

MOUNTAIN MILEPOSTS #1153

By Rita Spiegel

WHAT DO PERRY MASON, COLONEL KLINK, AND LAKE ARROWHEAD'S FIRE STATION 91 HAVE IN COMMON?

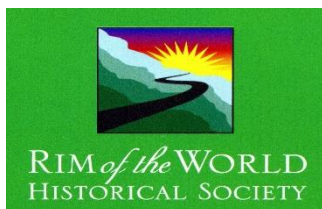
They all appear in the fictional Swiss town of Mitternacht (German for "midnight"), in the 1964 Perry Mason episode, "The Case of a Place Called Midnight." Raymond Burr received two Emmy Awards for his portrayal of Perry Mason, the champion of the wrongly accused. In a shift from the usual courtroom setting, Mason pays a visit to the lakeside hamlet of Mitternacht, to investigate the romantic liaison between a U.S. Army lieutenant and a cabaret singer. While there, Mason becomes entangled in an international con involving Nazi loot, and the lieutenant apparently murders a superior officer (or does he?).

Inspector Hurt is the savvy local police investigator who assists Mason. Hurt is played by Werner Klemperer. Klemperer was a German-born Jew whose family fled Nazi Germany. The year after his appearance on Perry Mason, he would gain fame as Colonel Wilhelm Klink, the inept and bumbling commandant of Stalag 13, in the hit comedy series Hogan's Heroes. For that role, Klemperer would himself receive two Emmy Awards.

The final scene of the episode takes place at the Mitternacht train station, a building which bears a striking resemblance to Fire Station 91 in Lake Arrowhead. Originally constructed in 1926 as the first Lake Arrowhead school house, it was converted into Fire Station 91 in 1949. Although the building was revamped again in the late 1990's, alert viewers will notice that the arrowhead embedded in the right side of the Mitternacht train station staircase is the same as the one still visible at the Fire Station today.

While at the station, Mason explains to Inspector Hurt how he managed to unravel the threads of the conspiracy and identify the correct killer. He also succeeds in putting the young lovers back on the right track. Once again, justice is served!

Our Mountain History Museum located at 27176 Peninsula Drive in Lake Arrowhead has closed for the season but continue to check the website for future events and additional information.



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