careers of crime-triad leaders by putting them to death. The scenario suggests cause for increased concern.

Characteristically, Dubro is nonchalant about his interviews for the book, and quite excited about his archival findings, which trace what he calls the “lost history” of Oriental crime in Canada. “Look at the detail on this,” he muses, flipping through a photocopy of a document he stumbled upon in a closet of the Vancouver police museum. During several visits to the museum, Dubro chatted up the curator, an amateur historian himself, and so engaged him with his enthusiasm that the two men ultimately ended up in the closet together, rooting through old files that had gone untouched for decades. The papers Dubro now clutches are copies of the lecture notes of a police superintendent on the proper police procedure for raiding an opium den - in the year 1932. Dubro is delighted at the specifics. “It goes through where the drugs are coming from, present supply,” he muses. “Very interesting. . . . it has terminology for dope. . . . the ‘white stuff’ for cocaine. . . . ‘bump off,’ ‘let him have it,’ ‘give him the works,’ ‘take for a ride’. . . . ‘mean to kill. . . .’ Dubro chuckles and his voice trails off as he is carried away by his reading.

When Dubro set out to do research on Oriental gangs, conventional wisdom said they weren’t a threat in Canada before the mid-1970s. You could hear that view even from special police investigators in the field. Skeptical, Dubro began to search the back files of various police-force archives; city, provincial, and federal governments; and customs and immigration departments, starting early in the century, until he had compiled some 10,000 pages of photocopied archival material. He went through 100 boxes of documents in the federal archives alone. He was astonished to learn, from easily accessible newspaper files, that British Columbia had hosted a huge wave of Oriental crime in the 1920s. At one point a Chinese gang lord, king of the gambling houses in Vancouver, had the city mayor and the chief of police on his payroll. “You never know what you’re going to find in the archives,” says Dubro. “To me it’s a great tragedy that most journalists don’t do their scholarly research, whether they’re writing about drugs or the Mafia or anything else.”

Not surprisingly, one of Dubro’s journalistic heroes is the late I.F. Stone, who became a legend in Washington for his penetrating readings of the bilge produced by the government PR machine. But unlike Stone, who believed documents alone told great stories, Dubro is an enthusiastic and gifted interviewer. He realized he had an unusual knack for engendering trust and cooperation in unlikely people when he did one of his first journalism interviews, with Victor Marchetti, a former CIA agent. “He told me I was the best one who had ever handled him in getting information,” recalls Dubro. “He said, ‘Fuck academia! What the fuck do you want to do in some place like the University of Saskatchewan?’ He added, ‘Jim, you’re a natural reporter.’

There are many reasons why mobsters and associates might be willing to talk to Jim Dubro. Some sources are in jail - and when you’re in jail, talking or corresponding with a reporter can add some zip to a bleak social agenda. Active mobsters may enjoy talking shop with an oddly interesting guy who often knows more than they do about the history of their gangs or crime families. And they may feel that to appear in his work en-

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