

it; in the meantime, he had prepared a duplicate piece of paper; and had sealed it, and reversed the fold, and made it dirty in a similar way to the letter that he wanted. And at a certain point in the visit, there were loud shouts and screams outside the window. The Minister went running over to the window to see what was going on. At that moment, Inspector Dupin simply made the switch. The guy looked out the window; it turned out that it was some psychotic who was threatening somebody with a shotgun, and actually fired a shot. And Dupin says that, of course, the shots were blank; this was someone he had actually hired to create the incident, to give him enough time to switch letters.

Dupin even says, that he didn't want to to merely steal it, because the guy's livelihood and future career depend-

ed on having that letter, and if he happened to notice that Dupin had swiped it, without substituted a replacement, there is no telling what the Minister might have done. He might have tried to kill Dupin. So I wanted to make my escape safely, Dupin explains.

On the other hand, I left something in the substitute piece of paper, so that when he opened it up, he would have some clues, to be able to figure out it was me. But by that time, the game would be up. The original letter would be returned, and everything would be corrected.

Just to read you a couple of paragraphs to make sure that you get an idea that this is really how Poe's mind is working—I'm not attributing things to him that he doesn't really say:

## The Death of E.A. Poe: Testimony of Dr. John J. Moran

*A Defense of Edgar Allan Poe: Life, Character, and Dying Declarations of the Poet. An official account of his death, by his attending physician, John J. Moran, M.D., was published in Washington, D.C., in 1885. Dr. Moran, who attended Poe on October 6-7, 1849, during the last hours of his life, penned this biographical memoir almost forty years later, after extensive research and interviews, at the urging of individuals who had known the poet during his lifetime, in an effort to right the historical wrong wrought by the slanders heaped on Poe after his death.*

Dr. Moran writes:

Concerning the oft-repeated slander, I here affirm that Edgar Allan Poe did not die under the influence of any kind of intoxicating drink. . . .

The hospital in which Poe died was second to none in Baltimore as to size, comforts and location. It was known for many years as the *Washington College University Hospital*, in which hundreds of students daily traversed its wards. . . . I conducted and controlled this institution for six years as resident physician . . . .

Just after the death of Edgar Allan Poe, before the lifeless corpse had become cold in the grave, an enemy, *an avowed and personal enemy*, who became his administrator and was his first biographer, made haste to write and publish the foul calumny and falsehood that Edgar Allan Poe died from *delirium tremens* at some *unknown and out-of-the-way hospital* in Baltimore City . . . ; and strange to say this man's work, [Rufus] Griswold's *Memoir of Edgar Allan Poe*, though repeatedly denied upon the best authority, continued to be much sought after, and its poisonous effects are yet seen and felt on both continents.

Contrary to the lies circulated by Griswold and repeated by others, Dr. Moran reports that,

Edgar Allan Poe did not die under the effect of any intoxicant, nor was the smell of liquor upon his breath or person. He was in my care and under my charge for sixteen hours. He was sensible and rational fifteen hours out of the sixteen. He answered promptly and correctly all questions asked, spoke freely . . . . He told me, in answer to my questions, where he had been, from whence he came, and for which place he started when he left Richmond, when he arrived in Baltimore, and the name of the hotel where he registered . . . .

Concerning the incident of Poe's attack, Dr. Moran presents a review of the evidence, and concludes that,

Arriving [at Baltimore] at about 8 o'clock P.M. . . . [Poe] was followed by two suspicious characters, as the testimony of the conductor will show, and when he reached the southwest corner of Pratt and Light streets, he was seized by the two roughs, dragged into one of the many sinks of iniquity or gambling hells which lined the wharf. He was drugged, robbed, stripped of every vestige of the clothing he had on when he left Richmond and the cars a little while before, and reclothed with a stained, faded, old bombazine coat, pantaloons of a similar character, a pair of worn-out shoes run down at the heels, and an old straw hat. Later in this cold October night he was driven or thrown out of the den in a semi-conscious state . . . .

—Robert Detlof

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The full text of Dr. Moran's memoir can be found at <http://wlym.com/text/defense-of-poe.doc>