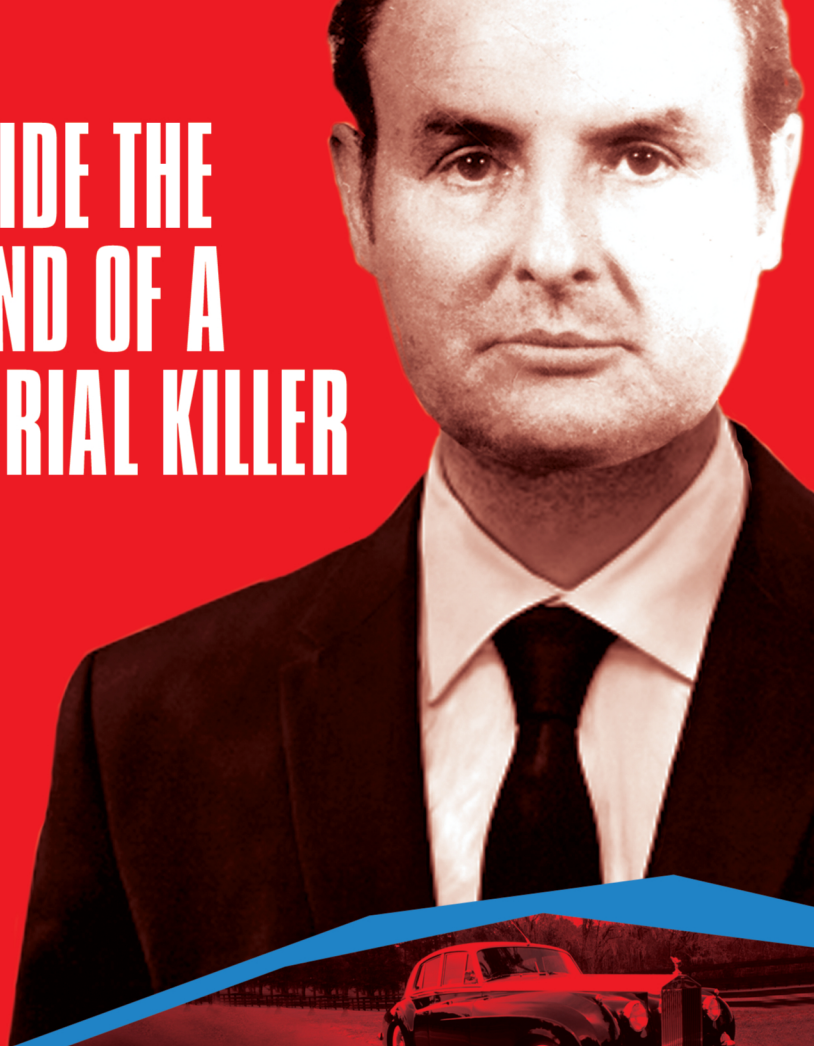


INSIDE THE
MIND OF A
SERIAL KILLER



The
**MONSTER
BUTLER**

A. M.
NICOL

Foreword by
Paul McBride QC

THE MONSTER BUTLER

Also available from Black & White Publishing by A. M. Nicol

MANUEL: SCOTLAND'S FIRST SERIAL KILLER

THE MONSTER BUTLER

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A. M. NICOL

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FOREWORD

by PAUL McBRIDE QC

Over the years, Scotland has produced serial killers from Manuel to Tobin and, gruesome as their crimes may have been, they have always caught the imagination of a public hungry for information as to how ordinary people from seemingly normal backgrounds can go on to commit the vilest of crimes.

A. M. Nicol, a very talented advocate, has now turned his forensic skills to studying a man from humble beginnings who was born in Partick in 1924, originally as Archibald Hall, but who later became known as Roy Fontaine, the serial killer who murdered not only his own brother but four other people apparently for gain, glamour and possibly pleasure.

In this detailed investigation, Nicol charts how Archibald Hall briefly became a butler to some of the finest gentlemen in society and studied in intricate detail the etiquette of polite society and their accents and protocol, all with a view to ultimately lining his own pockets. Hall was undoubtedly a formidable personality with the ability to lie, cheat and steal.

However, the real question in this fascinating insight into a deranged individual is how he became an uncaring serial killer. With impeccable research both north and south of the border, Nicol strips away the layers of this complicated man to reveal the dedication, obsession and greed that drove him to become the notorious individual we now know him to be.

The Monster Butler is a must read for anyone interested in human nature, the psychology of killers, the legal process and

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the parts of this country's history that many people would rather forget. This book deals with the age-old question of whether someone is merely fulfilling a predetermined destiny set in the stars, or whether a combination of circumstances or indeed the nature of evil itself were all factors that gave rise to this most unusual, refined, clever, enigmatic, flawed but ultimately heartless murderer.

This is a book not only of history and of human interest, but its message is also relevant to the times in which we currently live, as we are continually faced with the inexplicable cruelty of the criminal mind.

Impeccable research, clear narrative and logical analysis are the hallmarks of this excellent work but most of all it is a simply stunning read.

INTRODUCTION

A PLACE IN HISTORY

In 1919, the fifteen victorious allies of the Great War struck their own similar versions of a bronze medal called the Victory Medal. Any curiosity from the generations to come as to what had been at stake during the conflict can be easily answered: the reverse of the British version of the medal declares it had been 'The Great War For Civilisation 1914–1919'.

Civilisation, no less, had been at stake and the sacrifice of millions ensured that the fragile blossoming of human development, as seen through western eyes at the time, continued on its random way. But how is 'civilisation' judged?

In 1924, in Chicago, Illinois, the 'civilised' world was forced to come to terms with unexplained barbarity in its own ranks when it emerged that two highly intelligent teenagers from wealthy backgrounds, Leopold and Loeb, had planned and carried out the murder of fourteen-year-old Bobby Franks for only one possible reason – fun.

Attempting to stop his clients' executions, the famous lawyer Clarence Darrow addressed the court for twelve hours, and the judge decided not to impose death sentences, due in part to the ages of the killers. The judge also said:

Life imprisonment, at the moment, strikes the public imagination as forcibly as would death by hanging, but to the offenders, particularly of the type they are, the prolonged

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suffering of years of confinement may well be the severest form of retribution and expiation.

A civilised response to a barbaric act? To this day, the debate about executing murderers, or at least some of the more cold-blooded of them, continues.

That same year, a serial killer who was at least as ruthless as the two Chicago teenagers was born in Scotland.

After twenty-two-year-old Mary McMillan and twenty-eight-year-old Archibald Thomson Hall were married, their son was born in a flat in what was then called MacLean Street in the Partick area of Glasgow on 17 July 1924.

The boy was called Archibald Thomson Hall after his father and grandfather but would become better known as serial killer Roy Fontaine – ‘The Monster Butler’. Fontaine must surely be one of the strangest characters to emerge in recent British criminal history, an area not lacking in odd individuals.

Apart from murdering five people, including Donald, his younger brother by nearly seventeen years, and spending most of his life in prison, where he died in 2002, Fontaine stands out for other reasons – he published his life story *A Perfect Gentleman* in 1999, later published as *To Kill and Kill Again* after his death; even Moors Murderer Myra Hindley failed to get *her* autobiography published. Moreover, there cannot be many who have been given life sentences for murder in both Scotland and England in the same year.

Whilst some offenders prefer to hide from the glare of publicity, Fontaine positively basked in it. He was far more encouraged than embarrassed by the media reaction to his murder convictions in 1978 and quickly tried to start a bidding war for his story. He courted as many journalists as he could to interest them in his own account of events and even encouraged relatives to cash in by telling what it was like to know him.

That said, it would have been difficult for Fontaine in particular not to have revelled in the sort of stuff being written in

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crime magazines – more in hope of sales than anything else – such as:

He was a connoisseur of fine wines, an expert in antiques and a consummate actor. After spending most of his life in prison for jewellery thefts, he planned one more haul that would set him up in comfort for his old age. But his willingness to kill destroyed him.

From then on, he crafted the ‘cultured gentleman jewel thief’ image he desired.

When serving out his final jail sentence, he also ‘demanded’ elective state euthanasia for prisoners serving ‘natural life’ – as he was – whilst at the same time keeping an anxious eye on the possibility of a return to capital punishment. For Fontaine, the worst thing was not to be noticed.

But why would a serial killer with so much to hide want people to know so much about him? What does it say about him, except that he clearly sought sympathy?

Certainly, if the cover of *A Perfect Gentleman* is to be believed, Fontaine was a rich rogue driven to murder in extreme circumstances. The cover blurb states:

Roy Archibald Hall was born into the poverty of pre-war Glasgow in 1924. As an exceptionally successful con-man and jewel thief, he lived the luxurious life of a high-class criminal – easy money punctuated by occasional prison time – but at the age of fifty-four, the smooth talking butler murdered a homosexual who tried to blackmail him. Another four people, including his brother, would die at his hands.

Even allowing for exaggeration, ‘occasional prison time’ hardly encapsulates the actual time the ‘exceptionally successful con-man and jewel thief’ spent safely locked away from potential victims. He was deemed to be insane three times and was

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sentenced, in total, to over seventy years in prison *before* he received the 'natural life term' in November 1978, aged fifty-four.

Yet, he is perhaps not as notorious as he should be – given the outrages he committed – because his more serious crimes occurred between 1977 and 1978. At that time, British society was coming to terms with the string of murders attributed to the Yorkshire Ripper, later found out to have been committed by a man named Peter Sutcliffe, and when Fontaine was finally arrested in East Lothian in 1978, it was only a few months after the brutal rape and murder of two young girls from Edinburgh, later known as the 'World's End' murders, so his sudden flurry of murderous activity in both England and Scotland attracted less interest than might otherwise have been expected.

Fontaine spent the last twenty-four years of his life in prison trying to justify many of the crimes he had committed in a life-long criminal career and probably hoping for one last spell of freedom. He told of his powerful sexual magnetism *to both sexes* and of wealthy employers regretful at losing a head-of-household so in touch with their aristocratic ways. Clearly, he was desperate to be remembered as a likeable scoundrel who, nevertheless, was a talented, cultured man of principle. He saw his own life as the story of a fascinating eccentric, action-packed with tales of well-planned gem thefts, ingenious scams and constant sex.

Some in our civilised society could perhaps see some truth in Fontaine's viewpoint, the almost romantic story of a man who was a victim of the circumstances he was born into, who led an extraordinary life and pulled himself up from the gutter to experience the world of the privileged. Others only saw him as a misguided, cold, calculating killer who was both delusional and a menace to society. Fontaine, however, was determined that his legacy would be the romantic version and that the world would remember him as he wished.

Throughout his life in prison, Fontaine worked hard to convince the world of his more flattering version of events,

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repeatedly telling his story to any willing listener. With each telling, the stories grew more exaggerated and far-fetched, quickly obscuring any remaining traces of reality. Going to great lengths to woo journalists and writers, Fontaine managed to successfully publish several 'biographical' accounts and indeed other writers have unsuccessfully attempted to get to the heart of his criminal tales. Over the years, the lines have blurred between what Fontaine claimed and what is actually verifiable fact.

To unravel the truth about the man who came to be known as the Monster Butler, we first need to look at Fontaine's own account of his criminal and personal life. Part One examines his life and times, following how he recounted the events that led him down the criminal path to murder, with his own justifications for his actions. Parts Two and Three then evaluate Fontaine's claims in order to uncover the true story of his life, allowing us to finally get inside the mind of a serial killer and discover what really led Archibald Hall, aka Roy Fontaine, to become one of the most notorious criminals of his generation.

PART I:

‘HOW I DID IT – BY THE BUTLER’

1

THE TALENTED MR FONTAINE

Roy Fontaine's own version of his story, as relayed in *A Perfect Gentleman*, begins with him recalling how different he was from other young men of his age, a realisation gained due to the attention he received from young girls eager to have sex with him. A good-looking boy, he was also bright, charming and bold enough to impress. According to Fontaine, his charming personality was even powerful enough to attract attention from those beyond his adolescent circle. He claimed his most memorable date as his sixteenth birthday in 1940, when a thirty-something friend of his mother called Anne Philips bought him a dinner jacket and took him for a candlelit Italian meal before seducing him in her bedroom. Fontaine decided that the force of his personality caused him to exude a powerful sexual magnetism, a fact further confirmed in his own mind when his family moved to Catterick army base later that year and he made the same impression on the local girls there. As he recalled, 'I knew how to make love and I was always asked back for more. This wasn't much different from living back in Glasgow!'

The stay at Catterick was short-lived, though. Fontaine described how, one day, without warning, his family's house was raided and officers seized a collection of German and Nazi memorabilia he had been gathering. The officers who conducted the search asked Fontaine if he admired Hitler; he simply replied that he thought Hitler had done a good job stabilising the German economy, but that was all. However, only two days later,

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Fontaine's father was conveniently told that he was 'too old for the armed forces'.

After the family returned to Glasgow, Fontaine experienced an entirely different sexual encounter with a Polish freedom fighter who had arrived in Britain to prepare for the fight against Nazism. Captain Jackbosky had taken lodgings with the Hall family in Glasgow's West End and Fontaine was immediately taken with the young Pole's knowledge of culture. According to Fontaine, when Jackbosky complained that he found the bed in his room uncomfortable, Fontaine's mother Marion solved the issue by moving him into her son's double bed. It was to be Fontaine's introduction to homosexuality. He now 'had the best of both worlds' and the two young men spent as much time as possible dining in the best restaurants and visiting galleries and museums together.

By that time, young Fontaine had decided not to live a life of 'drudgery, boredom and hardship' like his father and countless others, but to follow the far more exciting path of stealing gems for a living. He explained: 'I had a lascivious appreciation of jewels and fine antiques, just holding jewels made my cock hard. I would steal beautiful jewels from rich people. It was a conscious career decision.'

From simple theft he progressed to breaking into shops and houses, something relatively easy to do in wartime Glasgow, and was so able to finance his love of expensive clothes and fine dining, a pastime which allowed him to 'absorb the manners and behaviour of the rich and privileged'.

At one point, he decided to do 'his bit' for his country and applied to join the Merchant Navy, but after a week's training he was simply told he wasn't needed. He wrote:

No explanation was given. I suspected that it was connected with the incident at Catterick and I had been labelled 'subversive'. They left me no option, I went back to burglary. If they wouldn't give me a suitable job, then I would create my own. I robbed houses all over the city.

THE TALENTED MR FONTAINE

He would later realise that if he became a butler he would easily be able to get close to his employer's valuables, but he still fondly recalled some of the successful scams and break-ins he had pulled off during his early career, such as stealing from Red Cross tins during the war and dressing up in expensive clothes to case rich properties under the guise of renting them for wealthy parents returning from India.

Indeed, after that last scheme, which netted him a small fortune, he reckoned he would have to lie low for a while to avoid police attention, so he took a job as a trainee receptionist at the Glenburn Hotel on the Isle of Bute. Once again he claimed that, due to 'secreting more pheromones than the average man', he had a constant stream of sexual partners, and as almost all of them gave him presents for his services, he clearly reckoned he was the Midnight Cowboy thirty years before the film was made!

According to 'Roy Fontaine', the first time he used this alias was in 1942 when he was dining alone in Glasgow's prestigious Central Hotel and a cultured Jewish gentleman asked him if he would dine with him. After dinner, the pair retired to his room where they had sex and Fontaine discovered his lover was the entertainer Vic Oliver. The relationship was to last and Fontaine described attending many wartime parties in Oliver's company, including one in the composer and singer Ivor Novello's flat in London's Piccadilly Circus, where the young men acted as waiters and the older men fondled them. Such events were said to be beautifully decadent but discretion was important as in those days the careers of many of the men involved would be ruined if they were outed. They purportedly included Lord Mountbatten, the playwright Terence Rattigan and the politician and journalist Beverley Baxter.

Looking back, Fontaine remembered that he felt as if he had 'died and gone to heaven' as he had arrived in a social sense and was accepted as a well-bred young gentleman by the elevated company he now moved amongst.

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So, according to Roy Fontaine, by the age of eighteen he had come a long way from his humble roots, funded by scams and robberies, and was now rubbing shoulders with the great and the affluent. He was clearly ruthlessly ambitious and had become adept at using his good looks and charm on both sexes to get what he wanted. He had learned some valuable life lessons about people. Now it was time to start using them.

2

A FEEL FOR NOBILITY

At the end of the war, Fontaine took a flat in central London and as commuters streamed off to work in the city centre, he travelled to the suburbs and broke into their houses. Imprisonment soon followed and by the spring of 1952, when he was released from Wandsworth Prison after a two-year sentence for 'smash and grab' raids on two London jewellery shops, Fontaine reckoned he was ready for an in-service post. He had read about what was required of a butler and he had honed his knowledge of jewellery, porcelain and antiques in the prison library.

However, when he returned to his parents' house in Glasgow he immediately realised that their marriage was in trouble. Shortly after that, his mother left his father to become house-keeper in a castle in Dunblane, Perthshire, and when Fontaine visited her, he was asked by the then owner, Mrs Dunsmuir, to stay on to be the driver and odd-job man about the place. He noticed two things immediately – the many valuables on show and the Swedish maid, Agnetha.

One significant event Fontaine recalled from his time in Dunblane was the arrival of his prison friend, John Wootton. An invitation from Fontaine led to Wootton turning up one sunny day when both employer and staff were enjoying drinks on the lawn. That was to be Wootton's second meeting with Fontaine's mother, who now called herself 'Marion', and in due course, Wootton was to marry her and become Fontaine's stepfather.

However, Fontaine's foremost memory from Dunblane was

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of the beautiful Agnetha. He again detailed their powerful attraction to one another, but unfortunately the relationship caused problems. Fontaine's employment finished abruptly one day when Mrs Dunsmuir unexpectedly entered a bedroom where Agnetha and Fontaine were having sex. Mrs Dunsmuir demanded he leave at once, but Fontaine, with admirable *sangfroid*, responded, 'Certainly, Madam. If you give me a cheque in lieu of a month's wages, I will be on my way.'

The employer reluctantly paid the money and Fontaine took off for a two-week holiday in Jersey with Agnetha, who had also decided to leave her job.

After that, Fontaine obtained new references 'for a price' then scoured the 'top people's' magazines looking for available posts. By that stage, he had decided that an in-service post was attractive on two fronts, namely living in comfortable surroundings whilst being able to assess what valuables were worth taking. On top of that, he had built up criminal contacts who were able to make convincing fake jewellery which he could swap for the real thing as most people were unable to tell the difference.

There was another reason though: 'I enjoyed nobility, it was something I had a feel for.'

Using his bogus references, Fontaine moved on to Park Hall, Drymen, Stirlingshire, owned by a family called the Warren-Connells. They were wealthy 'old money' and Fontaine worked hard to gain their trust, which was quickly earned. When the family went on holiday, he took over the various household duties, including opening all the mail in his employers' absence. One day, according to Fontaine, an invitation for Mr Warren-Connell arrived for the Queen's Garden Party at Edinburgh's Holyroodhouse. On reading it, it occurred to him that as he had already been 'a guest of Her Majesty on a number of occasions' – mainly in Barlinnie and Wandsworth and 'none of them enjoyable' – he owed it to himself to take his employer's place at the soiree.

Fontaine went on to explain how he accomplished such a deception. He allegedly hired a morning suit then drove the family's

A FEEL FOR NOBILITY

Bentley to the royal residence in Edinburgh where a uniformed policeman checked his invitation, then saluted him and waved him through. As Fontaine mingled, he rubbed shoulders with top policemen and judges as they all enjoyed paper-thin cucumber sandwiches, completely unaware of who he really was.

He also described taking the opportunity to visit an acquaintance, wealthy shop owner Esta Henry, in nearby Mowbray House, presenting her with a dozen red roses and letting slip that he was on his way to 'The Garden Party'. She was most impressed and his credibility was now beyond reproach, thus softening her up for the raid he was planning on her shop.

His time at Park Hall was limited, though.

Two Stirlingshire CID men, aware of his background, paid him a visit and quizzed him about some recent local crimes. After he had answered all their questions, the pair drove off, seemingly content with what they had heard and even wishing him luck, but that night they phoned Park Hall to warn Warren-Connell about him. Fontaine happened to listen in to the call and when his employers summoned him and asked him about his criminal past, Fontaine knew it was better to tell the truth. Despite this revelation, the Warren-Connells supposedly offered him a second chance, but Fontaine felt unable to take it as he knew he would be the chief suspect for any future crimes in the area.

Fontaine then stated, however, that when he told them he was leaving, the Warren-Connells became very upset. They firstly tried to get him a post with friends of theirs and when he declined that, they insisted he have three months' salary instead, whereupon he left for London to stay with his mother and Wootton in the Paddington flat they were now sharing.

His story thus far paints a self-flattering picture of a wealthy elite that was easily overwhelmed by his charm, would-be victims to his cunning. He had successfully utilised his cultivated prowess, but as yet both Mrs Dunsmuir and the Warren-Connells had managed to slip through his criminal grasp. It wouldn't be long, however, before his acquired contacts in the world of the rich began to pay off.