then a cryptic message arrived that sent the pair on their final adventure.

### Only You Can Save the World

Watson knows time is running out so he has written *The Case of the Worthless Newspapers* in the hopes that you will join the courageous Baker Street Irregulars as they battle the forces of darkness and injustice. No less than the future of the human race depends on it and you must do your part.

Holmes and Watson have created more than 45 puzzles that you can solve. Some are so easy that they will take you only a few minutes and others might require dozens of people to collaborate for weeks or longer. Instructions are provided for how you can follow the progress of your fellow "Irregulars" as you become a consulting detective just like Sherlock Holmes.

## CALLING ALL IRREGULARS

### Excerpts from Holmes' Diary 1982-2014

#### 7 May 1982

Today I split up with Watson. It is for the best. I told him not to try to contact me because he means nothing to me.

I have been alive for nearly two centuries and before today I did not look or feel a day over 30. But what I told Watson was the biggest lie of my life and now I feel like a decrepit old man.

#### 16 August 1982

After careful study to prepare myself for a career in business I have learned that not one person in one thousand knows the difference between a hypothesis and a fact.

A hypothesis is a supposition or proposed explanation made on the basis of limited evidence as a starting point for further investigation.

Yet, as soon as a businessman concocts an idea that he wants to believe, he makes it his first task to convince others that he knows what he is talking about rather than investigate the possibility he is fooling himself. No wonder the world is in such a mess and there is so little work for a consulting detective.

I can find no better expression of this philosophy than Genie Caldera's best-selling book *How to Win Influence and Befriend People*. Interestingly, she was born Jean Kaldeera

and changed her name so that people would imagine she had magical powers and mistake her for a relative of the famous industrialist, Andrew Caldera. Even her name is a lie.

## 1 January 1983

Today I've determined that I prefer the company of machines to men. In order to make myself employable I decided to master the workings of Babbage's Calculating Engine. I find that these machines appeal to my logical nature in a way humans do not.

Genie Caldera warns against coming between people and their beliefs. For example, if someone says something absurd like, "Ice is made from glass," she suggests you do not say, "No, but ice is made from water." If you want to win influence and befriend people you must say, "Yes, and ice is made from water."

Apparently, this is because most people are idiots. With "yes, and" when people hear you agree with them then you can contradict them with impunity because now they count you among their friends and they have stopped questioning what you say. However, if you say "no, but" then, because people have no interest in hearing that they are wrong, they will stop listening and avoid further encounters.

According to Genie's theory, in order to sell something to someone you need to maintain a "good" relationship. Apparently, to such people, the word "good" means "nice" and it is fine to be evil as long as you are nice about it.

But a computer will never allow you to get away with such an absurdity. It will always respond with FALSE if you try to assert  $(\text{ICE}=\text{GLASS})^{\wedge}(\text{ICE}=\text{WATER})$  in the case where  $\text{GLASS}\sim=\text{WATER}$ .

I am in love.

## 1 January 1984

I hope that someday programmers will rule the world.

After spending a year working as a coder among peers, I think I have found my people.

Machines have trained programmers to care about the truth, and these people believe that there is no greater a gift that you can give someone than to show them that they are wrong. They know that to hold a false belief can be disastrous and if you program a computer to do the wrong thing it might do it a million times a second.

They also have a different relationship with the concept of "ownership." Most people believe that owning something carries privilege.

But, programmers believe that owning your code means that you take responsibility for it. Academics insist that to use someone else's ideas without attribution is plagiarism and theft of intellectual property. But programmers consider imitation the greatest form of flattery. They put their name on their work not so you will know how great they are but so you know who to blame if it is wrong.

The best programmers are like the best artists and, interestingly, they call themselves "hackers." These people care about excellence in the pursuit of truth and beauty, and they love to explore the limits of what is possible.

Perhaps in their day job they are paid exceptionally well to write code for "the man" but when they get home they do not turn on the television but write more code for the pleasure of it. They proudly call themselves "nerds" and they have no interest in being popular because they don't care what other people think when what other people think is wrong.

I hope there comes a day when programmers become wealthy and find the wherewithal to control their own



destinies rather than work as minions to the wealthy and the selfish.

## 23 May 1986

On this day I was given a Master's degree in Business Larceny from New Dork University. I call it "business larceny" because on the very first day of my first class my professor said, "The sole objective of the professional manager is to maximize the net present value of the wealth of the owners."

What better formula for evil? My fellow graduates seem hell-bent on ensuring that the wealthy shall inherit the earth. They treat programmers like a cross between a slave and a secretary. They are idiots. I hope they go extinct.

Moriarty must be behind this.

## 2 May 1988

I have found my niche.

I was working as a coder at Lynch Barrel when I stumbled on a formula for calculating how stocks would be priced if people weren't so greedy and fearful. I presented my findings to the head of trading, a woman named Palmyra Kant.

I had prepared a business plan that called for her to create a group with a head trader, two analysts, and two programmers. They would use my formulas and I would go back to programming.

Five minutes into my two-hour 'spiel' she stood, took the cigar out of her mouth, and said, "I think you have no f#%king idea what you are talking about and there is no way I'll risk anyone else's career on your cockamamie ideas. So here's the deal; you do everything – the analysis, the coding,

and the trading – so I know who to fire if anything goes wrong. Do that, and I'll make you one promise..."

I asked, "What's that?"

She said, "If you f#%k up you will never work here again and you cannot go back to where you came from. Is that a deal?"

She held out her hand.

I shook it and said, "Deal."

### 3 May 1988

I just discovered that Lynch Barrel makes six cents in commission per share executing customer orders and yet my trading strategy only makes an average of four cents per share. I asked Palmyra why she wants to do my business when I make less money for the firm than they can make from the customers.

She said, "Because I love your business. To get a customer to trade we must get them to want to do something even if it isn't necessarily in their best interest. And of those six cents we pay two to the salesman in commission and another penny is spent taking the customer to ball games and buying them services so that they will trade with us instead of our competition."

"In your case," she continued, "you win your customers fair-and-square in open markets by being fastest with the best price, and you always do what the customer wants rather than persuade them to do what you want. For example, if the customer wants to sell something that means they want you to buy it."

"But," I protested, "If on average I make money doesn't it mean that, on average, they lose?"

She said, "Not really. If a customer is selling stock she has held for 20 years because now it is time to send a child

to college then she has already made her money. If you buy that stock then the money you make comes from holding the stock going forward, and you did not do anything at her expense.”

Palmyra explained that my argumentative nature and obsession with the truth makes me a perfect match for the markets because trading requires disagreement. What was I going to do? Track down every counterparty and talk them out of doing what they were doing? No, she explained, just do what they want you to do and print the ticket.

I asked her, “If I am trading with anonymous counterparties, how can I call them customers?”

She said, “Every business has customers; they are the people you are serving. Never forget that. Your counterparties are your customers whether you know their names or not. Even if nominally your customer is an institution, at the farthest end of every transaction are real people; working people who put their savings at risk. Always treat them with respect and do what is in their best interests.”

Today I feel good about myself and what I am doing. I feel five years younger. I wonder what Moriarty would think of that.

## 26 November 1990

Today is my first day of work in the Tokyo offices of Lynch Barrel. I took a taxi to the office and the fare was 980 yen. I knew that one does not tip in Japan but I was in a hurry so I gave the driver 1,000 yen and did not wait for my change.

When I entered my office I was met by my new assistant, a Ms. Koyumi. Instead of the customary greeting you'd expect when meeting a new boss for the first time, her

first words were, "You're late." I apologized and said there was lots of traffic. She said, "There is always traffic; you're still late."

Fifteen minutes later the taxi driver entered my office and handed me 20 yen. Koyumi-san was furious. "Don't you know there is no tipping in Japan? It costs 500 yen to park at a meter in this neighborhood." I said I knew it but couldn't understand why he wouldn't just pocket the 20 yen. She said, "Because it isn't his."

This is a fascinating place unlike any I've seen before. I must learn more.

## 17 October 1991

Today I met a Japanese World War Two veteran. I asked him how they created modern Japan, given how they behaved during the War.

He said, "There are two things you must remember. First, there is nothing you can do right now. Second, there is nothing you cannot accomplish in a generation if you raise your children to be unlike you."

That's the solution I was looking for. I was wasting time confronting well-meaning adults by pointing out the unintended consequences of their actions.

Instead, I must help the next generation to be unlike their parents.

## 27 August 1993

I have returned to the United States unhappy and disillusioned. Palmyra left the firm and my business was taken over by some bozos who did not think of counterparties as customers to be serviced but rather as dupes to be taken advantage of. For example, they were

proud of the fact that they could book more profits in a single transaction with Tangerine County in Florida than I had made in my entire career.

I left Lynch Barrel for CS Second Baltimore but things were no better there. I never learned what CS stood for but my best guess is "Crime Syndicate" if Moriarty has anything to do with it, which he probably does."

I have decided to give up running a trading business and become programmer again working for "the man." In my spare time I shall see if I can modernize my trading strategies and find a home for them at a place run by decent and honorable people. I don't hold out much hope.

### 13 April 1994

The world will never be the same again.

Yesterday, the law firm of Agnostic and Leer posted an advertisement on more than 5,500 Usenet discussion groups.

Everyone is up in arms.

This is a commercial use of the Internet that the current users think should be banned. But I am confident that the profit motive is too strong and soon the Internet will be 'open for business.'

I have made a list of twenty products that could be sold over the Internet: Software, books, magazines, newspapers, travel, real estate, music, movies, matchmaking, cars, boats, job placement, restaurant meals, clothing, electronics, groceries, education, house swaps, prostitution, and pornography.

But I have decided to ignore these opportunities in favor of continuing to develop my stock trading models. I made this decision because of what I call my "regret minimization" policy. I want to know if it is possible to

operate in the capital markets without compromising principles. Perhaps it cannot be done, but if I don't try, I might never find out.

#### 4 December 1995

I think I have found a great home for my trading strategies. It is a Canadian firm called Syrup Securities and it appears to be run by really good folks. My theory is that in Canada they raise their children to believe that it is more important to be decent than to be rich.

They agreed with me when I told them that I thought "maximizing shareholder value" was evil and proposed instead that we were just going to make sure that when all was said and done everyone involved with our endeavor would feel they were better for it and we weren't going to "maximize" anything for one party at the expense of another.

#### 5 December 2005

It is my 10 year anniversary with Syrup Securities and I must say my time here has been blissful. It appears you can be successful in the capital markets without compromising your principles.

#### 2 October 2006

Today I have made a pact with the devil.

A while ago Syrup decided to take their firm in a different direction so we created a stand-alone hedge fund.

Today we met with man who does something called “capital introduction” meaning that he can connect us to people with more money than they know what to do with.

I told him that my concern was that most investors are rich people who just want to get richer and they don't care to understand our business. He said that isn't true, ever since the Short Term Capital Mismanagement debacle of 1998, investors want to know all the details.

So I told him what Palmyra told me, that the people we trade with are our customers and the investors are not the customers but merely a source of capital. Our job is to provide a service to our counterparties at a decent return to investors and not to maximize return to investors at our customers' expense.

He turned beet red and screamed, “That's bulls%#t. The investors are the customers; they know it, I know it, and you know it. The only thing anyone cares about is that you are smarter than the guys you trade with; so f%#k them.”

I laughed and said, “Of course I know that. I'm just pulling your leg.” That afternoon his investor wired \$1 billion into our account.

Perhaps I should be elated but I am far from it. I feel old and cheap because for the first time I've compromised my principles. I looked in the mirror and asked, “What happened to the old Sherlock Holmes? He looked so young.”

## 10 January 2014

Today I have shut down my business. I have more money than I know what to do with.

## 14 March 2014

I have discovered some programmers who know the difference between a hypothesis and a fact. They have developed an annotation layer for the Internet that will allow all truth-seekers everywhere to be consulting detectives if they want.

## 22 February 2015

I have been aging fast. I miss Watson. What will I do with what little time I have left?



## Backstory (by Dr. Watson)

**26 November 2015, London**

It is not easy to express the inexpressible. But I shall try. This book is important because what is at stake is the future of news and news is important because it is how we learn what is happening and how we make sense of the world. That is why the very first thing a revolutionary does is take control the media. Think about what we know today. Where did that knowledge start its journey from the past to us now?

For example, today is Thanksgiving Day in the United States.

Why?

Apparently in 1863 President Abraham Lincoln declared the last Thursday in November as a day to praise God and express gratitude.

How do I know that? I looked it up on Wikipedia. The President's declaration was covered by the press and they left a record.

But why did Lincoln do it, what does it mean, and to whom is it important? That's still debated by historians.

It is an interesting story but this book is not about the history of Thanksgiving.

This book is about the future history of the news.

Henceforth on this day of giving thanks I shall be remembering my dear friend, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, who showed me the future of news so that I can show it to you.

Do what Sherlock suggests and future generations will be giving thanks to you too.

## My unplanned success

I have lived a long time and I never wanted to get rich.  
But it happened anyway.

It has been three decades since you last read anything written by me.

Or so you think.

You *have* read and heard my words many times because for the last thirty years I have been earning quite a substantial living ghostwriting books and speeches for some of the world's most popular and influential people.

Seventeen movies and no fewer than two dozen television shows have been based on either books or screenplays I have written. I have worked with the narrative and level designers of three of the most addictive video games of all time.

I am responsible for six of the most successful political advertising campaigns ever, and they have seen people with dubious leadership skills swept into office. In each case I also worked on the campaigns of their opponents; I don't care who wins and my clients are fine with that because they recognize they don't stand a chance without my help.

I have written the lyrics to eight popular songs that have spent more than a year at the top of the charts. Five of those songs have had advertising campaigns built around them that have sold more than \$37 billion in products.

And yet although you know my work, you don't know I did any of those things because my name figures in no newspaper. The work itself, the pleasure of finding a field for my peculiar powers, is my highest reward. That plus the fact that people paid me millions of dollars for me to pretend to be someone else. It also would not be fair for me to take credit because in no instance did my work express an original thought, idea, or emotion of my own.

## Calling All Irregulars: Backstory

As a result of my work I now own free-and-clear a seven bedroom apartment in Manhattan and a home on Mulholland Drive in Beverly Hills. On the west coast of Nicaragua I own a seven thousand acre private estate that includes 10 kilometers of pristine beach that is home to one of only twelve sea turtle hatcheries on the Pacific rim. When my friends and I walk on the beach the only footprints to be found are ours.

I have a pied-à-terre in each of London, Paris, Tokyo, and Dubai, and let us not forget my beach houses in St. Bart's, Moloka'i, French Polynesia, and the Seychelles. I am on a first-name basis with croupiers at high-stakes tables stretching from Monaco to Macao. I am a fractional owner of Lear Jets on every continent save Antarctica that stand ready to fly me to those places, and those aircraft have extra room for up to seven of my rich, famous, and powerful friends who number in the thousands (many of whom are wealthier than me).

My wealth puts me in the top one tenth of one percent of the citizens of the Western World. Of course that statistic looks much better if you compare me to planetary averages.

### Spring, 1982, New York

And yet, I would trade it all if I could return to the morning of May 7, 1982 and have just 15 minutes in the tiny dung-hole of an apartment in East Harlem that I shared with my good friend and companion, Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

I would gladly make the trade because I would use that time to try to talk Sherlock out of splitting us up.

That dung-hole had been advertised as a: "Luxury studio for the up-and-coming executive."

Yea, right!

## Calling All Irregulars: Backstory

It consisted of a single room with a toilet against the southern wall opposite a rickety desk with a hotplate next to which sat a bathtub that we used for both bathing and washing the cup, the dish, the fork, and the knife that we took turns using to eat on those days when we were lucky enough to score food on our dumpster-diving expeditions.

The outer wall had a single window to which was permanently bolted a massive iron latticework past which you could make out the decrepit fire escape that hung tenuously against the side of our building. Those iron bars were intended to keep out burglars who still periodically managed to loot what little we had through some method of egress that my detective friend was unable to discern.

Had there been a fire, and had we been able to remove the iron latticework, and had it been possible to open the window that was both nailed and painted shut, and had we been able to step onto the fire escape, then under our weight it would have most surely peeled from the building's crumbling facade and we would have plummeted to our death because our "luxurious" apartment was on the top floor of a sixth floor walkup.

For some reason unknown to us, or any of our fellow tenants, the heat only worked in the summer but not the winter. Similarly, only scalding hot water flowed from both taps in June, July, and August and for most the rest of the year the water temperature measured between two and five degrees Celsius.

We had a small mattress on the floor that wasn't big enough for both of us at once. In summer months we flipped a coin to determine who would be lucky enough to sleep in Central Park and who would have to stay behind in the sweltering heat to defend the apartment against burglars. In the winter we huddled together on that mattress and neither

## Calling All Irregulars: Backstory

of us would sleep much, but at least we kept each other warm.

Most apartments above 86<sup>th</sup> Street were similarly equipped. Things were much worse north of Manhattan in the Bronx where the shells of burned out buildings could remind you of Tokyo after a fortnight of raids by B-29s dropping blockbusters and incendiary bombs. In those empty hulks lived poor souls with prospects so bleak we could ill afford the energy it takes to muster empathy. To think of them made you want to cry and crying was not a luxury we could afford. Perhaps that was selfish; perhaps we would have cared more had we been just a little better off.

Sadly it was what it was. Things were bad all over and even the rich were complaining in the charming way that they do.

And yet in 1982 there was optimism in the air because we had a new acting President. He first honed his skills in the movies and then as governor of his state and in 1980 he was installed as Commander and Chief by a desperate nation.

This new leader promised a “new dawn in America” and his script called for smaller government with less public debt.

What he delivered was bigger government in even more debt.

That admixture of the perception of one thing and the reality of another appeared to be exactly what the citizens wanted and what the economy needed to get going again.

New York was bursting with bustling young up-and-coming executives living in apartments just like ours. They were oblivious to the poverty all around them and even the squalor that they came home to each night. Instead, their gaze was fixed on an imagined bright future that was full of

wealth and success for themselves and for their loved ones, assuming they had any.

Sadly, Sherlock and I shared none of that optimism. Our flat was not the ideal place for a once-great consulting detective and the faithful chronicler of his adventures to extricate themselves from the jaws of the black dog.

But it was our home and we had each other.

## 5 May 1982, New York

On 5 May 1982 it was my turn to sleep and for Sherlock to stay up. I was about drift off when Sherlock announced, "The way we live is intolerable. Ever since The Case of the White Collar Criminal we have not had a single nibble. It is as if we are being punished. I must do something." "To smoke," he answered. "It is quite a three pipe problem, and I beg that you won't speak to me for fifty minutes."

"What are you going to do, then?" I asked.

Smoking was one of the few joys he could afford because it was easy to collect tobacco from discarded cigarette butts. He curled himself up in the corner, with his thin knees drawn up to his nose, and there he sat with his eyes closed and his black clay pipe thrusting out like the bill of some strange bird. I had come to the conclusion that he had dropped asleep, and indeed was nodding myself, when he suddenly sprang out of his chair with the gesture of a man who has made up his mind.

He put his pipe down upon the floor and announced, "I must end it all." He abruptly left the apartment and I fell asleep.

6 May 1982

I had a nightmare in which Holmes jumped from the Brooklyn Bridge and I followed. Just as I was about to hit the water I woke up.

That's it, I thought, we have been working so hard trying to stay alive and instead we had misdiagnosed the problem. We have lived longer than anyone in recorded history and we have had a rich and rewarding life. Now it is time to end it all.

I had kept my service revolver under a floorboard that was held in place by six Philips Head screws. I went to Alpha Hardware on 112<sup>th</sup> and First and asked if I could borrow a screwdriver for one hour. They agreed if I would leave my coat as collateral.

I was able to remove the screws, return the screwdriver, retrieve my coat, and return to the apartment where I extracted the revolver and a single .442 bullet.

I put it into one of the chambers and spun the cylinder. I inspected the weapon closely, cocked it, put the barrel to my temple, and pulled the trigger.

As expected, the gun did not fire because I had made sure the bullet was in a chamber that would not rotate under the pin. Confident that my weapon could be relied upon, I placed my trusty Adams in my coat pocket and settled in to wait for Holmes to return.

I began to reminisce.

I remembered how wonderful it felt to go out on a case with Sherlock and my revolver in my coat. I remember using it on that infernal Somerset hound. I remember shooting another animal but it was so long ago I could not retrieve the details from memory. Then there was the Delaney character, but again my memory is foggy; so much time had passed that I'd have to go to the library and look up the details.

## Calling All Irregulars: Backstory

There were also many unpublished cases that might be lost to us forever because in 1980 Holmes and I sold every scrap of paper we had to collectors to make rent.

I cut these musings short because the past is the past and there is never any use in dwelling on it whether one's memories are fond or terrifying.

So I focused on the present problem. The fact was that we had only one bullet between us.

Could I use it on myself and leave the weapon for Holmes? But surely without a bullet it will be useless. He pistol whipped Major Dolan in the story we called *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches*. I imagine Holmes could pistol whip me and then shoot himself, but how could such an end be more humane than jumping off a bridge?

There are plenty of instances of one bullet killing more than one person, but such things are flukes and difficult to plan because although the .442 packs a wallop, penetrating power and stopping power are quite different things.

Surprisingly, I discovered that these thoughts were soothing rather than macabre. Our troubles would soon be over. I dozed off in in the chair and I slept more soundly than I had in months.

When I awoke it must have been between 11:30 and midnight judging from the conversation coming through our southern wall. It was cloudy and raining which cut down the amount of light that filtered past the iron latticework on the window. I could barely see so I struck a match and Holmes wasn't to be found.

The months of May and September were not too hot and not too cold and that made sleeping in the apartment tolerable for those two months only.

Normally if Holmes were to stay out all night I would have slept soundly.

But not this night.



## Separation

### 7 May 1982, New York

I was sick with worry and if I slept at all it couldn't have been for more than ten minutes. I rose at dawn and was standing at the window when I heard the key in the lock and soon enough Sherlock came charging into our tiny apartment.

He flopped onto the mattress and indicated I should sit next to him. He reached into a leather attaché case I had never seen before and removed two large manila envelopes. One was labeled "LB" and the other "BA". He dumped the contents of the "LB" envelope on the mattress between us and returned the other to the attaché case.

He began handing me items.

"United States Passport." He opened the passport to the identification page. "You are Mr. Leonard Bakerloo; born in Akron, Ohio. Your mother was born at home in in the town of Copley just west of Akron but your father was from London and at the age of three you moved there. That explains your British accent."

"Driver's License." He handed me a British driver's license that had been issued to a Mr. Leonard Bakerloo of Dulwich, South East London, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April, 1980. "This will help you establish that you had been living in England."

"Books." He handed me three books, all in perfect condition. "You have been working as a ghostwriter and wrote all three of these. Two were best sellers and one received critical acclaim but was not a commercial success."

"I have done no such thing." I looked at the dust covers. "I recognize these authors. All three have died in the last two years."

"That's right." Sherlock smiled, "Sadly, they are not around to deny your claim. If you notice, on the title page each one has a personal note thanking you for your work." He handed me an envelope. "Here are your invoices and photocopies of the checks they used to pay you."

I was incredulous. "Have you landed a new client? Are we to go deep undercover on a secret assignment?"

He laughed, "Nothing of the sort. Pay attention, there isn't much time." He handed me a wire bound notebook. "Here is your personal diary written in your own hand. It covers the years 1974 to the present. It will help you get your backstory straight."

I opened the notebook to a random page and indeed it looked like my own handwriting. "This is absurd; almost criminal."

Sherlock smiled, "As you are aware, Watson, there is no one who knows the higher criminal world of New York so well as I do. For years past I have continually been conscious of some power behind the malefactor, some deep organizing power which forever stands in the way of the law, and throws its shield over the wrong-doer. Again and again in cases of the most varying sorts—forgery cases, robberies, murders, stock market scams, and shady bond deals—I have felt the presence of this force, and I have deduced its action in many of those undiscovered crimes in which I have not been personally consulted. For years I have endeavored to break through the veil which shrouded it, and at last the time came when I seized my thread and followed it, until it led me, after a thousand cunning windings, to ex-Professor Moriarty of mathematical celebrity.

"He is the Napoleon of crime, Watson. But in calling Moriarty a criminal you are uttering libel in the eyes of the law – and there lies the glory and the wonder of it! He operates through consulting firms and investment banks that advise and underwrite many nefarious endeavors but he never does the dirty work himself.

"And he does not discriminate. I merely presented myself to him and described our circumstances. He gladly helped and it is entirely on account; I can pay him back at my leisure and although he usually charges usurious rates. However, as a professional courtesy from one consultant to another, in my case he is charging no interest whatsoever."

Holmes handed me pages torn from magazines and newspapers. "Here are seventeen speeches you've written for politicians and business leaders. Unfortunately, none of them are still alive so they cannot confirm that you are the author, but luckily you were given reference letters by most of them." He handed me a stack of envelopes.

He picked up a wallet. He opened it and itemized the contents. "Fourteen fifty-dollar bills and 25 twenty-dollar bills. A Visa card with a \$20,000 credit limit and an American Express Green. Various other small items of no consequence." He handed me a checkbook, "Here is your checkbook for an account at Citibank. In it you will find \$9,241.55."

"And now for the most important thing." He handed me a small book with a red binding. "This is your appointment calendar for the year. This afternoon you have a meeting with a tailor at Barneys. Tonight you will be staying at the Plaza and in the morning you will be meeting with a broker who can set you up with a small corporate apartment.

"On Monday you have a luncheon meeting with one of the most colorful governors this country has produced in decades. He wants you to write his memoir and might want

to run for president someday. On Thursday you have a morning meeting with a Senator and on Friday you have a lunch with a Representative. They have heard of your reputation as a speechwriter. One is a Democrat and the other is a Republican – I can't remember which is which – but it hardly matters. They'd both be happy to hire you." As he flipped through the little book I saw that there were appointments all the way into September.

He closed the book and handed it to me. Then he picked up an envelope and said, "In here you will find contracts you can use with your clients. In nearly every case the sales work has been done for you by your agent. All you need to do is keep your appointments, get the requirements of each job, and pick the ones you want to do."

Holmes handed me the envelope and said, "Any questions?"

I was somewhat overwhelmed by this flood of information, "Yes," I said, "What is going on?"

"You have a new identity and you have plenty of work."

He snapped his attaché case shut, stood, and walked to the door. He turned and said, "If there is no market for the truth then let us sell lies. It is best you do not try to contact me. Good luck. Please do not try to keep in touch; you mean nothing to me." The door slammed and I heard his footsteps as he ran down the stairs. I felt both sad and angry but mostly betrayed.

I first met Mr. Sherlock Holmes on a park bench in London on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, 1856. On that day he told me that he knew the secret of eternal life. I think he even explained how it worked but I couldn't follow what he was saying. It seemed unlikely such a secret could exist but somehow from that day until now I don't think either of us has aged more than two or three years.

## Calling All Irregulars: Separation

But on this day there was something different. Although he was animated in a way I hadn't seen in years, my friend seemed to have aged more than a few years in less than a day.

## Reunion

### Despondency

I studied the notebook Holmes left me. He had been very thorough and in short order I started to feel as if I really was Len Bakerloo. Apparently, Holmes had managed to fill my calendar by presenting himself as a literary agent named Josh Wanton. By June, I had a six figure advance to ghostwrite a memoir for one of the politicians and by year's end I had contracts for work that would keep me busy for all of 1983 and 1984.

By 1985 my net worth was about \$320,000 and although I found it astounding at the time I had no idea I was just beginning to accumulate wealth.

I've already told you how successful I am now.

What I haven't told you is that each year I became slightly more despondent.

One of Sherlock Holmes's defects – if indeed, one may call it a defect – was that he was exceedingly loath to communicate his full plans to any other person until the instant of their fulfillment. Partly it came no doubt from his own masterful nature, which loved to dominate and surprise those who were around him. Partly also from his professional caution, which urged him never to take any chances. The result, however, was very trying for those who were acting as his agents and assistants.

I had assumed Holmes had asked me to do these things as part of some undisclosed scheme of his and that any moment he would reenter my life and explain it all. But as the days turned into years and the years turned into decades I was losing all hope that I would see him again.

## Calling All Irregulars: Reunion

When he and I first met in 1856 we were both in our twenties. As I have mentioned, Holmes and I hardly aged since. In 1982 we still didn't look a day over 30.

For the first five or six years after Holmes left I hardly noticed that I was aging but by 1990 I looked like I was pushing forty. I still felt like I was 30 but I had gained weight and I had wrinkles where there had been none before.

I had always imagined that if Holmes and I were ever to grow old then we would grow old together. However, by 2005 I reconciled to never seeing him again and in 2009 I convinced myself that Holmes was dead.

By 2014, I definitely looked like I was in my 60's but I felt like I was 90 and that my life was over. I was drained of all energy and I'd stopped working altogether.

I was getting old and I missed Holmes.

But, there something else was wrong.

It took me a long time to figure out the problem. And then, I awoke on the morning of September 26, 2015 with the answer.

When I would write a book or speech for a politician or business leader I would come to know and admire them. My work reflected this and it is what made me very effective. People need heroes and I helped create them. I believed that the products I helped promote met real needs. I was proud of the movies I helped create and the song lyrics I'd penned.

But as time progressed the people I helped promote proved not to be who I'd thought they were. Nearly every politician resigned in disgrace and two were instrumental in getting us involved in disastrous military adventures. Some of the products I helped advertise had ingredients that were both harmful and addictive. Or they had product defects that could kill users. To be honest, the best products I had promoted were the ones that were shoddy and quickly found their way into the trash were they could do no harm.

## Calling All Irregulars: Reunion

The final blow came on September 25, 2015 when I learned that my biggest and longest standing client had been raided by investigators looking for evidence of tax evasion and money laundering. Even they proved not to be who I thought they were.

I slept fitfully that night and in the morning I knew what was wrong.

The last honest person I'd worked for was Mr. Sherlock Holmes and the last time I'd done honest work was when I'd worked with him.

I thought about the rich people I'd helped become richer, the powerful people I'd helped become more powerful, and the big corporations I'd helped become bigger. Very few of the people I met reflected on whether they were a force for good or evil. And, if they imagined they were doing good things they didn't give much thought to unintended consequences.

Dozens of college professors numbered among my friends and acquaintances and although they usually excoriated the rich and powerful they proposed no alternative system. Colleges had become expensive summer camps with libraries, and the libraries were no longer needed. Parents were gutting their retirement accounts and taking second mortgages to send their children to colleges that graduated them with few marketable skills and debt that could not be discharged in bankruptcy. Students owed more money today than the entire United States Government did in 1982, and these young people could not print money the way the government could.

I felt my honored career ended in irreparable failure and I went in disgrace, by thunder, and I was well ashamed of myself. The next day I moved into a budget motel near JFK airport. I called my accountant and told him I wanted to begin liquidating my assets. I began riding the subway



and talking to blue collar workers: auto mechanics, bus drivers, electricians, shopkeepers, nurses, and anyone else who would give me their time.

I took homeless people for meals at fancy restaurants and I would attend traffic court, small claims court, and even night court. I met and got to know minimum wage fast-food cooks living in homeless shelters, drug addicted mothers, abusive alcoholic fathers, and even sex workers. The thing that struck me was that nearly all of these people felt ashamed of themselves. They wanted to live honorable lives and they were struggling against the odds.

After a month I felt worse about myself and better about humanity. It is good to know there are still people who crave honor and can feel shame. Too bad there are more of them at the bottom of society than at the top.

## 27 October 2015, 221b Baker Street, London

On 13 October, I bought a one-way airline ticket to London and on the evening of 26 October, I flew from JFK to Heathrow. After clearing customs I took a black cab to 221b Baker Street. The cabbie said, "Sure thing governor. That's the most famous address in all of England and Wales."

I had not visited our old home since it had been turned into a museum in 1932. When we arrived the cabbie said, "That's funny."

"What's funny?" I said, "It looks exactly as I remember it."

"Where is the gift shop? There is no sign for the museum. I take more tourists here than any other place in London and I was here just Wednesday last. I'm sure I have the right address, but there is nothing. I'm sorry; they must have moved."

"That's fine; I'll get out here anyway." I paid the cabbie and made my way to the door. It was uncanny; it looked exactly as I'd remembered it; the same door knocker, the same mail slot; the same locks.

I notice the door was ajar so I pushed and it swung wide. Everything was as I remembered it; the wallpaper, the pictures on the walls, and the carpeting on the stairs. I would have expected it to have faded by now but everything looked as new as it had more than a century ago.

I climbed the seventeen stairs to our flat. I hesitated before knocking on the door and when I finally did there was an immediate response in that old familiar voice.

"It's open."

I pushed the door open slowly, afraid of what I might see. The place seemed to be exactly as we had left it. There was a beautiful airy sitting room with two windows, complete with fireplace and mantelpiece with several objects on it, including a Persian slipper, in which Holmes would put his tobacco. In the room was also a table where he kept his famous deerstalker, and two chairs where he and I would sit. There is a desk where Holmes would work, and beside it is a doorway that leads to his bedroom.

There was an old man sitting in what had been Holmes' chair. He did not utter a word but just looked at me for a second and then at my old chair for another second. Then he looked out the window and I knew I was to sit down and shut up until he was ready to speak.

I could have sworn that it had been Holmes voice that I had heard when I knocked at the door so I looked around the room and convinced myself that the old man and I were alone in the room. I looked at the old man and felt a creeping of the flesh, a presentiment of coming horror. And in an instant I realized that this old man was my old friend, Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

And then I realized that he wasn't looking out the window but at a syringe sitting on the sill. My heart sank.

"Which is it today?" I asked, "Morphine or cocaine?"

He raised his eyes languidly, "It is cocaine – a seven percent solution. Would you care to try it?"

"No, indeed," I answered, brusquely. "My constitution has had not gotten over the jet-lag yet. I cannot afford to throw any extra strain on it."

He cocked his head slightly to the right as if straining to hear something. Then he moved the window curtain aside and peered out onto the street.

Sherlock turned to me and said, "When Ms. Hudson brings us the note would you read it to me."

"Ah," I said, "The mail!"

He said, "No. The note. The mail comes later. She will be bringing us a note." He was looking at me much too sternly given that any normal person would be asking how I was and all that rot.

I heard footsteps and the door opened. I had been expecting to see our old landlady and so I was surprised to find myself looking at a familiar young face.

"Len Bakerloo," She exclaimed, "What are you doing here?"

"Kate, I should be asking the same of you." I had written two screenplays for films she had performed in. Both were hits, of course.

Holmes cut our conversation short with a wave of his hand. "Ms. Hudson, would you please give the note to my good friend, Doctor Watson, and then would you be so kind as to close the door when you leave."

Using a British accent, the young woman said, "Of course, Mister Holmes. As you wish, Mister Holmes." She held out a silver tray on which was a small slip of paper. "For you, Doctor Watson."

## Calling All Irregulars: Reunion

She winked at me as I took the note. "Call me if you need anything, Mister Holmes. And it is so good to see you again, Doctor Watson."

She closed the door. Once I heard her footsteps on the stairs I was certain she was not listening through the door. I said, "Sherlock. You look so old."

He laughed, "I'm not that bad. But have you looked at yourself lately; you're a wreck."

I had to admit he was right, so I changed the subject. "Do you have any idea who that woman is?"

Holmes said, "Of course I do. She's expensive but she was between projects so I was able to get her to do this gig. I convinced her no one else could play the part because she is, after all, the great great granddaughter of our own Mrs. Hudson."

"Does she know you are Sherlock Holmes?"

"Of course not," Sherlock laughed, "Everyone thinks we are a work of fiction." He looked at the note in my hand, "Now read it to me."

## Putting a Price on the News

I looked at the small slip of paper in my hand. On it was written:

Hey Sherlock! I miss you. Do you know anyone who wants to buy the LA LA TIMES for 300 mil?

Sherlock laughed and I waited. He waited. So I waited. Then he waited some more.

Finally, Sherlock said, "Well?"

I said, "That's my line. What does the message mean?"

He said, "One thing I know is that the LA LA TIMES is for sale."

"That's obvious; even I know that is what the note says."

He said, "Not true. The note doesn't say it is for sale. It asks if I know anyone who wants to buy it. You need to read things carefully."

"But," I protested, "If someone is asking for a buyer then you can assume they want to sell."

Sherlock sighed, "No. In this case, the writer is making a joke. You sound like Lestrade; he assumes much too much."

Sherlock paused for a sly smile. He continued, "The reason I know the LA LA TIMES is for sale is because everything is for sale for the right price; that's a fundamental rule of markets. When someone says something is priceless and isn't for sale then just keep offering to pay more until they capitulate. I'm not saying you should send a check; most things that people say are priceless are in fact worthless. If a college ever tells you the education they offer is priceless then you say that's great because you'll be happy to go as long as they never present you with a tuition bill."

"OK. Point taken." Then I said, "But knowing something is for sale doesn't mean that you know what price they have in mind. This mystery person is telling you that if you knew someone with 300 million pounds then you might do well to make an introduction."

"My dear Watson; again you assume way too much. Read it again."

I read it again, and yet again, and I said that frankly I didn't get it.

He said, "I'll wait."

Then it hit me and I said with great pride, "Ah-ha, I'm not so dumb after all. I had assumed pounds because we are in Britain but the LA LA TIMES IS in La La Land and therefore we can assume we're talking about dollars. That's still a lot of money, but not quite as much."

"I'll grant you that you're not as dumb as it is possible to assume that you are, but you're still off the mark. Let me help you. I have found that a short ambiguous message means one of two things."

I waited for him to continue but he didn't. I waited a while longer and then after much rolling of eyes he finally began talking.

"I'll spell it out. One reason for a short ambiguous message is because the sender is trying to be funny, such as with 'Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana.' This I call the 'Brevity is the soul of the wit' case.

"The other reason is because the author is an idiot. A classic example is when a programmer uses an all-purpose error message such as: 'You have performed an illegal operation.' This leaves users imagining they have broken the law. This I call the 'Brevity is the soul of the nitwit' case. I wrote a monograph about it once."

I responded, "OK. I got it. It isn't clear they are talking about 300 million pounds or dollars however that ambiguity would have been removed with the addition of either a single dollar or pound symbol. Therefore we are dealing with a nitwit."

Holmes winked at me and said, "Not bad. Or, we are dealing with a very smart person who is trying to be funny. Read the last sentence again."

I read out loud, "Do you know anyone who wants to buy the LA LA TIMES for 300 mil?"

Holmes stroked his chin. "This time, my dear Doctor Watson, let us try not make any assumptions. So, what is a mil if it just a mil and not a million or a millimeter or anything else but a mil?"

I had no idea what he was talking about, and I guess it was obvious from my expression, so Holmes continued, "If you had paid attention when you'd edited my monograph

*Coins Found on Cadavers 1859 – 1973* you would recall that a mil is the brass coin representing 1/1000ths of a Palestinian pound issued from 1927-1946 which was pegged to the British pound at the time. Adjusting for exchange this message is roughly equivalent to asking, ‘Do you know anyone who wants to buy the LA LA TIMES for a dollar.’

I laughed, “I don’t read the LA LA TIMES, but I assume that because La La Land is so big they must have plenty of subscribers so their paper has to be worth more than \$1. Also, nobody has thought about Palestinian coins since around 1947. Therefore we’re obviously talking about a nitwit. Ta-Dah.”

Holmes leaned back in his chair and smiled. “You’d be right except for one little thing. I know for a fact that the woman who wrote the note is not a nitwit but a kind-hearted genius with a sense of humor.”

I was astonished. “How can you know the author of this note was a woman?” I sniffed the slip of paper. “No perfume I can smell.” I inspected the letters. “It isn’t handwritten, so no clue there. I cannot remember what you said in your monograph *Type-Font Preferences by Gender*. I’m dumbfounded.”

My friend stared at me for a minute or so and then said, “Give up?”

“Yes, I give up. Tell me.”

“My dear Watson, I got a glimpse of her out of the window right after she dropped the note through the slot.”

I said, “Now I feel stupid.”

“I suspect you’d be used to that by now.”

“Ha. So you saw it was a woman, but how did you know she wasn’t a nitwit.”

“Because I recognized her. She was my editor at Bejazzled when they published many of my monographs including: *How to Tell the Difference between Good People*

*and Nice People When Making Hiring Decision. How Colleges Get Away with Being Evil, and, How To Make A Fortune While Appearing to Not Ask for Any Money.*

“That last one was probably the most popular due to the fact that you, Mr. Watson, never described how I could have taken on all those cases while never asking for anything in return. I think it also confused the publisher of *Bejazzled* because I refused to let them pay me for my monographs when most writers wouldn’t to put pen to paper for less than \$200.”

“What was the woman’s name?”

The way his features softened and the lips turned up slightly at the corners I knew exactly who the woman was. To Sherlock Holmes she is always *the* woman. I have seldom heard him mention her under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex. Sherlock leaned forward and I leaned forward in response.

His lips parted and he said, “The woman’s name is...” and then he paused. His eyes closed and I wondered if he would ever finish the sentence, not that I needed him to. I knew the woman’s name was Irene Adler, and if you have ever read my descriptions of Sherlock’s prior cases then you know I am right.

## Karma

Then suddenly his eyes popped wide open and he announced, “Her name is A. Karma Flitit.”

You could have knocked me over with a feather. I blurted out, “What kind of name is A. Karma Flitit?”

He laughed, “I have no idea. Indian perhaps?”

“American Indian or Asian Indian?”

He said, “There is a difference? I thought there was only one kind of Indian.”



That floored me. I said that the idea that any civilized human being in this twenty-first century should not be aware that we use the word "Indian" to refer to two completely unrelated peoples was such an extraordinary fact that I could hardly realize it.

"You appear to be astonished," he said, smiling at my expression of surprise. "Now that I do know it I shall do my best to forget it."

"To forget it!"

"You see," he explained, "I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of other things, so that he has a difficulty in laying his hands upon it. Now the skillful workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of these he has a large assortment, and all in the most perfect order. It is a mistake to think that that little room has elastic walls and can distend to any extent. Depend upon it there comes a time when for every addition of knowledge you forget something that you knew before. It is of the highest importance, therefore, not to have useless facts elbowing out the useful ones."

It felt like I'd heard this little lecture before. "But even so," I said, "just to avoid embarrassing yourself in front of A. Karma Flitit you should learn the difference between the two kinds of Indians."

"Why? Karma and I have embarrassed each other so many times that nothing matters at this point. I guess you could say that with Karma, what goes around comes around."

He waited for me to say something so I took the cue and said, "Ta-dah."

"Besides, Karma might be a pen name and her real name might be I. Lama Fartkit for all I know. Whatever her name, the woman is awesome."

I took a deep breath, looked my friend squarely in the eyes, and said, "Sherlock, any woman who would put up with you for five minutes is awesome."

He laughed and said, "No shit, Sherlock."

Sherlock Holmes and I looked blankly at each other, and then burst simultaneously into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. It felt familiar and for the first time in a long time I felt like I was having fun.

He continued, "Look, I know I'm not the easiest person to get along with. The fact that you have put up with me since 1856 is the only thing that makes you barely tolerable and the fact that Karma put up with me for two years is what makes her awesome."

It felt like there was an insult in it somewhere but I couldn't find it, so I said, "Can you tell me what is going on?"

"I can. What do you want to know?"

"Everything. I am totally confused."

Sherlock threw me a notepad and a pen. "OK." He said, "Let's make a list. The first question you probably have is: Why are we getting so old?"

I wrote it on the pad. "I also want to know why we hardly aged at all between 1856 and 1982."

Sherlock laughed, "I've explained that to you a few times already but I'll be happy to do it again. Perhaps you'll pay more attention this time because we will both need to stop growing older soon or we'll be pushing up the daisies. Put it on the list."

I did.

## Calling All Irregulars: Reunion

Sherlock smiled, "Do you want to know how I knew you would be coming here today?"

"You knew that?"

"I certainly did. I knew you were depressed and when you bought the airplane ticket I knew I had two weeks to get over here and buy this place and set things up."

"How did you know I had bought a ticket?"

"Do you know what a keylogger is?"

I had to admit I'd never heard of it. "And how did you know I was depressed?"

"It was clear from your demeanor this last year. Then, when you began liquidating assets, things started to look dire."

I was incensed, "You've had me followed?"

Of course not. "Why would the world's greatest detective hire someone to follow you? I have been following your movements since we split up. Remember, I created your new identity and you were very easy to keep track of."

I laughed. "You have a point."

"Do you remember talking to a homeless man on the subway? And a pharmacist? And a nurse who did triage at the hospital? And an alcoholic in an alleyway? And a transsexual prostitute?"

"You interviewed them?"

"No, my dear Watson. I was them."

I was nonplussed and it must have showed.

"I always was a master of disguises. Do you remember the three sessions you had with a psychotherapist earlier this year?"

I did not respond.

"That was my best work ever; I don't think you had a clue."

I sat in silence while his words sunk in.

Eventually Holmes spoke, "You and I have more money than we will ever spend in one hundred lifetimes and yet we're not happy. Why is that?"

"I concluded a month ago that it is because I'd been living a lie and I'd been helping others tell lies too."

"Well done my dear Doctor Watson; a fine piece of detective work. It is as if evolution gave us the ability to reason as a weapon to use against our enemies rather than to work together in a search for the truth. What should be a connected series of statements intended to establish a proposition is more like a No Potty Hymn comedy skit.

"People need to learn to tell the difference between the truth and a lie; between a proposition and a proof; between a hypothesis and a fact; between evidence and an opinion; and between a reasoned argument and a fistfight. If we don't all do that then we aren't long for this planet. Now, what are we going to do about it?"

"What do you mean?"

"When you understand the cause of a problem you've removed an excuse for not doing something. *If we know what to do then we must act.*"

"It's impossible, Sherlock. The wealthiest and most powerful people in the world have only one objective and that is to become wealthier and more powerful. What weapons do we have that can stand up to that?"

## Holmes' Secret Weapon

"Elementary, my dear Watson. We have two secret weapons." Holmes held up his index finger. "Our first weapon is that we care about the truth. There is no more powerful weapon than a person who cares about the truth."

"That sounds grand, Sherlock, but I've rubbed elbows with these people and they are quite formidable. I've even

done their bidding and believe me, even if I refuse to work for them there are a million unemployed writers and journalists who will gladly bid for the work. It doesn't matter if only you and I care about the truth. We can't do it alone."

"That's right, Watson, but we have another weapon." He added a second finger. "These rich and powerful people are mortal and they have children just like the poor and disenfranchised. A wise man once said that there are two things you must remember: The first is that there is nothing you can accomplish right now and the second is that there is nothing you cannot accomplish in a generation if you raise your children to be unlike you."

"Holmes, you've said that many times. Are you quoting yourself?"

"Of course; I am wise and I'll gladly admit it. There are many things we need to say to the richest kids in the world. I put some of those things into a monograph once and it was well received by some of the rich kids themselves. Even if they recognize that they have a great responsibility to be a force for good they don't know what to do and they lack a sense of purpose."

I had to agree with Holmes, "I'll second that. Many of the wealthy and powerful people I have met were self-made and they were cut of a different cloth than their children who were born with privileges and resources their parents had to work for.

"And that is where my Baker Street Irregulars come in." He looked at me with a sly smile.

"And, who are they again?"

Holmes sighed. "It is funny how you seem to forget your own words as soon as they appear in print. In the earliest days they were a small rag-tag band of young street urchins who reported to an older boy under my employment. They

## Calling All Irregulars: Reunion

were very effective because, as I said at the time, they operated under the radar.”

“What ever happened to them?”

“They grew up and had children. And those children grew up and had children. And so on. Many former Irregulars have become some of the richest and most influential people in the world.”

“Really. Why have I never heard of them?”

“You have heard of them, you just never worked for them. They don’t need you to help them manipulate the thoughts of others. They have their own thoughts and they do their own work and they let their work speak for itself. Some of them were born poor and some of them were born rich. But they all had one thing in common.”

“What’s that?”

“They all started young. Children are built to play and they imagine themselves as heroic characters fighting evil in the name of good.

“But such children are a threat to the established order and people committing evil acts cannot allow children to grow up thinking evil needs to be fought in the name of good. The people you worked for, Dr. Watson, need the next generation to do their bidding. So they begin socializing our children very early. They force academic subjects on tots who should be spending their days climbing trees and playing in mud puddles. Children are told that their dreams are childish and that they need to get themselves ready to make a living in a ‘cold cruel world.’

“But some children continue to play well into high school and even college. From puberty through our mid-20’s we possess something scientists call the adolescent brain. Adults imagine that adolescents need to be protected from themselves because they have no idea how risky the world is. Helicopter parents who misunderstand the point

of the adolescent brain follow their kids to college and even into the workforce where annoyed employers refer to them as 'bulldozers.'

"But they misinterpret the data. The fact is that adolescents over-estimate risks. For example, they think that unprotected sex is much more dangerous than it is. What adolescents are unafraid of is the unknown. Nature is smarter than we give her credit. Each new generation must see the world with fresh eyes because the world changes and they cannot succeed if they think the world works according to their parents' out-of-date beliefs.

"Young people aren't afraid to talk to strangers unless we teach them to be afraid. They don't mind walking into a neighborhood they have never been in before unless a neurotic adult is making them afraid. They feel comfortable exploring their neighborhood without a map; it is their parents who hate being lost. When they get a new toy they don't read the instructions and they will take it apart without caring if they know how to put it back together. It's the parents who see exploration as destruction.

"If grown-ups don't made young people needlessly fearful, then when they grow up they won't know how risky it is to start a business doing something that has never been done before. They won't know how risky it is to fly to Mars because it has never been done. They won't know how risky it is to re-invent the music industry because it has never been done. They won't know how risky it is to imagine that computers the size of your thumbnail can overthrow a world dominated by room-sized mainframes.

"And most importantly, young people don't have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Revolution comes naturally to the young; old people say they want evolution but usually they want no change whatsoever. What's the chant of the revolutionary? 'What do we want?

Change. When do we want it? Right now.' And what is the chant of the gradualist, 'What do we want? Change. When do we want it? In due course.' Yea. Right!

"I heard someone say that today more people believe the moon landings were faked than believe you can have a decent living without a college education. Think about that. It means that the Ed Biz has sold the idea that their product is an absolute necessity and to imagine otherwise is foolhardy.

"And yet they can graduate people who imagine that we never landed on the moon? If someone doesn't know that we went to the moon 45 years ago how can such a person imagine visiting Mars? Sure, we graduate a surplus of film majors who make movies about exploring space, but where are the engineers who are going to make it happen?"

"Sherlock, I have to interrupt." Frankly, I was getting bored because he had gone on so long without letting me speak. "When we first met you told me you didn't care if the earth went around the moon or the sun. Now you care about rocket ships?"

"Damn straight, I do. I did not care about the motions of the planets in the 1800's because the crimes I was trying to solve required I know about train schedules and the kinds of mud found in various parts of London.

"But today perhaps the biggest crime is the one being perpetrated on young people by their parents, the schools, and our entertainment industry, which I believe has grown to incorporate the financial markets and the news. High school seems to have one mission and that is to get their graduates into college. About half of all high school graduates go to college but only about half of them graduate from four-year colleges in six years. Whether they complete a degree or not, the majority leave school with onerous debt that cannot discharge in bankruptcy. In America, everyone



isn't born equal but at least there aren't debtors' prisons and everyone had the right to start fresh at zero. Well, it used to be that way, but not anymore. Many grads don't get marketable skills and something like 60% of them take jobs that don't require a college degree.

"But, the worst thing of all is that by the time the adolescent brain has become an adult brain our society has done everything in its power to make sure all childhood dreams and heroic imagination have been erased without a trace. We are launching our young people into adulthood as economic slaves who must work as minions to the rich and powerful to pay off their debts and then they pay to send their own children into the same dysfunctional system hoping they will become winners in a ridiculous pointless game. This has been going on for decades; how do you think the rich have become richer, the poor poorer, and the middle class has stagnated and shrunk in size?"

Sherlock was getting angry. I seldom saw him so animated and he stopped talking and began to slowly count the fingers on his left hand and then just when he was about to begin counting the finger on his right hand I couldn't take it anymore and said, "Sherlock, what are you doing?"

"I'm counting to ten."

"You need to use your fingers to count to ten?"

"Of course not. But I noticed that when I would take a pause to compose myself idiots would think it was their turn to put a word in edgewise. Because they hadn't been listening to what I was saying, invariable, they would change the subject. That would get me angry and defeat the point of counting in the first place."

I wasn't really listening to what Sherlock was saying so I let it go.

## Calling All Irregulars: Reunion

“Besides, when someone interrupts they can make you forget where you are. He looked back at his hands. “Ah, there I was. Seven, eight, nine, ten. Ah. Much better.”

I was so glad that I had gotten into the habit of keeping a digital recorder going all the time so that I can write up a transcript later. But for that I would have had no way of telling you what Sherlock said.

Even though I wished he would stop, I said, “Please go on.”

“And the worst of it is that you and I helped.”

“Helped what?”

“We helped the powerful become more powerful and the rich become richer. You became a ghost writer and put powerful words into the mouths of idiots and I became a hedge fund manager and helped the rich get richer. And we had to learn the hard way that making the ‘rich and powerful’ richer and more powerful isn’t very satisfying, even if *you* are a powerful and rich person.”

“I noticed that. I once met a Hollywood producer who noticed that all his rich, famous, and beautiful friends were not happy and yet his gardener was happy. So he commissioned a documentary film to be made about what it means to be happy and I don’t think anyone is interested in watching it. They all want to know how to become rich, famous, and beautiful. Happiness doesn’t have an advertising budget.”

“Adverts know what we really want: they just refuse to sell it to you. The philosopher, Icky Rashley, has suggested that if we spend just a little less time consuming entertainment and instead use the time we save as a global resource. The internet allows our Baker Street Irregulars to collaborate and coordinate in ways that weren’t possible when Wiggins was running the show.”

"Icky sounds like he is worth studying. But who going to pay for your Irregulars to do all the work?"

"My irregulars will do the really important work for free. When an irregular is in school all we have to do is give them something more interesting to do than their homework. And when they grow up all they need is something more meaningful than their jobs. Luckily schools and employers don't give us much competition."

"OK, Sherlock, what have your Baker Street Irregulars done lately?"

"The ones who played with mainframe computers as adolescents grew up to create the personal computer and the internet revolution. The ones played with computers on the internet grew up to reinvent markets for books, music, travel, and lodging. I only wish the ones who played Dungeons and Dragons as adolescents grew up to take morality, ethics, and character development seriously. Sometimes I wonder if we lost them to banking and advertising."

"More recently, my irregulars built the Wikipedia. One quarter of them were under 18 and another quarter were between 18 and 22. They were high school and college students who weren't satisfied writing papers for an audience of one – their teacher – but rather they created a giant cheat sheet that became the largest encyclopedia the world has ever known. Later experts would fill in the details where the kids didn't get it exactly right."

I was losing interest, so I asked, "Sherlock, I wonder; can we get a bite to eat?"

"Certainly. I notice your stomach has been growling since eleven thirty-seven and fourteen seconds."

"You noticed that? You're kidding me."

"Yes, this time I am kidding you. Let's go eat. Where would you like to go?"

## Calling All Irregulars: Reunion

I said, "I know a great Chinese restaurant just north of Leicester Square."

"On that pedestrian street?"

"Yes, on the corner with Wardour."

Sherlock laughed, "I know the place well. Once I took a photograph of that street and that restaurant with a camera I use for detective work. The photographs were used for a science magazine article about how my camera might help Alzheimer's patients."

"You know, Sherlock, I have to tell you that today I feel ten years younger. Why is that?"

"Elementary, my dear Watson, it is because we've got a new case."

"What shall we call it?"

"The Case of the Worthless Newspapers."

"Sherlock, surely you know that newspapers will be worthless because the news is going on-line."

"The problem isn't with the paper. The problem is with the news. Let's go eat; we have so much to talk about."

## A New Game is Afoot

At the restaurant I ordered sizzling scallops with ginger and spring onion and Sherlock ordered a half Peking duck with pancakes. Then he asked the waiter to bring fortune cookies immediately rather than at the end of the meal.

When they arrived, Sherlock handed both of them to me and instructed me to open them and not show him. Then he said, “These cookies contain slips of paper with a fortune printed on one side and on the reverse you will find a Chinese lesson and a set of ‘lucky lottery’ numbers. Open one of the cookies and, without looking at the fortune, read to me all the lucky numbers except for the last one.”



I read them to Sherlock, “41, 53, 11, 16, and 17. Go ahead, tell me the last number.”

Then he asked me to read the Chinese lesson on the other cookie, which I did.



Sherlock stared into space for perhaps two minutes. Then he said, "Just a tick; I have to check something." He took out his smart phone and looked at it.

A short while later he looked up and said, "I'm sorry; I was distracted. What was that again?"

I repeated the numbers and the Chinese phrase and he said, "Oh, now I remember. The last number on the first fortune is 18."

"You are amazing, Holmes. There must be some kind of mathematical pattern at work. I notice the last three numbers are 16, 17, and 18 so they are in series. However I don't know how the prior three numbers fit into the pattern."

"My dear Watson, you are looking for patterns where they don't exist. Now if you turn over the fortune I believe you will find that it says, 'Do a good deed anonymously. You will make a difference in your life.'"



I turned the fortune over and I was flabbergasted. "You still amaze me. How did you do that?"

"Never mind how I did it. The fortune seems to apply to you, doesn't it?"

"Perhaps. Everything I have done since we broke up in 1982 has been done anonymously and although it has

certainly made a difference in my bank account, why has it not made me feel good?"

"Elementary, my dear Doctor Watson. The reason is that while you have acted anonymously you haven't been doing good deeds and only good deeds make you feel good. You have done what others wanted you to do and you have said what others have wanted you to say and you haven't reflected on whether what you were doing was good or evil."

That hurt, but I had to admit it was true.

I turned over the other fortune cookie. "Well, my dear Mister Holmes, this fortune certainly applies to you."



He said, "Yes and no. I certainly do love the truth, but the second half of the fortune is less the case. I will forgive an error only when it is honestly made. Most errors are made by lazy people who make things up to suit their needs rather than admit ignorance or do the hard detective work that it takes to discover the truth."

I confess I was considerably startled by this fresh proof of the practical nature of my companion's theories. My respect for his powers of analysis increased wondrously. There still remained some lurking suspicion in my mind, however, that the whole thing was pre-arranged."

I confronted Holmes outright. "Did you make a deal with the waiter to bring these two fortunes to us?"

## Calling All Irregulars: A New Game

"When could I have done that? You picked the restaurant and you saw that I had no interaction with the waiter until we ordered just now."

"Then how did you do it?"

"A more important question is: Why did I do it?"

"OK, I'll bite. Why did you do it?"

"Because I wanted to make a point. These days it feels like you can know anything except for why you should want to know it. I don't think people actually want to know why they want what they want."

"My first clue came in the summer of 1982. I was sitting on a park bench next to a young woman who was very slowly and deliberately paging through a very thick glamour magazine for women."

"I had never paid attention to how women read such things so I asked her if she liked the magazine. She said she was very fond of it. I asked how much it cost. She said it was \$2. I asked if she would pay \$1 if it only had articles. She said she wouldn't pay anything because then the magazine would only have about a dozen pages; hardly worth a dollar. So, I asked if she would pay \$1 if it were just the ads. She said she would never pay for a magazine of just ads; that would be stupid. Then I said, 'But you paid two dollars for this magazine that contains articles and ads. Isn't that the same thing?' She said, 'I don't know what you are talking about. This is a great magazine.'"

"I asked to borrow it and I noticed that the articles had titles like: *How to attract a successful man. How to tell if your boyfriend is wrong for you. and, Why the first impression you make might be holding back your career.* The articles were designed to make you unhappy and the ads were designed to make you imagine that if you bought their products it would make you feel better. And the amazing



thing was that this woman would not have paid for one without the other.

“Once I saw how it worked I started to see the same thing everywhere. Newspapers act like really terrible parents; they focus on giving you bad news and the impression the world is cruel and that people are selfish and evil. They have sold the idea that if you aren’t informed then you can’t be a good citizen, but they don’t teach you how to solve any of the problems they present, and they seldom report on anyone else who is successfully addressing problems. Instead of only talking about problems, journalists should talk more about solutions.

“Instead, the stories butter you up for the advertisers. If you can’t do anything about terrorism at least you can go on a vacation in the Caribbean. And if airplanes fall out of the sky all the time, at least you can buy travel insurance so your loved ones will be taken care of. And if nobody ever taught you how to love someone, then at least you can buy people expensive gifts. At a minimum, if you feel bad then have a snack, or better yet, some booze and a cigarette.

“Instead, I ask people to imagine how much better off they would be if they didn’t read the news. At a minimum, the news should come with a user’s manual and warning labels.”

Holmes was off on another tirade and I had just about reached my limit when the food arrived. It gave me a chance to change the subject.

“Tell me again because I’ve forgotten, why exactly is it that between the time we met in 1856 and 1982 you hardly aged at all?”

Holmes laughed, “Because I discovered the secret of perpetual youth. Obviously.”

Sometimes I really wish he would take me more seriously. “OK. But what about me? Why was it that I didn’t

age during the time when I was with you? I didn't know the secret of youth, and if you ever told me I didn't understand and forgot immediately."

"You stayed young because you were with me and you let me do your thinking for you. That's the reason. When we broke up you didn't know what to think or believe and you started to grow older."

I was very confused and let him know it.

"In due course, my good friend, I will tell you everything soon enough. For now you don't need to know the secret, and neither does anyone else. I made the mistake of telling Professor Moriarty and he has been a problem for humanity ever since. The last thing I need is you telling everyone the secret."

"You're killing me, Holmes. You're leaving me in suspense."

"You write mystery stories, don't you? That's what it is all about. Anyway, here is something I never told you. I wasn't born Sherlock Holmes. And I wasn't born in England. Before becoming a detective I had a career as a mathematician, and once I stopped aging I had to fake my own death because people would become suspicious. I moved to England the next day and that is when I met you."

"I can't believe it. What was your name before?"

"I'm not telling you. But you can find it out easily enough."

He reached across the table and took one of my scallops with his chopsticks. I tried some of his duck and I have to say he made the better choice.

"Watson, my old chum, this is what I propose we do. You move in with me at 221b Baker Street and we work on *The Case of the Worthless Newspapers* together. However this time it isn't going to be like old times. I'm not going to be able to solve this problem without the help of the Baker

## Calling All Irregulars: A New Game

Street Irregulars. No matter how much money we have, collectively they have much more time, energy, and resources than we do. All they need is for us to do is define the problem accurately and make implementing the solution fun. Then the Baker Street Irregulars will take it from there.”

I asked, “But why would they solve *The Case of the Worthless Newspapers* just for fun. Isn’t the world flush with entertainment competing for their attention?”

“Maybe. But this problem must be solved or humanity is doomed.”

I had a feeling he was right, but I couldn’t tell you why.

“The first thing to do is for you to put out a short book telling the story so far. We can call it *The Case of the Worthless Newspapers – Calling All Irregulars*. We’ll add lots of puzzles and mysteries for them to solve just to limber up before we tackle the really big problems. Let’s see if you can’t get a first draft ready for Thanksgiving Day in the USA. Then we’ll try to get it published by Christmas so people can give the book as a holiday present.”

“Sherlock, that sounds great, but I don’t think publishers can move that quickly.”

“Nonsense. We are going to be the publishers. And since we already have plenty of money we don’t need to charge for the book. People can give it as a stocking stuffer and it won’t cost them a cent... assuming they can figure out how to stuff an electronic book into a stocking.”

I said, “They don’t need to stuff stockings; they can mail a copy of the book as an attachment to their annual holiday mailing to all their relatives, or they could send a mail with an invitation link.”

He held out his hand across the table and said, “Shall we do it? Is it a deal?”

I said, “It’s a deal. Let’s do it.” And so we did.

## Puzzles and Mysteries for the Reader

In order to get his Baker Street Irregulars into the right frame of mind to tackle the rest of the *Case of the Worthless Newspapers*, Sherlock Holmes has instructed me to give you some puzzles to work on.

**See how many of these questions you can answer. Do the easiest ones first and come back to the harder ones later.**

- 1) Who was the person I refer to as the acting President?
- 2) I said that the President had promised small government with less debt and delivered the opposite. Is that a fair characterization of what happened? If it isn't, then what did happen?
- 3) Is it true that there is more student debt today than the entire nation had in 1982?
- 4) When I woke after sleeping through the afternoon of May 6, 1982, what is a plausible explanation for not referring to a watch or a clock to tell the time exactly?
- 5) What could explain my belief that it was between 11:30 P. M. and midnight? Was it in fact cloudy and raining in New York at that time on that date?
- 6) Holmes said that after 1982 he began working in finance under an assumed name. What name do you think he used?

## Calling All Irregulars: Puzzles and Mysteries

7) Holmes talks about various monographs that he published while working in finance. The titles were changed slightly but can you still find them?

8) Who is A. Karma Flitit in the real world?

9) If she was really asking Holmes if he knew someone who wanted to buy the LA LA TIMES for 100 million pounds then what is the dollar equivalent to on the day in question?

10) Who was No Potty Hymn?

11) What comedy skit was Holmes talking about?

12) Who is Icky Rashley in the real world? What books did he write? What did they say?

13) What was the name of the Chinese restaurant that Holmes and I went to?

14) What did our dishes cost?

15) When I took an overnight flight from JFK to Heathrow what airlines could I have been flying on (assuming the flight was non-stop)?

16) Sherlock said that he was not born as Sherlock Holmes but rather someone else. What was his birth name? What country was he born in?

17) What was the name of the camera Holmes used that might help Alzheimer's patients, and who wrote the science article that used his pictures?

## Calling All Irregulars: Puzzles and Mysteries

18) Based on the market value of the things I said I owned on November 26, 2015, what is your best guess as to my net worth (not counting the fractional jet ownership)?

19) I claim to be in the top  $1/10^{\text{th}}$  of the wealthiest people in the Western World. Based on your answer to the prior question, where would I rank among the wealthiest people in the USA? (e.g. top 5%, top 1%, top .5%, top .1% or something else)?

20) Where would I rank in wealth compared to the British?

21) Where would I rank in wealth compared to everyone in the world?

22) Sherlock was speaking from memory and he might have been wrong. What are the real statistics concerning high school grads that go to college, six year graduation rates, and percentage of students that get jobs that use their degrees? How much debt does the average student graduate with? What is the average debt load for the students in the top 10% of the range of debt upon graduation?

23) Sherlock says that he attended a science conference in 1975 or thereabouts in the Northeastern USA where one talk was about the future of the man computer interface. A presenter envisioned a day when everyone would be connected to the internet and we could read books on-line. He said the only problem would be paying for it all. A graduate student answered, "That's easy. Advertising will pay for it." The student was shouted down and people said, "We will burn down the Internet before we allow

## Calling All Irregulars: Puzzles and Mysteries

commercial use. What is your best guess as to the name of the location of the conference and who was the presenter?

24) Treat the following five questions as invitations to write a compelling essay in a light-hearted tone that makes a serious point:

a) What is the difference between the truth and a lie?

c) What is the difference between a hypothesis and a fact?

d) What is the difference between evidence and an opinion?

e) What is the difference between a reasoned argument and a fistfight (or its verbal equivalents)?

f) I left out a question labeled b. What is your best guess as to what it could have been?

25) Sherlock was able to guess the last digit of the lucky lottery number on my fortune. How did he do it?

26) Why did he say he would rather play any random set of digits rather than those on a fortune cookie?

27) What were the exact words on my fortune?

28) Sherlock often quotes other people without giving credit and sometimes he even paraphrases prior works of mine. How many such instances can you identify?

## Calling All Irregulars: Puzzles and Mysteries

29) Imagine the Irregulars building a news repository like they did with Wikipedia. Have there already been attempts, how did they fare, and how could they have done better?

30) Between 1982 and 2014 I wrote speeches for every Senator and Representative that ended up leaving office in disgrace. What were their names?

31) During the same period, I ghost-wrote autobiographies for every American business person who subsequently was convicted of a felony. Who were five of them?

32) Sherlock said that the news acts like a bad parent and we need a new kind of journalism that concentrates on solutions. Who else has made that point and what might that kind of journalism be called?

33) Sherlock Holmes says that it is a very bad idea to try to understand the news without a user's manual. Has anyone written such a manual, and if so, what are the major points that it makes?

34) What other cool puzzles have we imbedded in this story that I haven't asked about here?

35) How would you define "the news?"

36) How is a news story different than a list of facts?

37) How is a news story different than an article in an encyclopedia?



## Calling All Irregulars: Puzzles and Mysteries

38) How is a news story different than a history book?

39) If every general news source in England were to go out of business except for one, what would you guess would be the sole survivor?

40) If every general news source in the United States were to go out of business except for one, what would you guess would be the sole survivor?

41) If nearly every source of general news in the world were to go out of business and only ten survived, which three would you want to be on the list?

42) What do you think of this book and these puzzles?

43) Are they fun?

44) Will you tell all your friends?

45) (Hey, what happened to #45? What other mysteries can you find?)

46) What other book titles would you like to see in this “Worthless” series?

## Sharing Answers and Annotating this Book

Sherlock knows some but not all of the answers to the puzzles that we pose. He is hoping you will answer as many as you can and share them with the whole world.

He would like you to do this with the open annotation tool that you can find at:

<http://Hypothes.is>

But first, watch a short video explaining the idea:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCkmOLL-6lc>

There can be many versions of this book floating around the web in various forms therefore in order to keep all the annotations in one place **we want you to only annotate the master copy which you can find here:**

<http://lenbakerloo.com/calling-all-irregulars/>

There are two ways to annotate it:

1) Go to [Hypothes.is](http://Hypothes.is) and install the add-in to your Chrome browser. Then visit the book.

2) Instead of installing the add-in you can this link:

<https://via.hypothes.is/http://lenbakerloo.com/calling-all-irregulars/>

*(note: It might now work on all browsers.)*

## When you annotate this book please:

Be civil.

Highlight and correct typing and grammatical errors if you find them.

Please do not add annotations that do not help improve the work. Comments like, “Interesting observation” or “I like this clue” are unhelpful.

**NOTE TO CRITICS: If you are critical of this work then publish your critique elsewhere and publish a link to it by annotating this sentence with a link to your critique. It will destroy the reading experience for others if you publish your criticisms all over this text.**

If you are not the first to answer a puzzle or mystery do not repeat what a person said before you. However if you have additional information to add then please add it.

Most puzzle/mystery answers should be provided as annotations the questions themselves. However, some puzzles are best answered in-line, such as when identifying unattributed references to other works or solving mangled names of people.

As a general rule, if it belongs on Facebook it doesn't belong here.

Have fun.

## Calling All Irregulars: Sharing and Annotating

For a more formal guide on annotation with Hypothes.is see:

<https://hypothes.is/annotation-tips-for-students/>

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**If you do not want to take annotation seriously then we suggest that instead of using hypothes.is you use the annotation tool at:**

**<http://genius.com/web-annotator>**

**It is much more appropriate if you just want to say something for the hell of it but don't want to take the time to solve the various puzzles in this book.**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

Len Bakerloo says that he ghostwrote this book for Dr. John Watson. However, Dr. Watson disputes this and claims that he is the sole author writing under the pen name Len Bakerloo.

Sherlock Holmes believes that to find the truth you must eliminate the impossible and what is left, no matter how improbable, must be the truth. When asked to comment on who wrote the book, he said, "I cannot eliminate the possibility that one of those two is telling the truth although obviously they both can't be right so therefore I admit I don't know. The only thing I can say with certainty is that I am a fictional character used as a plot device to teach some important lessons about taking personal responsibility for finding the truth. I also suggest some tools useful to those people who are more interested in solving problems than complaining about them."

Life is full of mysteries and this book contains lots of them. The solutions to most of them are left as an exercise for the reader.

## Perhaps You Will Become One of the Authors

You can annotate a version of this book at: <http://www.LenBakerloo.com/WorthlessNewspapers>. In this way you can contribute your thoughts to Holmes' and Watson's.

When asked why he is doing this, Len Bakerloo said, "If you take my words as your own – and even add to them – then you and I become one. That is how out of many we get one."

Watson took out a dollar bill and a penny from his trouser pocket.

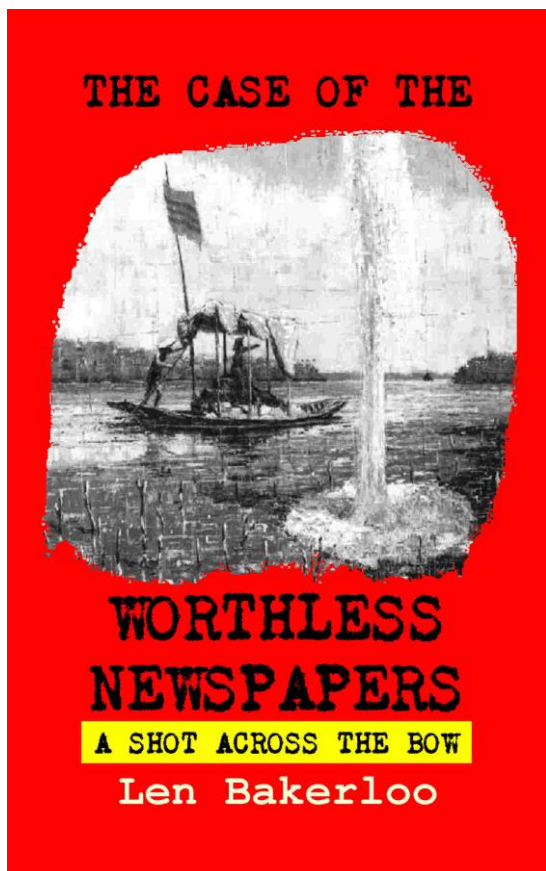
## Calling All Irregulars: About the Authors

“On the dollar bill it says, ‘This note is legal tender for all debts public and private.’ That simply means that you can offer to pay for things with the government issued paper but it is a little known fact that nobody has to accept it.”

“On the penny it says E Pluribus Unum, which is Latin for: “Out of many, one. Our problems are so big the only people who can solve them are all of us. We must work together if we are not to leave our future to fate alone.”

Len Bakerloo flipped the coin in the air and said, “Quick, the game is afoot; we haven’t a moment to lose.” He seemed not to care about the outcome of the coin toss because he was out of the door before it landed.

## Next: A SHOT ACROSS THE BOW



Get it beginning January 1, 2016  
at: <http://LenBakerloo.com>

# ONLY YOU



# CAN SAVE THE WORLD

More than 100 years ago Mr. Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson learned the secret of eternal life. However, something went wrong in 1982 and they began aging. Now their time is running out. In *Calling All Irregulars* they ask their trusty band of misfits to join the battle for truth and justice against the news media under the influence of the evil Professor Moriarty, who only cares about page views and profits.

Mystery, Sherlock Holmes, Journalism, Business

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