

Ordeal by cheque

BY WUTHER CRUE

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Apr. 18th 19 10 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF City Bicycle Co. \$ 52.50
Fifty two ———— 50 / DOLLARS
Lawrence Exeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Aug 30th 19 03 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Grocie Gander Baby Shoppe \$ 48.50
One hundred + forty eight ———— 50 / DOLLARS
Lawrence Exeters

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Aug 26th 19 15 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Columbia Military Acad. \$ 2,150.00
Twenty-one hundred + fifty ———— XX DOLLARS
Lawrence Exeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Sept 2nd 19 03 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Hollywood Hospital \$ 100.00
One hundred ———— XX DOLLARS
Lawrence Exeter

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Sept 3rd 19 21 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Hollywood Cadillac Co. \$ 3,885.00
Thirty eight hundred + eighty five XX DOLLARS
Lawrence Exeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Oct. 3rd 19 03 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Dr. David W. McCoy \$ 475.00
Four hundred + seventy five ———— XX DOLLARS
Lawrence Exeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Sept. 7th 19 21 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Wilshire Auto Repair Service \$ 288.76
Two hundred + eighty-eight ———— 76 / DOLLARS
Lawrence Exeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Dec 19th 19 03 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF California Joyland Co. \$ 83.20
Eighty Three ———— 20 / DOLLARS
Lawrence Exeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Oct. 15th 19 21 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Stanford University \$ 339.00
Three hundred + thirty-nine ———— XX DOLLARS
Lawrence Exeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Oct. 6th 19 09 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Palisades School for Boys \$ 1,250.00
Twelve hundred + fifty ———— XX DOLLARS
Lawrence Exeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. June 1st 19 23 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Miss Daisy Windsor \$ 25,000.00
Twenty-five thousand ———— XX DOLLARS
Lawrence Exeter Sr.

Crue, W. (1932 [renewed 1960, 1988]). Ordeal by Cheque. *Vanity Fair*. Cited in Vacca, R. T., & Vacca, J. L. (1999). Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum (6th ed.). New York: Longman.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. June 9th 19 23 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF French Line, Ile de France \$ 585.00
Five hundred + eighty-five ——— xx DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Nov. 18th 19 26 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Beverly Diamond + Gift Shoppe \$ 678.45
Six hundred + seventy-eight ——— 45 DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Aug. 23rd 19 23 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Banque de France \$ 5,000.00
Five thousand ——— xx DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Nov. 16th 19 26 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Hawaii Steamship Co. \$ 560.00
Five hundred + sixty ——— xx DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Feb. 13th 19 26 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF University Club Florists \$ 76.50
Seventy-six ——— 50 DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Nov. 21st 19 26 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Lawrence Epeter, Junior \$ 200,000
Two hundred thousand ——— xx DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. June 22nd 19 26 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF University Club Florists \$ 312.75
Three hundred + twelve ——— 75 DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Nov. 22nd 19 26 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Ambassador Hotel \$ 2,250.00
Twenty-two hundred + fifty ——— xx DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Aug. 11th 19 26 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Riviera Heights Land Co. \$ 56,000.00
Fifty-six thousand ——— xx DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Dec. 15th 19 26 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF University Club Florists \$ 183.50
One hundred + eighty-three ——— 50 DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Oct. 30th 19 26 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Renaissance Interior Decorator \$ 22,000.00
Twenty-two thousand ——— xx DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter Sr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Feb. 18 19 27 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Oceanview Grove Sweet Shoppe \$ 27.00
Twenty seven ——— DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. July 16 19 27 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Parisian Gown Shoppe \$25.00
Nine hundred twenty five DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Aug. 30 19 29 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Tony Spagoni \$126.00
One hundred twenty six DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Dec. 1 19 27 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Anita Lingerie Salon \$750.00
Seven hundred, fifty DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. May 25 19 30 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF University Club Florists \$87.00
Eighty seven DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. April 1 19 28 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Parisian Gown Shoppe \$150.00
Eleven hundred, fifty DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. May 28 19 30 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Broadway Diamond Co. \$575.00
Five hundred, seventy five DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Nov. 1 19 28 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Moderne Sport Shoppe \$562.00
Five hundred, sixty two DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Nov. 13 19 30 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Miss Flossie Wentworth \$50,000.00
Fifty thousand DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. July 1 19 29 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF The Bootery \$45.25
One hundred, forty five DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Nov. 14 19 30 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Wall & Smith, attys. at law \$525.00
Five hundred twenty five DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Aug. 23 19 29 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Tony Spagoni \$126.00
One hundred, twenty six DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Nov. 15 19 30 No. _____
HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Mrs. Lawrence Epeter, Jr. \$5000.00
Five thousand DOLLARS
Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. June 20, 1931 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Clerk, Reno Municipal Court \$52.00

Fifty-two DOLLARS

Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. July 2, 1931 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Tony Spagoni \$100.00

One hundred DOLLARS

Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. June 20, 1931 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Marie Wharton Epeter \$175,000⁰⁰

One hundred seventy five thousand DOLLARS

Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. July 3, 1931 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Peter Ventizzi \$25.00

Twenty-five DOLLARS

Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. June 20, 1931 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Walker + Walker \$700.00

Seven hundred DOLLARS

Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. July 5th, 1931 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Hollywood Hospital \$100.00

One hundred DOLLARS

Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. June 20, 1931 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Wall + Smith \$450.00

Four hundred fifty DOLLARS

Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. July 15th, 1931 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Dr. David M. McBoy \$175.00

One hundred + seventy-five DOLLARS

Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. July 1, 1931 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Tony Spagoni \$100.00

One hundred DOLLARS

Lawrence Epeter, Jr.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. July 16th, 1931 No. _____

HOLLYWOOD STATE BANK 90-984
6801 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Hollywood Mortuary \$1,280.00

Twelve hundred + eighty DOLLARS

Lawrence Epeter

Crue, W. (1932 [renewed 1960, 1988]). Ordeal by Cheque. *Vanity Fair*. Cited in Vacca, R. T., & Vacca, J. L. (1999). Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum (6th ed.). New York: Longman.

Part I. Read the Story. On your own, read the checks closely in their numbered order. Don’t worry if you are confused. Now I want you to read it a second time, paying attention to *where* the checks are going, *who* is signing them, *when* each check was written, and *how much* money is being spent. Do you see any strange parallels? For instance, is there a day in which a lot of checks are written? Or, how about the people receiving the large sums of money? What do you think is happening? Jot down your observations here:

Part II. Character Web. Making Connections. Believe it or not, this is a story with characters, setting, plot, conflict, etc... It is told in a nontraditional way through the checks that are written by two men, Lawrence Exeter, Sr. and Lawrence Exeter, Jr., over a period of years. **The task for your group is to piece together what happens based on the story the checks tell.** When you are finished, you should be able to *tell a part of the story*. Each group will present their version of the story.

Read through the checks and create a character web. You may include personality traits, what they do for a living, adjectives to describe; you may also connect characters to the main characters of Lawrence Exeter, Sr. or Lawrence Exeter, Jr., etc...

Part III. Identifying Elements of a Story

1. Identify the setting of the story: Time: _____ Place: _____
2. What is the story’s conflict?
3. Who is the protagonist?
4. Who is the antagonist?
5. What happens in the very end of the “story”? How can you tell?
6. Did you find this “story” difficult to read/understand? If so, what made it hard?

Part IV. Figuring it out. Now tell the story: Select a series of at least **four checks** and tell the story you think they tell. You may use Creative Dialogue, Traditional Prose, or A Graphic Novel.

Here’s an example: Creative Writing Dialogue

“Ordeal by Cheque” or “What Really Happened!”
Wuther Cruie and others

“We did you the favor!” Peter Ventizzi yelled, as Tony Spagoni held the gun to Lawrence’s head.

“Okay, okay,” Lawrence said wearily.

“Pay up,” Tony sneered, putting away the gun.

Lawrence took out his checkbook and scribbled the information out on the lines, paying the amount of twenty-five dollars. Ripping the check out of the book, he threw it at Tony and made a run for it.

“Cash! Where’s the cash?!” Peter Ventizzi screamed at the escaping Lawrence.

Peter and Tony slowly made a wobbling run after Lawrence, but their lack of physical fitness (which was visible, to say the least) gave Lawrence an advantage.

“The check-” Lawrence screamed, “-all I’ve got! Take it or leave it!”

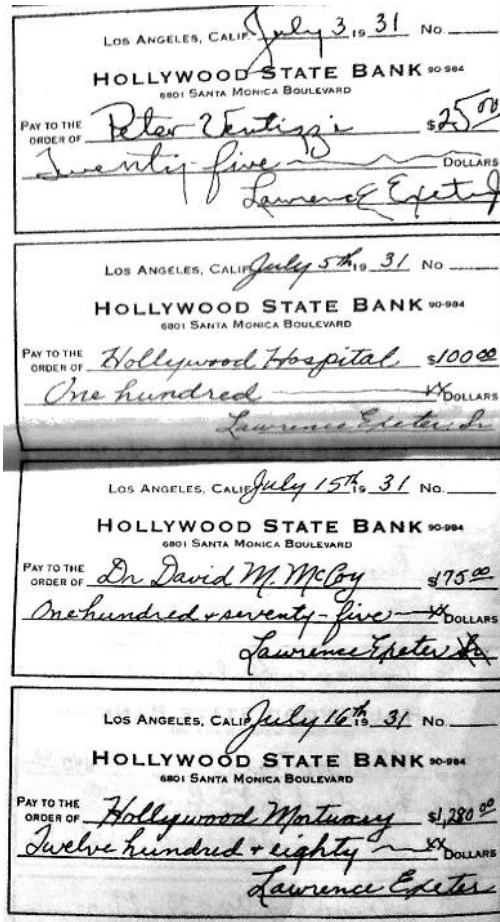
“Who-are-you-” Tony yelled between heavy breaths, “kidding?!”

Tony pulled out his pistol and aimed towards Lawrence. A gunshot echoed in the alley and Lawrence fell to the ground.

Lawrence knew he wasn’t dead. But if he wanted to stay alive, he’d have to pretend. He felt his leg throbbing, knowing he had been hit; faint laughter came from the other end of the alley.

“Come on, let’s leave,” a mocking voice said from afar.

Who is that? Peter? Tony? They must think I’m dead. Good. Lawrence thought. The sound of tires screeching against the hot pavement hurt Lawrence’s ears, and everything went black.



Part V. Your Turn. On a separate sheet of paper, tell your *version* of the story based on the four checks you’ve selected.