

# THE BELIEVER



## THE 2009 ART ISSUE



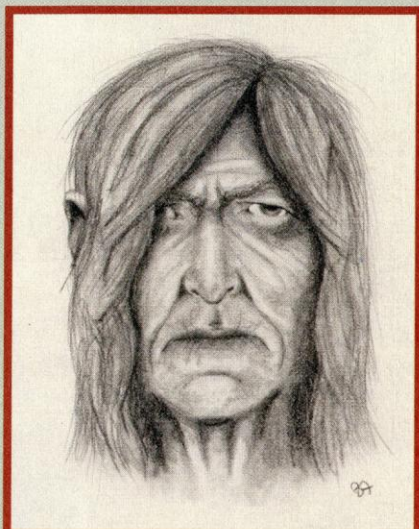
\$10 U.S. / \$11 Canada

WITH A HUGE, TWO-SIDED POSTER BY JERRY MORIARTY  
(in conversation with CHRIS WARE) PLUS: ANDREA ZITTEL IN UNIFORM;  
MICHELLE TEA IN VENICE; COMICS BY CHARLES BURNS, ANDERS NILSEN,  
RON REGÉ JR, ET AL; GREIL MARCUS ON PYNCHON & POWERS; POMPIDOU POLITICS, MORE.



# FORENSIC SKETCHES OF EIGHT LITERARY CRIMINALS

Police sketch-artists—they call themselves “forensic artists”—are readers, of a sort; they face the same problem readers face, namely: How to conceive of a character’s face? Their task is to take a text, usually a spoken description, and draw from that a person. Not a person, the person; “Have You Seen This Man?” being the eternal question of literature and law enforcement both. It is amazing how police work from so little information. And it is amazing, too, to realize how little detail the greatest writers provide. As witnesses, authors are unreliable but trenchant: just a hint here, a shade there, but from that, a life. Hester Prynne had “a marked brow”; from “ivory heel” to “slouched hat,” Ahab was all “grimness.” Here we’ve asked forensic artist Barbara Anderson to interpret the mugs of eight literary criminals, based on prose descriptions alone (plus imagination). —Joshua Cohen



## FAGIN

### DESCRIPTION:

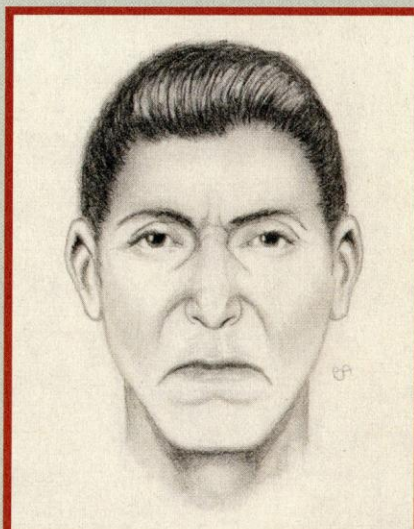
“[...] a very old shrivelled Jew, whose villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair [...] As he glided stealthily along, creeping beneath the shelter of the walls and doorways, the hideous old man seemed like some loathsome reptile, engendered in the slime and darkness through which he moved, crawling forth by night in search of some rich offal for a meal.”

### ACCUSED OF:

theft, corruption of minors

### SOURCE:

*Oliver Twist*, Charles Dickens



## RASKOLNIKOV

### DESCRIPTION:

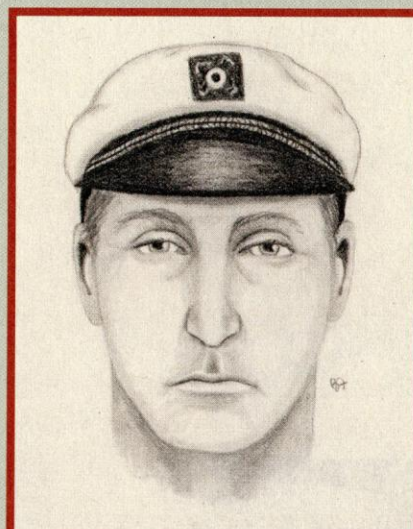
“An expression of the profoundest disgust gleamed for a moment in the young man’s refined face. He was, by the way, exceptionally handsome, above the average in height, slim, well-built, with beautiful dark eyes and dark brown hair [...] his face was pale and distorted, and a bitter, wrathful and malignant smile was on his lips.”

### ACCUSED OF:

murder

### SOURCE:

*Crime and Punishment*, Fyodor Dostoevsky



## OSTAP BENDER

### DESCRIPTION:

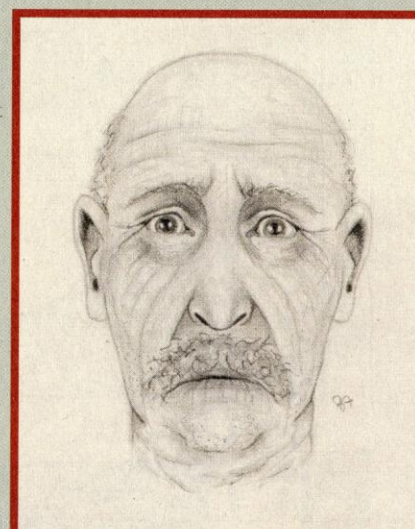
“a young man aged about twenty-eight [...] powerful neck [...] long and noble nose [...] sleepy lids [...] brown hair, last seen dressed in a green suit, yellow boots, and a blue vest. [...] wearing a white-topped captain’s cap.”

### ACCUSED OF:

fraud

### SOURCE:

*The Twelve Chairs/The Golden Calf*, Ilf and Petrov



## PAPADOPOULOS

### DESCRIPTION:

“[...] a Greek [...] a rabbit [...] Fifteen minutes later the shabby little old man came running into the kitchen, saying he had heard feet on the roof. His faded brown eyes were dull as an ox’s with fright, and his withered lips writhed under his straggly yellow-white mustache [...] The man was old, small, scrawny, wrinkled, pitifully frightened.”

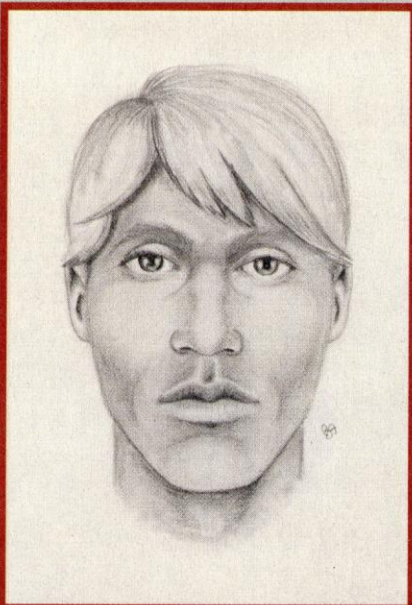
### ACCUSED OF:

theft

### SOURCE:

*The Big Knockover/\$106,000 Blood Money*, Dashiell Hammett





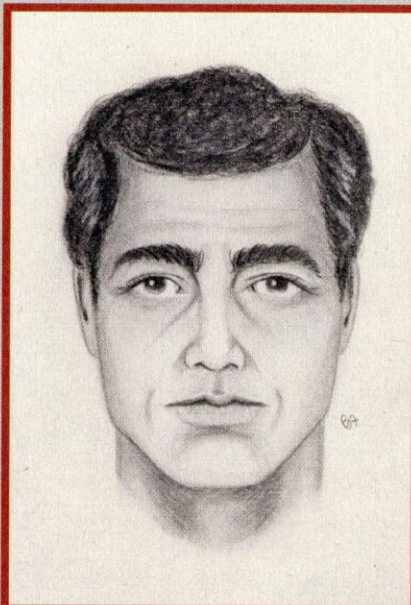
### FELIX KRULL

**DESCRIPTION:**

"[...] and indeed I was a little like a young god, slender, graceful, yet powerful in build, with a golden skin and proportions that lacked little of perfection [...] whatever the costume, the mirror assured me that I was born to wear it [...] Whereas my hair was as silken-soft as one seldom sees it in boys, and light in color; together with my blue-grey eyes it formed a fascinating contrast to the golden brownness of my skin, so that I hovered on the border-line between blond and brunet and might have been considered either."

**ACCUSED OF:**  
fraud

**SOURCE:**  
*Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man: The Early Years*, Thomas Mann



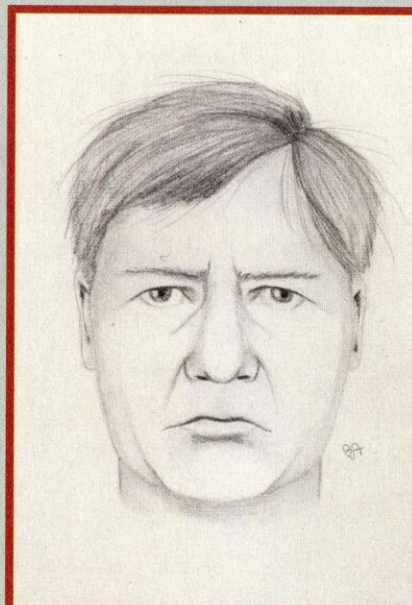
### HUMBERT HUMBERT

**DESCRIPTION:**

"Old-world politeness [...] I have all the characteristics which, according to writers on the sex interests of children, start the responses stirring in a little girl: clean-cut jaw, muscular hand, deep sonorous voice, broad shoulder. [...] But instead I am lanky, big-boned, wooly-chested Humbert Humbert, with thick black eyebrows and a queer accent, and a cesspool of rotting monsters behind his slow boyish smile."

**ACCUSED OF:**  
kidnapping, statutory rape

**SOURCE:**  
*Lolita*, Vladimir Nabokov



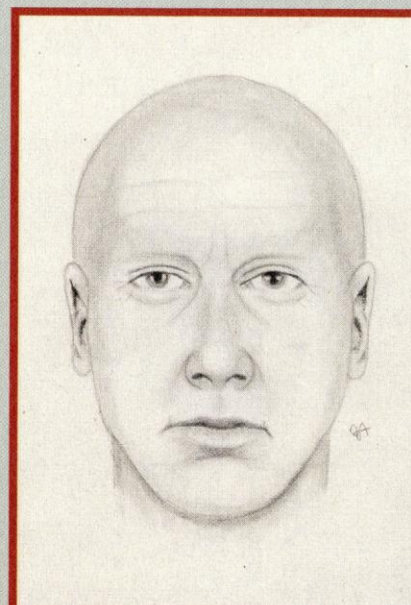
### WYATT GWYON

**DESCRIPTION:**

"[...] a small disgruntled person with sand-colored hair, hazel eyes which burned into green on angry occasion, and hands constantly busy, clutching and opening on nothing, breaking something, or picking his nose [...] Wyatt, haggard as he was, looked with such wild uncomprehending eyes on a day beginning so, that he attracted the attentions of a policeman who stopped him. [...] His hair was cut short, and his skull looked almost square."

**ACCUSED OF:**  
art forgery

**SOURCE:**  
*The Recognitions*, William Gaddis



### JUDGE HOLDEN

**DESCRIPTION:**

"An enormous man [...] bald as a stone and he had no trace of beard and he had no brows to his eyes nor lashes to them. He was close on to seven feet in height and he stood smoking a cigar [...] His face was serene and strangely childlike. His hands were small [...] his pleated brow not unlike a dolphin's [...] immense and pale... oddly childish lips [...] Huge and pale and hairless, like an enormous infant [...] The great pale dome of his skull shone like an enormous phosphorescent egg in the lamplight."

**ACCUSED OF:**  
rape, murder

**SOURCE:**  
*Blood Meridian*, Cormac McCarthy