

*Featuring*  
**Sites and Scenes**  
*from the Lives of*  
**Rex Stout**  
**Nero Wolfe**  
**and**  
**Archie Goodwin**



## 2014 Walking Tour of Greenwich Village

### Table of Contents

1. 66 Fifth Avenue .....	1
2. Gambit .....	2
3. First Presbyterian Church .....	4
4. 18 West 11th Street .....	5
5. Poison a la Carte .....	6
6. The Mother Hunt .....	7
7. Second Spanish-Portuguese Jewish Cemetery of New York.....	9
8. Jefferson Market Library .....	10
9. Too Many Women .....	11
10. Blood Will Tell .....	12
Map of Walking Tour Route.....	13
11. 33 Perry Street .....	15
12. Before Midnight .....	16
13. Death of a Doxy .....	18
14. Champagne For One .....	20
15. Die Like A Dog .....	21
16. Plot It Yourself .....	22
Former Location - The Pink Teacup .....	23
17. The Doorbell Rang .....	24
18. Sheridan Square.....	26
Gallo Nero II location .....	27

## **1. 66 FIFTH AVENUE**

The former home of Macmillan publishers, it was purchased by Jack Kaplan, a friend of Rex Stout's, in 1925. Kaplan added a penthouse onto the building, designed to Stout's specifications.

The penthouse home of Fay and Rex Stout became a magnet for their friends with frequent parties hosted by the Stouts. The guests included John Dos Passos, Robert Sherwood and Paul Robeson.

## **2. GAMBIT**

### **19 WEST 12<sup>TH</sup> STREET**

Who can forget the description of Wolfe burning Webster's Third International Dictionary? Gambit opens with this scene.

Wolfe is engaged to prove that Matthew Blount is innocent of the murder of Paul Jerin. The crime takes place at the Gambit Chess Club while Jerin is involved in a chess stunt, playing twelve simultaneous chess games while blindfolded.

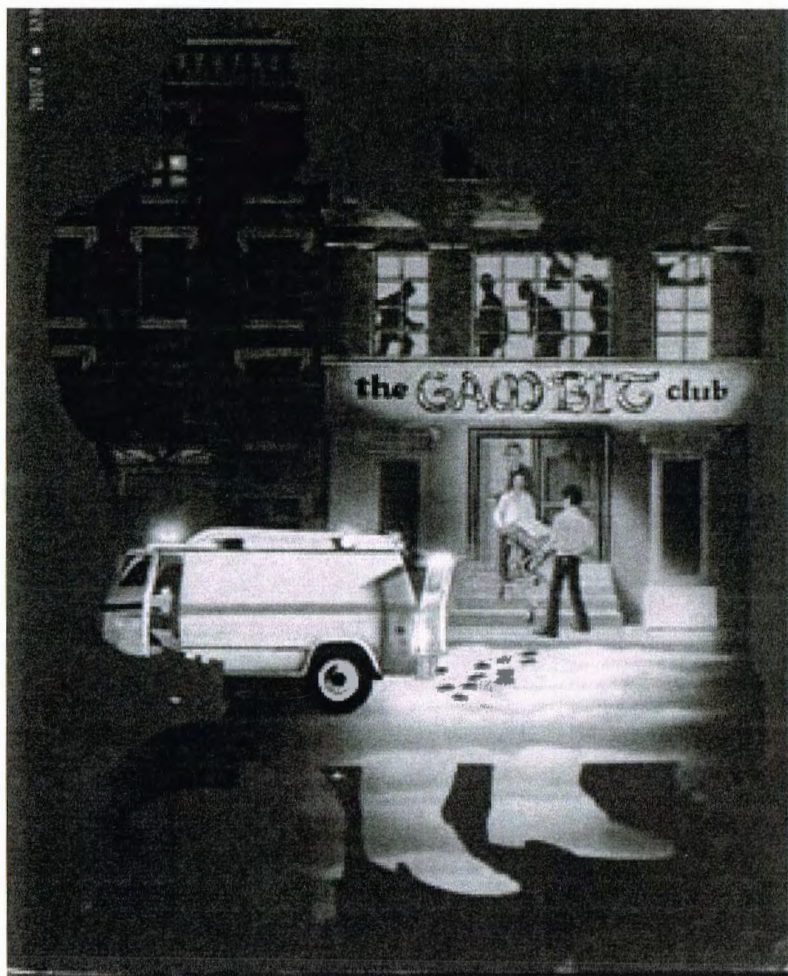
While the matches are underway, Jerin becomes ill and eventually dies of arsenic poisoning at St. Vincent's Hospital. The only food ingested by Jerin is a cup of hot chocolate brought to him by Matthew Blount.

Wolfe's suspicions quickly center on one man, but when he too is murdered, Wolfe and Archie must devise a trap to trick the murderer into incriminating himself.

"So I kept going [down Sixth Avenue] clear to Twelfth Street, turned left, stopped half way down the long block, and focused on a four story brick building,



painted gray with green trim, across the street. A brass plate to the right of the door, nice and shiny, said GAMBIT CLUB."



### **3. FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

The church had its beginnings on Wall Street near Nassau Street in 1716. The original building was destroyed by the British when they occupied it during the American Revolution. Following the migration north up Manhattan island, this building, constructed in the Gothic Revival style, was dedicated in 1846.

William Jennings Bryant was a member of the congregation and First Presbyterian became embroiled in the creationism controversy when its preacher, Harry Emerson Fosdick asserted that Darwinian theory was not inconsistent with the Christian Faith. Fundamentalists, led by Bryan, forced Fosdick's resignation over the issue.

## **4. 18 WEST 11<sup>TH</sup> STREET**

This is the former site of a Greek Revival Row house built in 1845. It was similar in appearance to its neighbors until just before noon on March 6, 1970, when the house was destroyed in an explosion. The radical Weather Underground was using the cellar as a bomb making factory. Three of the bomb makers were killed but two, Kathy Boudin and Cathlyn Wilkerson, escaped. It was another ten years before they were captured and tried.

The site of the house remained an empty lot for eight years. Then, with permission from the Landmarks Commission, this modern structure was approved and built for a wealthy Philadelphia couple. Paddington bear has lived in the sharply angled window since then, his costume changing to suit the season and the weather.

## 5. POISON A LA CARTE

### 39 WEST 12<sup>TH</sup> STREET

Against his better judgment, Wolfe allows Lewis Hewitt to persuade him to have Fritz cook a dinner for the Ten for Aristology, a group dedicated to the pursuit of the ideal of perfection in food and drink.

Archie and Wolfe attend the dinner. An added surprise is the twelve young women dressed in classical robes who have been engaged to serve the members. During the meal, one of the guests becomes ill and dies of arsenic poisoning.

Wolfe is outraged at the affront to Fritz's cooking and sets out to identify the murderer.

The dinner takes place on April 1st, the birthday of Brillat-

Savarin. "...in the kitchen of the four-story Schriver house on Eleventh Street west of Fifth Avenue."





## **6. THE MOTHER HUNT**

### **60 WEST 11<sup>TH</sup> STREET**

A baby left in the vestibule of Lucy Valdon's townhouse on West 11th Street starts Archie and Mr. Wolfe on a search for the mother.

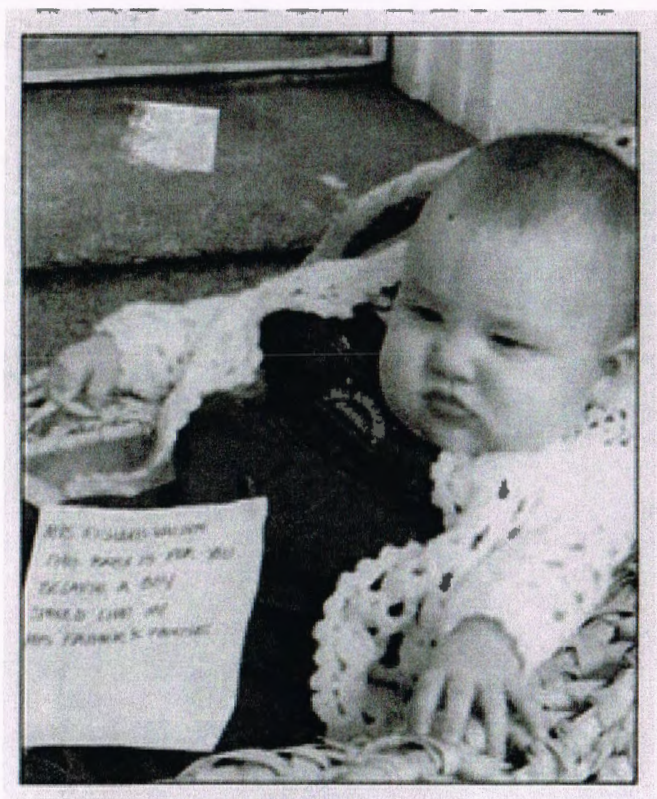
This book could have been called *The Button Hunt* because the baby arrives dressed in overalls with horsehair buttons. The father turns out to be Valdon's late husband, Richard. But when the real mother, Carol Mardus, is killed, along with another character, Wolfe does some of his famous side-stepping of the truth and soon feels the hot breath of Inspector Cramer on his neck.

When Wolfe needs to flee the brownstone after a confrontation with Cramer, Archie suggests that they camp out at Lucy Valdon's home rather than risk recognition at a hotel. Amazingly, Wolfe and Archie walk the approximately two miles from the back entrance of the house on West 35<sup>th</sup> Street to Valdon's 11<sup>th</sup> Street home.

He takes refuge in Lucy Valdon's West 11<sup>th</sup> Street townhouse where he cooks the infamous 40-minute scrambled eggs for Lucy and Archie. Also, the murderer is finally unmasked in that townhouse.

Wolfe to Lucy Valdon - "You own your house. Where is it?"

"Eleventh Street near Fifth Avenue."



## **7. SECOND SPANISH-PORTUGUESE JEWISH CEMETERY OF NEW YORK**

Opened in 1805 and closed in 1829, this cemetery is owned by Shearith Israel (the "Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue"). Begun in 1654, Shearith Israel was the only Jewish congregation in New York City until 1825. Burials began here in 1805, in what was a much larger, square plot that extended into the present-day street. The Commissioners' Plan had established the city's grid in 1811, but not until 1830 was West 11<sup>th</sup> Street cut through, at that time reducing the cemetery to its present tiny triangle. The disturbed plots were moved further uptown to the Third Cemetery on West 21<sup>st</sup> Street.

## **8. JEFFERSON MARKET LIBRARY**

Since 1832, the Jefferson market was a center of Village life and one of the main food markets for the region. The belltower allowed firemen a view over all of Greenwich Village, from a vantage point 100 feet above the ground. The original bell is still in the clock tower.

The exotic building we see here, along with an adjacent prison, was designed by Withers and Vaux and built in 1875-77. It had a civil court (now the Adult Reading Room) and a police court (now the Children's Room). The basement (now the Reference Room) was a holding area for prisoners. In 1906, the courthouse was the scene of the sensational trial of Harry Thaw for the murder of Stanford White.

In 1929, the market and prison were torn down and replaced by the Women's House of Detention. Its raucous occupants were a constant source of irritation to the neighborhood. In 1973 the building was razed and, after many petitions, the land was given over to the community for a garden.

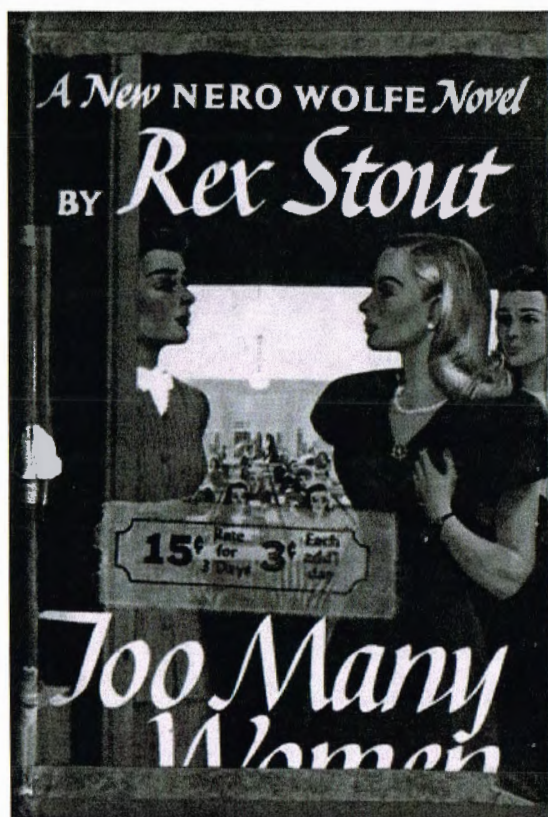


## 9. TOO MANY WOMEN

### 2-4 BANK STREET

When Archie goes undercover at Naylor-Kerr, it seems too good to be true. Looking into the death of Waldo Wilmot Moore involves interviewing or even wining and dining the women Moore worked with, including Rosa Bendini.

"... She turned and told Cramer and Purley right to their faces, My name is Rosa Bendini, or it's Mrs. Harold Anthony, either one will do, and I live at Four-eighteen Bank Street, second floor..."



## **10. BLOOD WILL TELL**

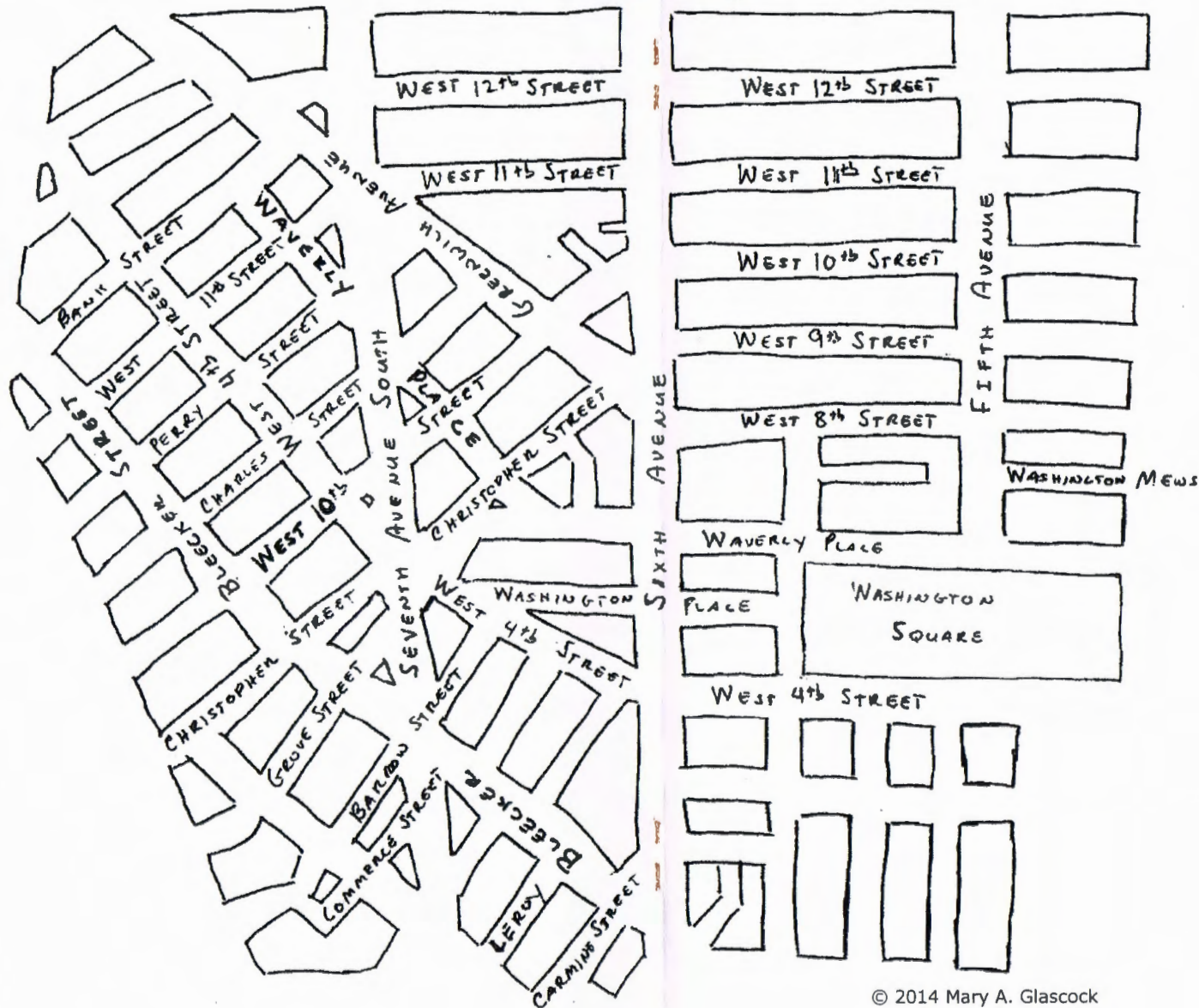
### **24 WAVERLEY PLACE**

Archie receives a mysterious package in the mail - a stained necktie with a note - "Archie Goodwin — Keep this until you hear from me — JNV." A phone call from the purported owner, James Neville Vance, asking Archie to burn the tie piques his curiosity.

Archie discovers that the stain is blood and decides to pay a call on Mr. Vance. Vance owns a house in Greenwich Village at 219 Horn Street, which has been divided up into apartments. While Archie is there, the police arrive and find a corpse in another apartment.

The victim's husband appeals to Wolfe to find the murderer and remove suspicion from him.

# The Wolfe Pack Greenwich Village Walking Tour Route Map



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## **11. 33 PERRY STREET**

By 1929, Stout's marriage to Fay was dissolving. He had left ETS, the Education Thrift Service, to write full time. He was also starting to build High Meadow. During this transitional period in his life, he took a pied-à-terre at 33 Perry Street.



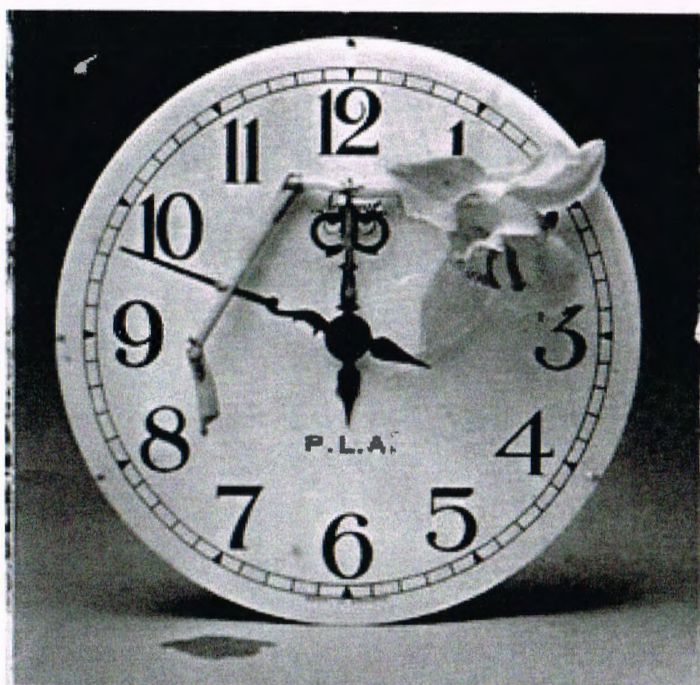
## **12. BEFORE MIDNIGHT**

### **55 PERRY STREET**

Advertising agency Lippert, Buff & Assa, (LBA), has devised a unique campaign for their perfume client, Pour Amour. They ran a contest where the public is encouraged to guess the identities of famous women by deciphering poems. The five finalists and senior members of LBA are gathered in New York to receive the final poems. The mastermind of the campaign, Louis Dahlmann., a rising star at LBA, displays a piece of paper which he claims holds the answers to the Pour Amour contest. Dahlmann then puts the paper in his wallet and everyone disburses. He is murdered later that evening and his wallet is stolen.

Wolfe is engaged to discover who stole Louis Dahlmann's wallet. When one of the LBA partners is murdered in Wolfe's office as he prepares to uncover the perpetrator, Wolfe must find the murderer to avenge this blot on his honor. He ventures from the brownstone to participate in the search for evidence to identify the murderer

"He [Dahlmann] was a bachelor and lived alone in an apartment on Perry Street."



## **13. DEATH OF A DOXY**

### **SOUTH EAST CORNER OF WEST 4<sup>TH</sup> STREET AND CHARLES STREET**

Orrie Cather, a friend and fellow private detective, asks Archie Goodwin to pick up a few personal effects from the apartment of Orrie's former lady friend. The lady friend is unhappy that Orrie has found someone else to love and is threatening to make trouble since the new love does not know about the previous one.

Archie agrees but when he arrives at the apartment he finds the girlfriend murdered. Since she kept a diary and Orrie is in it, Orrie is arrested for murder. Wolfe takes the case, naturally and Archie goes looking for a friend of the dead woman at The Ten Little Indians.

The trail leads from Central Park to the Bronx with a dollop of blackmail as well before Wolfe proves the innocence of his occasional employee by naming the real murderer.

"I had seen quite a few of the Manhattan spots, mostly with Lily Rowan, but had never been inside The Ten Little Indians..."





## 14. CHAMPAGNE FOR ONE

When Dinky Byne called Archie from his apartment at 87 Bowdoin Street in the Village, he was faking a bad cold in order to avoid attending another one of his Aunt's dinner parties. His aunt, Mrs. Robolotti, had inherited a 'pile' from her late husband, Alfred Grantham, who financed a home for unwed mothers.

Soon enough there's a murder. Faith Usher, one of the unwed mothers, is poisoned in Archie's presence. Only Archie's eyewitness account keeps the murder from being labeled a suicide. The usual denouement takes place in Wolfe's office when the murderer is revealed.

"My apartment. Eighty seven Bowdoin Street, in the Village. It's two blocks south—"

"I know where it is."

## **15. DIE LIKE A DOG**

Must be something about Arbor Street because another person turns up murdered at Number 29. The murder victim lived on Perry Street, also in the Village, and once again he was a writer. (Could Rex Stout have been eliminating the competition?)

To start at the beginning, Richard Meegan of 29 Arbor Street tries to hire Nero Wolfe in a case involving marital problems. Since Wolfe never takes those kinds of cases, Meegan is sent away but he mistakenly takes Archie Goodwin's raincoat as he leaves. Later that afternoon, Archie heads to Arbor Street to exchange raincoats but when he sees cops on the street and in the doorway he heads back uptown on foot. Some blocks later he notices he is being followed by a friendly dog.

Just to annoy Wolfe, Archie takes the dog home figuring he will have a little fun before turning the stray over to the A.S.P.C.A. As happens so often when we play "little jokes," life happens and the joke misfires. We learn there's been a murder at 29 Arbor Street and Wolfe decides to take the dog as his client and investigate the murder.

## **16. PLOT IT YOURSELF**

### **42 GROVE STREET**

Plagiarism, the dirty crime of the writing world, is at the center of the plot of this literary work in which manuscripts are always turning up just in time to 'prove' that a plot was stolen. Twists abound but always come back to the mousy little author, Amy Wynn. The suspects keep getting murdered, which conveniently, if brutally, narrows the list of candidates.

Wolfe decides to solve the crime by reading his way through the works of the various victims of plagiarism in an effort to parse out the murderer. In the end, it's paragraphing that points the finger at the murderer.

"Hold it." I turned to Wolfe. "Amy Wynn lives at Forty two Arbor Street."

While tailing another member of the plagiarism ring, Dol Bonner tails her to Amy Wynn's apartment. She calls in her report to Mr. Wolfe from

a drug store on the corner of Bailey and Arbor Street.

### **FORMER LOCATION OF THE PINK TEACUP**

During the course of Champagne for One, Archie waits for Dinky Byne to show up at his apartment so he can begin trailing him. His long wait is made more pleasant when he finds Amy's Nook, where, over the course of two hours he says "I ate five pieces of pie, two rhubarb and one each of apple, green tomato and chocolate and drank four glasses of milk and two cups of coffee, while seated at a table by the front window...To keep from arousing curiosity by either my tenure or my diet, I had my notebook and pencil out and made sketches of a cat sleeping on a chair. In the Village that accounts for anything."



## **17. THE DOORBELL RANG**

### **61 GROVE STREET**

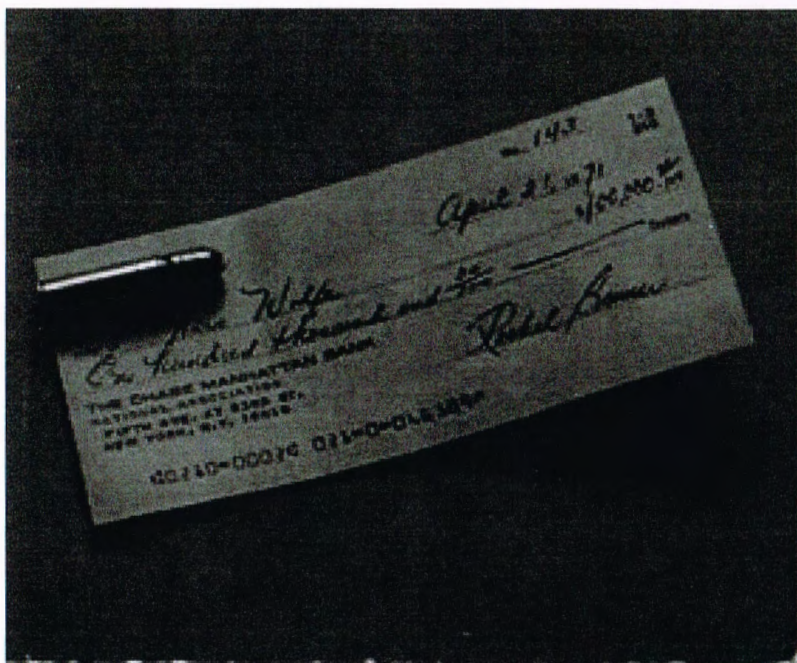
Mrs. Rachel Bruner, a rich and influential woman, is being harassed by the FBI ever since she sent 10,000 copies of the critical book, "The FBI Nobody Knows," to prominent and important people across the country. The time is early 1965, J. Edgar Hoover is FBI director, and FBI special agents are involved in illegal break-ins, wire-taps and other unsavory activities under the guise of "national security interests."

Mrs. Bruner hires Nero Wolfe to try and get the FBI off her case. The FBI quickly learns of Wolfe's involvement and tries to intimidate him and Archie Goodwin. Outmanned but not outwitted, Wolfe hatches a plan and traps two FBI agents illegally breaking into his 35th Street brownstone.

A key element in the saga is the unsolved murder of a writer who resides at 61 Arbor Street in Greenwich Village. The writer was working on an unflattering article about the FBI when he was killed

and FBI agents are suspects, but the police are stymied.

Wolfe pulls off a hat trick: he manages to get the FBI out of Mrs. Bruner's life; the FBI agrees to leave Wolfe and Goodwin alone; and he nails the murderer at 61 Arbor Street, who turns out NOT to be an FBI agent.



## 18. SHERIDAN SQUARE

In 1917, Rex's sister, Ruth Stout opened a tearoom in a dilapidated building in Sheridan Square. She named it the Klicket, choosing the name by shutting her eyes and picking a word from the dictionary.

John Barrymore lived in the neighborhood and patronized The Klicket, once reading from Hamlet for her.

**Optional drinks and snacks**

(not included in tour fee)

**to follow Walking Tour at**

**Gallo Nero II**

**(Sheridan Square)**

95 Seventh Ave. South

(between Grove and Barrow)

New York, NY 10014

(212)255-1980

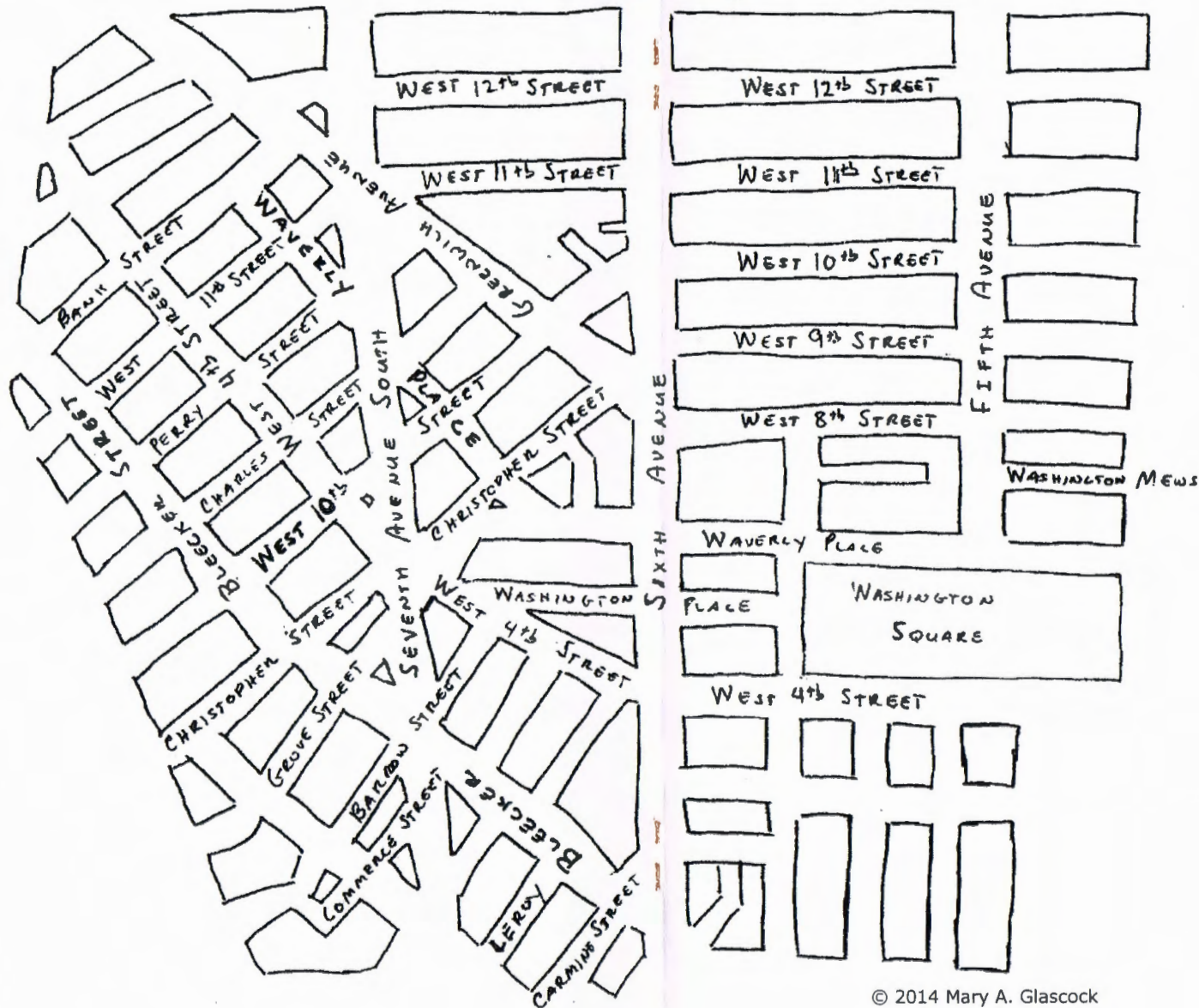






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PO Box 230822  
Ansonia Station  
New York, NY 10022  
[www.nerowolfe.org](http://www.nerowolfe.org)

# The Wolfe Pack Greenwich Village Walking Tour Route Map



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