


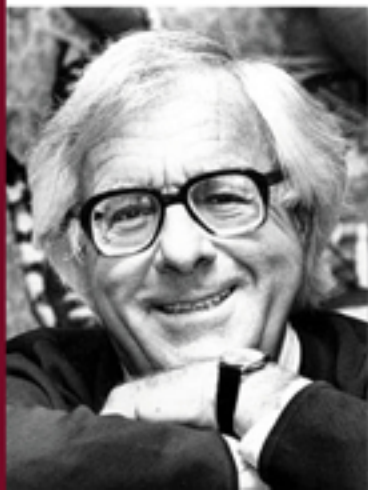


Literary Movements 

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
PULP
FICTION
WRITERS

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MORE THAN 200 PULP
PIONEERS AND MASS-MARKET MASTERS

LEE SERVER



Encyclopedia of Pulp Fiction Writers



A selection of novels from pulp fiction writers such as W. R. Burnett and Horace McCoy.

Encyclopedia of Pulp Fiction Writers

LEE SERVER

Encyclopedia of Pulp Fiction Writers

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For Robert and Elizabeth Server



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INTRODUCTION

The history of sensational literature is a long one. The earliest cave paintings show narratives of bloodshed and giant beasts. Plato wrote in *Timaeus* of the lost world of Atlantis, that staple of the fantasy genre, and Homer's *Odyssey* and the age-old tales of the Arabian Nights were the pulp fictions of their day. Stories of space travel, like Cyrano de Bergerac's *A Voyage to the Moon*, date back to the 1600s, as do the first crime stories, peddled by hawkers to the crowds at public hangings.

Pulp, a species of popular fiction writing with which this encyclopedia is concerned, draws from that long history. Originally used to describe a mere physical characteristic of the periodicals of the 1880s to 1950s whose pages were made from the cheapest grade of pulpwood paper, the word came to have an expanded meaning both categoric and aesthetic: pulp as a genus of imaginative reading matter distinguished by mass production, affordability, an intended audience of common as opposed to elite readers, a dependence on formula and genre; and pulp as a literature aimed at the pleasure centers of the reader, primarily concerned with sensation and escape, variously intended to excite, astonish, or arouse.

Pulp as defined above owes its existence to revolutionary developments of the 19th century, enlightened and industrious years before which the possibilities for a truly popular literature were severely restricted. Few people could read, for one thing. Methods of producing printed works were time-consuming and costly, and their distribution limited. In the 1800s all that began to change. Im-

proved school systems and a mandate for universal literacy brought the privileges of reading and writing to the "common people." The invention of the rotary steam press and efficient new machinery for binding and typesetting and for the production of paper made possible the mass production of books, newspapers, and magazines. The expansion of postal services and railway lines allowed for their timely and cost-effective distribution. Under these circumstances, publishing could now attract a new breed of industrial entrepreneur eager to exploit a market—the millions of newly literate—previously unknown or untapped. In newly created, efficient formats, styled like newspapers or paper booklets, and offered at a price—a single penny—affordable to nearly everyone, publishers distributed the first mass-produced fiction. As product created strictly for profit and fashioned for what were expected to be the low tastes of the masses, most of these publications emphasized escapism and sensationalism. The story weeklies and what in England came to be known as the "penny dreadfuls," were followed in the 1860s by the dime novels, which offered an almost exclusive diet of melodrama, horror, crime, and lechery. The "dreadfuls" released such instant classics of sensationalism as *Varney the Vampire*, a bloody tale of a vicious immortal, and *Sweeney Todd (the Demon Barber)*, a story that involved serial murder and cannibalism. On both sides of the Atlantic, tales of sympathetic criminals made folk heroes of highwaymen like Dick Turpin and Spring-Heeled Jack. The new fiction magazines were capable of printing sweet and pious stories as well, but the purpose of the popular press was to



Advertisement for story weeklies from Street & Smith, c. 1900

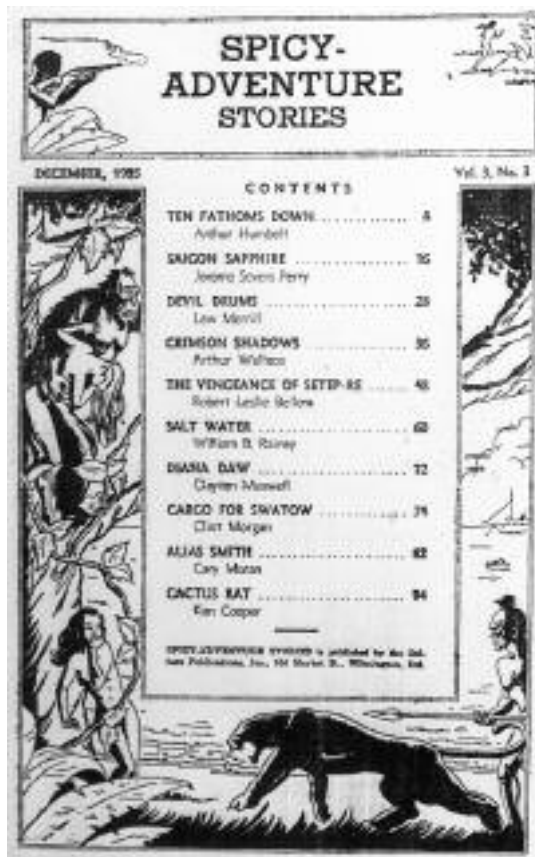
make money, and publishers believed that the most likely guarantor of that goal was a steady supply of thrills.

Out of the weekly need to retain high sales, the popular press appealed to readers with a combination of the familiar—the repetition of proven successful plots and dramatic situations and the establishment of recurring series characters—and the new: evolving genres like science fiction and the detective story, and stories torn from contemporary life, like the melodramatic tales of slum girls or Wild West adventures. The popular fiction magazines created the need for a new species of writer—namely, the hack. Industry took precedence over artistry, with primary concerns for schedules, reliability, and steady product. This required the discovery not of artists who created when the muse was at hand, but of driven craftsmen who produced on de-

mand. Unknown recruits were paid as little as possible and labored without public recognition; they were assigned house pseudonyms to keep them from acquiring personal fame and a consequent pay raise. Conversely, even the celebrated names of world-class popular fiction—Alexandre Dumas, Charles Dickens—had value not for their individual talent but instead for their successful brand. Some in the publishing business were not above assigning *The Three Musketeers* author's alluring byline to something actually written by an anonymous hack. (The tradition remains in place today, with celebrities fronting novels ghostwritten in their name by anonymous hired hands, and long-dead authors seemingly continuing to produce new work through the help of uncredited ghosts). Despite the publishers' misgivings, and oblivious to the tastes of the critical establishment, readers created new literary stars—such writers as Joseph Holt Ingraham, author of the popular melodrama *Fanny H. or The Hunchback and the Roue* (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow called it the worst novel ever written by anybody); Ned Buntline, who chronicled and highly exaggerated the life of a frontier hunter, William Frederick Cody, nicknamed “Buffalo Bill”; and Horatio Alger Jr., a Unitarian minister whose work with New York’s wretched street orphans inspired his uplifting stories of poor boys making good.

The pulp magazine made its first appearance in 1882, the year Frank Munsey launched a cheap fiction weekly for children which he called *The Golden Argosy*. The magazine evolved into *Argosy*, a thick—nearly 200 pages—all-fiction periodical for adults, offering some 135,000 words of fiction and a little poetry, crowded into ugly blocks of black type and printed on the cheapest paper available. The giant package overloaded with content was a great success. Munsey followed with another title, *All-Story*, and soon a rival publisher, Street & Smith, known for its dime novel collection, was imitating the form with its *Popular Magazine*. Other publishers and pulpwood magazines entered the competition. In time, the arrival of such sensationally popular pulp authors as Edgar Rice Burroughs and Max Brand took the pulp industry to unimagined profits.

Simultaneous with the birth and development of the pulp magazine, the book publishing industry had begun its own evolution. The ponderous three-volume novels of domestic life that had largely defined the popular mainstream fiction of the Victorian era collapsed in favor of the innovative, single-volume, swift-moving popular literature created by younger writers like Robert Louis Stevenson, H. Rider Haggard, Arthur Conan Doyle, and H. G. Wells, authors of compulsively readable and imaginative works like *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *She*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and *The Invisible Man*. Their work, and that of other novelists of the late Victorian and early Edwardian



The Spicy series of pulp magazines from Culture Publications added sexual content to adventure, mystery, and western stories.



This issue of *Diamond-Dick Library* dates from 1896 and features a cover story by Ned Buntline.

periods—Jack London, Bram Stoker, Baroness Orczy, Owen Wister, Zane Grey, and others—became harbingers of the explosion of pulp and popular literature to come.

In the 1900s, the pulp magazines expanded in volume and number. The general fiction pulps were soon joined by titles specializing in individual genres—crime, western, romance, adventure, fantasy. Eventually, in the multitudinous, try-anything boom years of the 1930s, readers could find pulps dedicated to stories of spies, World War I flying aces, FBI agents, famous trials, sex, Foreign Legionnaires, weird menaces, zeppelins, and the singular adventures of various superheroes, including Doc Savage, the Shadow, G-8, Operator #5, the Spider, and Terence X. O'Leary. Certain pulp magazines achieved individual distinction and legendary status for their innovations and high quality. Publisher Hugo



The lord of the jungle, seen here in this 1914 edition of *Tarzan of the Apes* by Edgar Rice Burroughs.

Gernsback's *Amazing Stories* would virtually invent the modern science fiction story, while *As-tounding*, under the editorship of John W. Campbell, would develop the more sophisticated and rigorously scientific SF and most of the great writers of the genre's golden age. *Black Mask*, as edited by Joseph Shaw in the 1920s and 1930s, originated the form and content of the hard-boiled detective story, brought to its creative height by such *Black Mask* regulars as Dashiell Hammett (*The Maltese Falcon*), Paul Cain (*Fast One*), and Raoul Whitfield (*Green Ice*). Existing simultaneously with the pulp magazine industry, and employing some of the same literary personnel, were like-minded businesses with similar, culturally disrespected wares, including the "true crime" and "confession" magazines, and the cheap book publishing houses that supplied the

low-end "lending libraries" (sections of drug-stores and other businesses offering book rentals for a few pennies a day), with genre novels and, in some cases, what passed for erotica.

The influence of the pulps on the greater popular culture can be charted through the careers of former pulpsters who moved on to work in the movies (as writers and, as in the case of Richard Sale, Frank Gruber, and others, as producers and directors), in the rapidly developing comic book industry, and in radio and television.

The introduction, in the late 1930s, of the economical, highly portable paperback book would soon produce another evolutionary change in pulp fiction. These paperbacks were sold in the same locations as the pulp magazines, and appealed to much of the same audience, with their lurid cover illustrations and stories concerned with sex and violence. The paperbacks would eventually usurp the pulp magazines' place on the newsstands, driving them out of business. At first nearly all softcover books were reprints of hardcover editions. In 1950 the New York publisher, Fawcett, began to produce original paperback fiction, commissioning new works rather than contracting for reprints. Using well-known names from the pulps and commercial fiction circles like Cornell Woolrich and Sax Rohmer, plus a lot of new young talent like Vin Packer and David Goodis, Fawcett cultivated the old pulp magazine fans and a new generation of readers looking for something stronger than the old magazines. Fawcett had tremendous success with its Gold Medal line of paperback originals. Numerous other publishers began issuing similar lines of sensational originals in softcover editions. A new style of pulp fiction evolved: grittily realistic, often frankly erotic, with an iconoclastic eagerness to explore the controversial and the taboo. The paperbacks developed new genres around such shocking subject matter as drug addiction, juvenile delinquency, racism, and homosexuality. Escapist reading took on a weird, nihilistic edge in the work of such paperback pros as Jim Thompson and Charles Willeford. Similar fiction lines thrived in Great Britain, with the rise of numerous small softcover publishers pushing tough, ersatz American private eye stories and erotic fiction.

The various “noir” editions in France and the yellow-backs or “giallos” of Italy and comparable publications in other countries around the world were evidence of a burgeoning trend and of the international appeal of the pulp fiction style.*

Adjusting to changes in society and the marketplace, variant forms of pulp fiction would continue to develop and prosper. As literary censorship began to crumble in the 1960s, erotic fiction paperbacks became the mainstay for hundreds of small softcover publishers. These books, subtle and euphemistic in the beginning, became increasingly explicit as that decade wore on. At this same time, the growing cultural strength of African Americans influenced the efforts of Holloway House, a Los Angeles-based publisher that came to specialize in brutally realistic novels about inner-city crime and vice and various aspects of the black experience as recounted by such authors as Iceberg Slim and Donald Goines.

In the 1970s and 1980s, even as literary pundits decried the death of the novel and the “new illiteracy,” pulp paperbacks continued to find ways to reach various strata of nontraditional readers ignored by the more “respectable” hardcover presses. Popular series like Don Pendleton’s ultra-violent anti-Mafia series, *The Executioner*, discovered a loyal readership in working-class American males, while in Britain startling developments like the largely violent, racist skinhead movement were chronicled in book form almost exclusively in the cheap, sensationalist paperbacks. More recent paperback lines of hard-boiled fiction have targeted such audiences as hip-hop fans in the United States and the Afro-Caribbean immigrant communities of the United Kingdom, while houses like Cleis Press have printed new and classic “lesbian pulp fiction” for a segmented readership of their own.

Though the majority of pulp fiction has been properly stigmatized for its lurid unreality, its recurring cultural importance has been undervalued. Hard-boiled crime fiction, far more than the drawing-room mysteries of the mainstream, re-

vealed the brutal realities of modern criminality and the contemporary flavor of life in Prohibition gangland and on the mean streets of the Great Depression. The marginalized genre of science fiction, growing beyond its era of bug-eyed monsters, pondered the human and technical future provocatively and with frequent accuracy. The sex pulps dealt with a subject—in all its arousing and frightening aspects—with a frankness no mainstream magazines or publishers dared to emulate for decades. The noir fiction of such pulp paperback hacks as Jim Thompson and David Goodis, dealt more incisively with the postwar psychological states of alienation and angst than did most of the acclaimed hardcover authors of the day. Literally a literature of the street—sold not in genteel bookstores but in drug stores, cigar stores, and bus stations—pulp fiction has often closely reflected the society at hand, its hopes and dreams, ideals and prejudices, taboos and sexual fantasies. The wild



Tip Top Weekly from 1906 featured a Dick Merriwell adventure for young readers.

* This book is primarily concerned with Anglo-American pulp writings, but similar literary traditions can be traced throughout Europe, in Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere.

imaginings of the pulp writer—from television to world war, from space travel to terrorist attacks on America—have proven again and again to be a glimpse of a future reality.

This volume attempts to follow the threads of pulp fiction over more than a century through profiles of more than 200 writers—the good, the bad, and the sometimes worse, from some of the 19th-century progenitors of pulp to men and women practicing the tradition to this day. A comprehensive listing of all pulp fiction writers, even under a stricter definition than my own, would run to dozens of volumes. For this book I have attempted to include a representative sampling, including both names of legend and those writers whose ob-

scurity remains almost complete. A few significant pulp fiction contributors—and much-written-about names—have been left out altogether in favor of some little-known writers who might otherwise not ever be written about at all. I have tried to include both some description of a writer's work and some salient facts regarding the writer's personal history, particularly in regard to its influence on the written work. On the pages ahead you will read of many colorful and, I think, fascinating personalities, lives of adventure, romance, debauchery, fear, and murder. The storyteller's trade is an ancient and noble occupation, though one that has sometimes put the teller behind bars or driven him mad. Read on!



Aarons, Edward S.

(1916–1975) *Also wrote as: Edward Ronns*

Aarons was a writer of lending-library, paperback, and pulp crime and espionage fiction for virtually his entire adult life, taking only a few years off to attend Columbia University and to serve in World War II. His early mystery novels were credited to a pen name, Edward Ronns, and published by the low-rung Phoenix Press. Phoenix's editorial standards were notoriously even lower than its advances, and Aarons's work for them was crude, if colorful. In *The Corpse Hangs High* (1939), for example, private eye "Beauty" Black gets slugged unconscious in a classic sub-Chandler riot of metaphors that verge on the ridiculous: "A red, red nose blossomed before my eyes, spread out until it filled the universe, and then turned rotten and decomposed into a mountain of red worms that wriggled wildly away into the darkness."

Aarons's postwar work was better, including tough suspense novels like *Nightmare* (1948) and *Dark Memory* (1950). He became one of the first writers to work for Fawcett's Gold Medal line of paperback originals, beginning in 1952 with a melodrama, *Escape to Love*. In 1955, Fawcett published the novel *Assignment to Disaster*, the first in the "Assignment" series, which would last for 20 years and 40 volumes. The series hero was Sam Durrell, a bayou-born (raised on his granddaddy's paddlewheeler), Yale-educated, patriotic, two-fisted CIA agent, assigned—twice a year by Fawcett Gold Medal's schedule—to the world's

hot spots, from Karachi to Budapest to the Sulu Sea. At each location Durrell would find a looming threat to U.S. security or world peace, a deadly villain, a beautiful female, and action, action, action. As a spy novelist, Aarons lacked the Continental flair of Ian FLEMING, author of the James Bond series, and was certainly not interested in the complex world view represented by later, more literary spy novelists like John Le Carré. If anything, Aarons was a kind of spy fiction Mickey SPILLANE, with hard-boiled prose and an emphasis on brutal violence and torture. But the stories moved swiftly and surely, and many of the settings and plot devices had a news-headline immediacy.

Works

Assignment—Mara Tirana (1960); *Assignment—Angelina* (1958); *Assignment—Sorrento Siren* (1963); *Assignment to Disaster*; (1955); *Assignment—Amazon Queen* (1974); *Assignment—Ankara* (1961); *Assignment—Bangkok* (1972); *Assignment—Black Gold* (1975); *Assignment—Black Viking* (1967); *Assignment—Budapest* (1957); *Assignment—Burma Girl* (1962); *Assignment—Carlotta Cortez* (1959); *Assignment—Ceylon* (1973); *Assignment—Cong Hai Kill* (1966); *Assignment—Golden Girl* (1972); *Assignment—Helene* (1959); *Assignment—Karachi* (1963); *Assignment—Lili Lamaris* (1959); *Assignment—Lowlands* (1961); *Assignment—Madeleine* (1958); *Assignment—Maltese Maiden* (1972); *Assignment—Manchurian Doll* (1963); *Assignment—Moon Girl* (1967); *Assignment—Nuclear Nude* (1968); *Assignment—Palermo* (1966); *Assignment—Peking* (1969); *Assignment—Quayle Question* (1975); *Assignment—School for Spies* (1966); *Assignment—Silver Scorpion*

2 Abdullah, Achmed

(1973); *Assignment—Star Stealers* (1970); *Assignment—Stella Marni* (1957); *Assignment—Suicide* (1956); *Assignment—Sulu Sea* (1964); *Assignment—Sumatra* (1974); *Assignment—The Cairo Dancers* (1965); *Assignment—The Girl in the Gondola* (1964); *Assignment—Tokyo* (1971); *Assignment—Treason* (1956); *Assignment—White Rajah* (1970); *Assignment—Zoraya* (1960); *Big Bedroom, The* (1959); *Black Orchid, The* (1959); *But Not for Me* (1959); *Come Back, My Love* (1953); *Dead Heat* (1950); *Defenders, The* (1961); *Escape to Love* (1952); *Girl on the Run* (1954); *Glass Cage, The* (1962); *Hell to Eternity* (1960); *Lady Takes a Flyer, The* (1958); *Nightmare* (1948)

As Edward Ronns:

Art Studio Murders, The (1960); *Catspaw Ordeal* (1950); *Corpse Hangs High, The* (1939); *Dark Destiny* (1952); *Dark Memory* (1950); *Death in a Lighthouse* (1938); *Death Is My Shadow* (1957); *Decoy, The* (1951); *Don't Cry, Beloved* (1951); *Gang Rumble* (1958); *Gift of Death* (1947); *I Can't Stop Running* (1951); *Million Dollar Murders* (1950); *Murder Money* (1938); *Net, The* (1953); *No Place to Live* (1947); *Passage to Terror* (1952); *Pickup Alley* (1957); *Point of Peril* (1956); *Say It with Murder* (1954); *State Department Murders* (1950); *Terror in the Town* (1947); *They All Ran Away* (1955); "Three Doors to Doom" (*Dime Detective*, August 1939); "Totem Pole Murders" (*Angle Detective*, July 1941)

Abdullah, Achmed (Alexander Nicholayevitch Romanoff) (1881–1945)

Achmed Abdullah was born Alexander Nicholayevitch Romanoff to a grand duke father and a high-born Afghani Muslim mother in czarist Russia. Raised in Afghanistan, where he assumed his Asian title of Prince Nadir Khan, he was educated at Eton and Oxford, then became a gentleman officer in the British army, keeping the peace along the Khyber Pass and in assorted colonies in Africa. He became a writer in the early 1900s, establishing the name of Achmed Abdullah as an erudite teller of thrilling stories and an elegant stylist whose work appeared in numerous periodicals and pulp magazines. Abdullah cultivated a romantic public image—the writer as dashing, exotic, and

cosmopolitan—which lent an extra glamor to his work: the adventure fiction of farflung Asian and African outposts, upper-crust mysteries set in manor houses and penthouse apartments, and lurid tales of violence and drama in New York's Chinatown. His name appeared with frequency on the covers of novels, short story collections, and popular histories (as well as memoirs, books of poetry, and a cookbook). *The Trail of the Beast* (1919) was a spy thriller about a planned political assassination, set in a thrilling France of nightclubs, apache dancers, and promiscuous female agents. *Night Drums* (1921) concerned insurrection in Africa, a would-be black emperor, and an ancient mummy, and the bandaged body of the first man—Adam himself. Many of Abdullah's American-set stories were tied to the exotic East or Africa, the "Dark Continent." In *The Bungalow on the Roof* (1931), a ritzy New York apartment building contains on its rooftop a secret headquarters for an African cult, where wealthy New Yorkers go to satisfy their "diseased, degenerate craving after foul, bestial voodoo rites and worship . . ."

Some of Abdullah's most popular stories were those set among the Chinese community in lower Manhattan, ironic and sometimes cruel tales similar to the short stories about London's Limehouse district by Thomas Burke. The first group of these "Pell Street" tales was published as *The Honorable Gentleman and Other Stories* in 1919. Written under the premise that each inscrutable basement warren and cluttered shop in Chinatown held a strange, shocking secret, the stories juggled the familiar props of the Chinese ghetto—opium dens, white slavers, tong wars, submissive young immigrant girls—with touching character vignettes and poignant, usually tragic romances. The most famous of Abdullah's Chinatown stories is no doubt "The Hatchetman," due to its subsequent adaptation as a Broadway play and then a motion picture, starring Edward G. Robinson in the title role as the Chinatown killer, but it is a hauntingly memorable tale in its own right.

In addition to his adaptation of "The Hatchetman" for the stage, Abdullah worked in Hollywood on occasion. The studios sought him out for projects to which his exotic experience and erudition seemed particularly suited, including the

Douglas Fairbanks Sr. Arabian Nights spectacular, *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924), and a story of the British Raj on the northwest frontier, *The Lives of the Bengal Lancers* (1935) with Gary Cooper. Abdullah's published version of *Thief* is likely one of the earliest examples of the "novelization" of a motion picture.

Works

Alien Souls (1921); *Benefactor Club, The* (1921); *Black Tents* (1930); *Buccaneer in Spats* (1924); *Bungalow on the Roof, The* (1931); *Cat Had Nine Lives, The* (1939); *Deliver Us from Evil* (1939); *Flower of the Gods* (1935); *Honorable Gentleman and Other Stories, The* (1919); *Man on Horseback, The* (1919); *Mating of the Blades, The* (1920); *Night Drums* (1921); *Red Storm, The* (1915); *Swinging Caravan, The* (1925); *Thief of Bagdad, The* (1924); *Trail of the Beast, The* (1919); *Veiled Woman* (1931); *Wings* (1920); *Year of the Wooden Dragon* (1926)

Adams, Cleve

(1895–1949) *Also wrote as: Franklin Charles, John Spain*

The missing link between Dashiell HAMMETT and James Ellroy, Cleve Adams wrote rambunctious, violent, corrosively cynical private eye fiction from the mid-1930s until his untimely death from pneumonia in 1949 at the age of 54.

Like Hammett and many another pulp star, Adams found his way to writing after a peripatetic life and an assortment of odd jobs and adventures. Born in Chicago, he was a copper miner in the West, an accountant, a window trimmer, an art director for a movie studio, a life insurance executive, a soda jerk and—like Hammett again—a private detective. Like Raymond CHANDLER, he was already middle-aged when he took up his pen, or, more likely, began battering his typewriter. He started selling stories to such detective pulps as *Clues*, *Double Detective*, *Detective Fiction Weekly*, and eventually *Dime Detective* and *Black Mask*. By the late 1930s his byline appeared at least once or twice a month, and he wrote several book-length serials. His most unusual and interesting contribution to the pulps was probably his series of stories published in *Clues* about a female private detective

in Hollywood, Violet McDade, a 400-pound former sideshow attraction, and her gorgeous Mexican sidekick Nevada Alvarado.

In 1940 Adams joined the other crime pulpsters on the bandwagon to hardcover publication. His first three published novels—*And Sudden Death* (1940), *The Black Door* (1941), and *Decoy* (1941)—were in fact reprints of his pulp serials. Those first three, and a subsequent trio of titles (one published posthumously), all featured raucous case histories from the files of Rex McBride, a tough private detective. Adams's other hard-boiled heroes, including those chronicled under his pen names would have been hard to distinguish from McBride in a police lineup. Adams also stuck to a few basic plotlines, usually ones that seemed familiar from the works of Dashiell Hammett. But the books had their own style, snarly in tone and chaotic in construction. Adams has been accused of writing from a pro-fascist perspective. Adams's "hero" McBride in *Up Jumped the Devil* (1943) does in fact bark that "an American Gestapo is goddam well what we need . . ." and Adams's mysteries are filled with unpleasantries about women, foreigners, and miscellaneous races and religions. But Adams, to paraphrase Ellroy on Ellroy, is writing about bad white men doing bad things, and his political viewpoint seems less ultra-right-wing than nihilistic, creating a nasty landscape full of chauvinist pigs, rotten cops, crooked politicians, rich slatterns, and sadists—a big, ugly, wisecracking world of everyday corruption.

Other than some early paperback editions, Adams's work has never been reprinted, and yet he was a leading contender in the hard-boiled field in his day, receiving many enthusiastic reviews. One of his books, *The Private Eye* (1942), was bought for the movies (but never produced) by director Howard Hawks at about the time Hawks was filming Raymond Chandler's novel *The Big Sleep* for Warner Bros. Vincent Starrett, a respected author and columnist of his day, wrote of Adams: "He is far and away the best writer of the hard-boiled school who has come along in recent memory to delight those of us who, in the safety of our homes, like to be frightened by events which, if we were part of them, would send us scurrying to the nearest sanatorium. . . . For exhilarating adventure, rowdy

4 Allain, Marcel and Pierre Souvestre

humor, and cynical awareness of much of the contemporary scene, it would be difficult to find a more entertaining raconteur than Mr Adams.”

Adams was friends with many of the West Coast pulp mystery writers, including Chandler, and he dedicated some of his books to fellow pulpsters such as Dwight BABCOCK, W. T. Ballard, and Robert Leslie BELLEM (who completed Adams’s unfinished novel, *No Wings on a Cop*).

Works

And Sudden Death (1940); *Black Door, The* (1941); *Contraband* (1950); *Crooking Finger, The* (1944); *Decoy* (1941); *No Wings on a Cop* (1950); *Private Eye, The* (1942); *Sabotage* (1940); *Shady Lady* (1955); *Up Jumped the Devil* (1943); *What Price Murder?* (1942)

As Franklin Charles:

Vice Czar Murders, The (1941)

As John Spain:

Dig Me a Grave (1942); *Death Is Like That* (1943); *Evil Star, The* (1944)

Allain, Marcel (1885–1969) and Pierre Souvestre (1874–1914)

“Fantomas.”

“What did you say?”

“I said: Fantomas.”

“And what does that mean?”

“Nothing. . . Everything!”

“But what is it?”

“Nobody. . . And yet, yes, it is somebody!”

“And what does the somebody do?”

“Spreads terror!”

The famous poster introduced a new literary creation, super-criminal Fantomas, to the Paris of 1911: a malevolently bored masked man in evening clothes posing astride the entire helpless city like an elegant Colossus. No ordinary miscreant, Fantomas was an unpredictable, even incomprehensible wrongdoer, devoted to cruelty and outrage without purpose. His presence would

hover through much of this first book like a windswept virus, invisible yet terrible in effect, leaving frightened or savaged victims on every chapter. A mixture of brilliant detective work and absurd intuition on the part of the obsessed police inspector Juve at last brings a suspect to ground, and the convicted killer is dispatched beneath the gleaming blade of the guillotine. The reader long anticipates the book’s climactic surprise, but the last paragraph is savory nonetheless—a horrified Juve bounding up to the execution site too late, grasping the dripping, freshly decapitated head in his hand and screaming brokenly, “Oh, curse him! Fantomas has escaped. . . . He has had some innocent man executed in his stead! I tell you, Fantomas is alive!”

And so he was—to wreak havoc in 31 more original volumes in as many months. The series was the creation of a pair of hack writers, the older Pierre Souvestre and his secretary-turned-partner Marcel Allain. The pair had been writing articles for the new automobile magazines that were all the rage at the time, and when an editor had needed a few pages filled in a hurry they had supplied some action-packed automobile fiction. A Monsieur Fayard, publisher of the cheapest pulp fiction line in Paris, liked what he saw and put the two men under contract. The succeeding stories increased in outlandishness, Fantomas’s mastery of disguise ever more incredible, his sociopathy reaching ever-grandier heights of cruel absurdity (unleashing plague rats on a luxury liner, watching the hundreds of passengers die, and so on). Beloved by the working stiffs who purchased Fayard’s cheap publications, the Fantomas series was also embraced by the intelligentsia and by artists and poets of the nascent dada/surrealism movements who found the series’ anarchic spirit exhilarating. “Full of life and imagination,” said Guillaume Apollinaire. “From the imaginative standpoint Fantomas is one of the richest works that exist.” “Magnificent lyricism!” said Jean Cocteau. “The modern Aeneid!” averred Blaise Cendrars. The legend of Fantomas grew even mightier with the almost immediate adaptation of the series to silent film by master director Louis Feuillade.

Pierre Souvestre died in the Spanish flu epidemic of 1914. Allain married his widow. He kept

on writing but resisted offers to continue the Fantomas series until 1925, at which time he created a number of magazine stories that subsequently formed the contents of five new novels. From then on he left the character more or less alone, although he created similar pulp thrillers for most of his long life. He died in 1969, by then much honored as a living legend of French culture.

Works

(English titles are of known translated editions)

Fantomas (1911; U.S. edition, 1915); *Fantomas attaque Fandor* (1926); *Fantomas en danger* (*Fantomas Captured*) (1926); *Fantomas est-il ressuscité?* (*The Lord of Terror*) (1926); *Fantomas prend sa revanche* (*The Revenge of Fantomas*) (1927); *Fantomas, roi des receleurs* (*Juve in the Dock*) (1926); *Juve contre Fantomas* (*The Exploits of Juve*) (1911; U.S. edition, 1915), also published as *The Silent Executioner*; *La cravate de chanvre* (1913); *La disparition de Fandor* (1912); *La fille de Fantomas* (1911); *L'agent secret* (*A Nest of Spies*) (1911; U.S. edition, 1917); *La guêpe rouge* (1912); *Le livre du crime* (1912); *La main coupée* (1911); *La mort de Juve* (1912); *L'arrestation de Fantomas* (1911); *La série rouge* (1913); *L'assassin de Lady Beltham* (1912); *Le bouquet tragique* (1912); *Le cadavre géant* (1913); *Le cercueil vide* (1913); *Le faiseur de Reines* (1913); *Le fiacre de nuit* (1911); *Le jockey masque* (1913); *Le magistrat combricoleux* (1912); *Le mariage de Fantomas* (1912); *Le mort qui tue* (*Messengers of Evil*) (1911; U.S. edition, 1917); *Le pendu de Londres* (*Slippery as Sin*) (1911; U.K. edition, 1920); *Le policier apache* (*The Long Arm of Fantomas*) (1911; U.S. edition, 1924); *Les amours d'un prince* (1912); *Les souliers du mort* (1912); *Le train perdu* (1912); *L'évadé de Saint-Lazare* (1912); *Le voleur d'or* (1913); *L'hotel du crime* (1913); *Un roi prisonnier de Fantomas* (*A Royal Prisoner*) (1911; U.S. edition, 1918); *Yellow Document or Fantomas of Berlin, The* (1919)

Allen, Richard (James Moffat)

(1922–1993)

Simmering behind the good vibes of hippiedom and swinging London as the 1960s came to a close was another, less friendly British cultural movement, one built not on peace and love but on suspicion, resentment, racism, and violence. Media reports exposed the rise of white, working-class youth

gangs, new cults of juvenile delinquency involved in riots and violent incidents, some of it aimed at the United Kingdom's rising immigrant population, a great deal of it centering on explosive soccer (football) team fandom. The most intimidating of these antisocial groups were the "skinheads," angry young people uniformly clad in blue jeans or army trousers, union shirt, suspenders, steel-tipped boots, hair shaved to the scalp (a pointed rebuke to those long-haired hippies), many with a right-wing, white supremacist political orientation. To conventional Britons and media pundits the skinheads and soccer hooligans signaled the end of western civilization, but to the good folks at the New English Library (N.E.L.) they looked like money in the bank. Ever ready to put their paperback presses in pursuit of a new trend, editors at N.E.L. saw a chance for a quick quid in the fictional exploitation of the new delinquency and "football aggro." The idea took hold one night over drinks at a London party; the editors agreed they should get the book out as soon as possible, before the bloody tabloid stories grew old, so sometime before midnight they called their fastest and most reliable "hack"—Richard Allen—and assigned the novel idea with a one-week deadline.

The writer they called was no youth himself—48 years old in 1970—and knew nothing about football gangs, but he had not sold hundreds of books and articles by turning down assignments. In the morning, in search of some background detail, he drove over to the East End of London, command central for the new youth cults. At a pub he introduced himself to a group of drunken skinheads. An outsider, he was met with typical aggression at first. "But the moment I told them they were to be featured in a new book," the writer recalled, "they completely changed their attitude. They bought me beers and verbally fought for top-billing. And I had enough material to start typing!"

In June 1970, N.E.L. published Richard Allen's *Skinhead*. A viciously invigorating read, *Skinhead* was the real *Clockwork Orange*—the Anthony Burgess book (and Stanley Kubrick film) about renegade juvenile gangs—without the intellectualism, irony, or distance of a science fiction setting. *Skinhead* was the story of Joe Hawkins, a fearless, dangerous East Ender, leader of a small

mob of violence-craving teens. Only 16, Hawkins is filled with an angry nostalgia for all he perceives his kind has lost. Once, Hawkins reflects, when the Krays—gangster brothers, the Al Capones of '60s London—had been the “king-pins of violence in London,” the East End had ruled the roost. “Not now! Every section of the sprawling city had its claims to fame. South of the Thames the niggers rode cock-a-hoop in Brixton, the Irish held Shepherd’s Bush with an iron fist; and the Jews predominated around Hampstead and Golder’s Green. The Cockney had lost control of his London. Even the porno shops were having their difficulties with the parasitic influx of outside talent.” Allen’s book was a close study of Hawkins’s life, days and nights of drinking, raping, attending soccer games (for the primary purpose of attacking opposition fans), and brutally “bashing” an assortment of detested elements, including blacks, Pakistanis, and “soft, dirty hippies” (with their hair “so bleedin’ long and matted with lice and dirt”).

With a seven-day deadline weighing upon his typewriter, Allen had little time for a consistent perspective. The novel spouts righteously right-wing, fascistic rhetoric about foreigners and the welfare state on one page, a shocked voice of reason on another, and gleeful, nihilist indifference on the next. Overall, though, Allen was a sympathetic chronicler of the skinhead life. The violence and racist attacks are written with the lasciviousness of pornography, and in the novel’s end the young protagonist, having landed in jail after beating a cop, is, by his own standards, triumphant: “From today, Joe Hawkins was made. His name would rank with those others in the crime underworld. . . . Oh, the stupid bastards—didn’t they ever learn! Didn’t they know that his crime being publicized would make him a king of skinheads!”

N.E.L. brought the book out within weeks of its completion and sold it at newsstands and book stalls like any other exploitation paperback. The book, with its cover photograph of a skinhead in full regalia, did not have much appeal to the mainstream softcover reader. In time, however, British youths themselves discovered the title, narcissistically hailing its subject matter and uncompromising vision, and N.E.L. found itself with a million-copy seller. The formerly unknown

Richard Allen was hailed as the Dickens of the skinhead movement. Sequels followed: *Suedehead* (1971) took an on-the-lam Hawkins into straight society and a city job, complete with pinstripe suit and tie. But Hawkins soon gets involved with a new violent youth cult. “Suedeheads” were a more subversive group than their skinhead predecessors: “An anti-social anti-everything conglomerate affecting status as their protective cover whilst engaging in nefarious pursuits more savage, more brutal than other cultists we have seen rise—and fall in this past decade.” The pinstriped Joe sees the possibilities at once, and immediately sharpens the metal tip of his umbrella into a lethal weapon.

Allen continued writing about the outlaw Hawkins and his spiritual kin and descendants. British youth culture had no end of malcontents, with later books centering around punk rockers, neo-Mods, angry street demonstrators, and kung fu gangs. In *Skinhead Girls* (1972), *Sorts* (1973) and *Knuckle Girls* (1977), Allen focused on female delinquents, young darlings living for kicks, like Glasgow’s Ina Murray (one of the Knuckle Girls), whose “violent upbringing taught her to fight for her rights—with a bicycle chain and a copper wire!” There were 18 Richard Allen books in all, published between 1970 and 1980. Looked at by the literary establishment with all the horror and contempt launched at the skins and punks themselves, the books achieved something remarkable and significant: pure pulp masterpieces that put the raw taste of anger and anarchy on paper and documented important social phenomena and historical upheaval the mainstream culture preferred to avoid.

Richard Allen was in fact James Moffat, a Canadian-born writer with Celtic roots and hundreds of books and nearly as many pen names to his credit. He had studied law at Queen’s University in Canada but dropped out to write and wander the world. For a time he published a magazine about bowling. He lived in Hollywood and Mexico and more than once lost all his savings at the gaming tables in Las Vegas. Settled in Britain in the early '60s, he became a reliable hack writer for various paperback houses both in London and New York, producing westerns, children’s stories, horror novels, a mystery series about Canadian private

eye Johnny Canuck, and more. He married another Canadian, also a writer, and remained in England, churning out books. His reputation as one of the fastest writers in the business once led a BBC television program to film him as he produced a new book-length work from first line to finish. Moffat completed the novel in less than a week. It went on sale the following month.

The Richard Allen books were Moffat's greatest achievement and clearly made a genuine connection with his readers. Through the years he received thousands of fan letters from skinheads and would-be skins and other alienated youth. The original editions and reprints of the books, long out of print, became collectors' items and difficult to find. A skinhead cult revival brought the spotlight back to Allen/Moffat in the early 1990s. The Scottish publication *Skinhead Times* determinedly prepared to return the entire Allen opus to print, and a grateful James Moffat, then in his seventies, and sounding more like a true believer in the cult than in the past, vowed to write a new sequel, *Skinhead Return*. Alas, the ravages of decades of alcohol and tobacco had caught up with him, and the 19th Richard Allen book was never to be.

Works

Boot Boys (1972); *Demo* (1971); *Dragon Skins* (1975); *Glam* (1973); *Knuckle Girls* (1977); *Mod Rule* (1980); *Punk Rock* (1977); *Skinhead* (1970); *Skinhead Escapes* (1972); *Skinhead Farewell* (1974); *Skinhead Girls* (1972); *Smoothies* (1973); *Sorts* (1973); *Suedehead* (1971); *Teeny Bopper Idol* (1973); *Terrace Terrors* (1975); *Top Gear Skin* (1973); *Trouble for Skinhead* (1973)

Allison, Clyde (William H. Knoles)

(?–1972) *Also wrote as: Clyde Ames*

The subject of a posthumous cult following for his once obscure, now hotly collected paperback spy spoofs of the mid-to-late 1960s, Clyde Allison, the pseudonym of William H. Knoles, ranks among the more talented and tragic figures to come through the paperback jungle. Knoles immigrated—from where we do not know—to New York City in the '50s to find his way in the writing game. Like many

others come to town with a similar goal in that period—Donald Westlake, Damon Knight, Lawrence Block, and others—Knoles found work at the Scott Meredith Agency, at the time a kind of literary chop shop that supplied standing orders for pulp fiction to some of the new paperback houses and fiction digests. When the agency did not have an appropriate client's manuscript in hand, the aspiring writers on staff were encouraged to contribute. Knoles, like Westlake and the others, began fulfilling assignments for various adventure and erotic magazines, and later graduated to writing softcore sex novels for such publishers as Midwood Books.

Knoles, unlike some of the better-known Meredith authors, never found his way to more upscale assignments. According to the paperback historian Lynn Munroe, who discovered much of what is known about the mysterious writer, Knoles was manic-depressive and his mental health problems no doubt hindered his attempts to break out of the sleazy paperback ghetto, despite his apparent talent. But Knoles would achieve greatness—in a sense—without ever leaving the hack/schlock underground. After already turning out perhaps as many as 100 sexy softcover novels—the exact number of titles in his bibliography remains a mystery—Knoles began to write the books that would earn him his reputation. Working for an obscure sex fiction publisher called Ember Books, he created the "0008" series, outrageous, psychedelic, self-conscious and very funny spoofs of Ian FLEMING's 007/James Bond series and the whole super-spy craze, which, in 1965, was just starting to reach its peak. From the first, *Our Man from Sadisto* ("MEET 0008—PEERLESS LOVER, FEARLESS KILLER!"), the 0008 books featured sex, spies, supervillains, wisecracks, sex, torture, orgies, time travel, secret weapons, more torture, more sex, and an assortment of satiric characters and an unexpectedly knowing and self-reflexive wit, all wrapped up in covers featuring an assortment of buxom beauties in shredded go-go girl duds and skintight Emma Peel-ish bodysuits. Allison lampooned and referenced the new, instantly clichéd milieu of espionage sensationalism in a way that other writers and publishers tried (in similar series such as *The Lady from L.U.S.T.*) and that surfaced

on film in the leering Matt Helm series and the chaotic film version of Fleming's *Casino Royale*, but Allison did it better than any of them. The books were funny, hip, and sexy as hell.

Twenty of the books were written and published in the space of four years, with as many publishing imprints, all small time. In 1969, a variant on the 0008s appeared, *Gorgonzola Won't You Please Come Home?* ("A Wacky Spy Thriller") under the name Clyde Ames, published by a higher profile paperback house, Lancer Books, which might have signaled the beginning of the author's discovery and ascent from hack-writer hell.

But that was not to be. Knoles's depressive state returned, this time for good. Late in 1972, he killed himself with a razor to his throat.

The delightful 0008 books are now some of the most sought-after vintage paperbacks, and in fine condition they may command a higher price than the author was originally paid to write them.

Works

0008 Meets Gnatman (1966); 0008 Meets Modesta Blaze (1966); Bang the Doll Slowly (1969); *Desdemona Affair* (1966); *Desert Damsels* (1968); *For Your Sighs Only* (1966); *From Rapture with Love* (1966); *Gamefinger* (1966); *Go Go Sadisto* (1966); *Have Nude, Will Travel* (1962); *Ice Maiden* (1967); *Lost Bomb* (1966); *Lustful Ones* (1960); *Merciless Mermaids, The* (1966); *Million Dollar Mistress* (1960); *Mondo Sadisto* (1966); *Nautipuss* (1965); *Our Girl from Mephisto* (1965); *Our Man from Sadisto* (1965); *Platypussy* (1968); *Roburta the Conqueress* (1966); *Sadisto Royale* (1966); *Sex Peddlers* (1961); *Sex Ray, The* (1966); *Sim Funnel, The* (1967)

As Clyde Ames:

Gorgonzola Won't You Please Come Home? (1967)

Alter, Robert Edmond

(1925–1965)

Alter is remembered chiefly for two novels, paperback originals from the 1960s. *Swamp Sister* (1961) and *Carny Kill* (1966), both Fawcett Gold Medal books played out against classic low-class milieus of sleazy softcover fiction in the early 1950s: the southern swamp in the first and the traveling car-

nival in the latter. Indeed, the books can be seen as out-of-sync hangovers from the earlier era, particularly *Swamp Sister*, almost a nostalgia item from the years when rural vixens were briefly considered major erotic icons and numerous paperback pros chronicled their misadventures. But if Alter seemed to have missed the heyday of his subgenres, the two books were at least excellent examples of their benighted kind. *Swamp Sister* centers on the hot-to-trot denizens of a slimy backwoods community, the alluring young woman of the title, the boy who covets her, and the lost fortune in cash buried in an aircraft crashed in the swamp and surrounded by alligators and deadly snakes. In *Carny Kill*, a drifter and ex-con turns up at his ex-wife's carnival knife-throwing act at just the wrong time; the owner of the carnival, the ex's new husband, gets a knife buried in his chest and the cops think the former hubby did it. *Swamp Sister* is good, sleazy fun, and *Carny Kill* tells its tale in a vivid, suspenseful style that brings to mind similar work by Fredric BROWN and Cornell WOOLRICH.

Alter's other novels include *Red Fathom*, (1967) a good underwater-treasure story with vivid diving scenes; *Thieves Like Us* (1968), an archaeological adventure set in Egypt; *Path to Savagery*, (1969) an apocalyptic science fiction story; and *The Trail of Billy the Kid* (1975), a dramatized account of the life of the western outlaw. Alter also wrote children's novels and sold stories to some of the top magazines of his day, including the *Saturday Evening Post*. Alter died suddenly at the age of 40, and some of his later works were published for the first time many years after his death.

Works

Carny Kill (1966); *Path to Savagery* (1969); *Red Fathom* (1967); *Swamp Sister* (1961); *Thieves Like Us* (1968); *Trail of Billy the Kid, The* (1975)

Ambler, Eric

(1909–1998) *Also wrote as: Eliot Reed*

If Eric Ambler was not the inventor of the "modern" spy novel—that title must go to the English novelist Somerset Maugham (1874–1965) for a single, autobiographical work, *Ashenden*—he was

certainly among the first few authors to establish the boundaries and possibilities for such a genre. Sporting left-wing sympathies (and, after World War II, a jaded middle-of-the-road political stance), he brought an iconoclastic sensibility to what had been a hidebound form of popular fiction, either mindless action and intrigue or earnest patriotic adventure. He was also, not incidentally, a writer of great skill and wit, whose best work was colorful, insidiously amusing, and ineffably cool. Ambler, whose first novel was published in 1936, and who was still working into the 1990s, bridged the gap between the old world spy fiction of E. Phillips OPPENHEIM and his ilk—Riviera casinos, tuxedoed Secret Service agents, mysterious trans-European train journeys and Balkan border crossings—and the more complex and cynical espionage stories of the cold war and beyond, most popularly represented by the works of John le Carré. Ambler shared his historical and literary position with fellow Englishman Graham Greene: both writers favored colorful, exotic settings, anti-establishment heroes, an iconoclastic outsider's perspective, and an atmosphere of general seediness. But Ambler was more generous, funnier and less pretentious (feeling no need to label his entertaining books as “entertainments” the way Greene did), and his sharp, lucid prose was just as good.

Born in London and educated at London University, Ambler first considered a career in engineering, then pursued a burgeoning flair for words as a copywriter at an advertising agency. He had moved up to creative director by the time of the publication of his first two novels, *The Dark Frontier* (1936) and *Uncommon Danger* (1937), (brought out in America by Alfred A. Knopf as *Background to Danger*). These were followed by *Epitaph for a Spy* (1938) and *Cause For Alarm*, (1938) like the first two, suspense novels with continental settings. With a third and fourth novel published, Ambler had enjoyed sufficient success to quit the advertising grind and devote all his time to writing novels. Already, Ambler had separated himself from the English spy story traditions. He chose to stay away from professional espionage agent heroes, preferring ordinary people caught up in strange circumstances, or footloose characters (journalists, writers, adventurers). He also showed

little of the jingoistic, “Rule, Britannia” spirit of the earlier specialists. His cold, hard prose and wryly cynical attitude were closer in style and spirit to the American hard-boiled fiction of Dashiell HAMMETT than to Oppenheim, Sapper, author of the Bulldog Drummond stories, or others in the old guard.

The highlight of Ambler's early years as a novelist was *The Mask of Dimitrios* (1939, retitled *A Coffin for Dimitrios* in the United States), an original and entertaining dissection of a colorful international criminal. More complex and ambitious than Ambler's previous works, the story advanced on two planes—the investigations of Latimer, an English academic turned detective novelist (author of *A Bloody Shovel*), as he pieces together the biography of a supposedly dead Dimitrios, following a trail of swindle, espionage, and murder from Istanbul through eastern Europe to France, and the elaborate recollections of Dimitrios's friends and enemies that Latimer meets along the way. In the end, in a slowly anticipated but blissfully satisfying plot development, the two planes come together, with Latimer facing down a figure seemingly back from the dead: Dimitrios himself. The story climaxes in a welter of suspense, a final blackmail plot, a fight to the death, and two blood-soaked bodies in a back-alley Paris apartment. Ambler concludes with a signature irony: like an appalled Alice backing away from all she has seen down the rabbit hole, Latimer flees the secret world he has uncovered (the world of ruthless criminals, ubiquitous corruption, global events controlled by international corporations and paid assassins) and returns to the comforting unreality of his next cozy mystery plot, another gentle murder in the country vicarage.

The influence of *Dimitrios*'s plot and structure could be felt in other works through the years. Graham Greene's *The Third Man* would feature another criminal mastermind, Harry Lime, presumed dead but “resurrected.” The way Ambler constructs Dimitrios's life story would be repeated on film in *Citizen Kane* (and Orson Welles would then codirect and star in an adaptation of Ambler's *Journey into Fear*). The intricate structure of Ambler's *Dimitrios* would soon become a standard method for telling the story in assorted '40s film

noirs, where flashbacks, convoluted plots, and sociopathic protagonists became the norm. In fact, the Hollywood film version of Ambler's novel, using the American title, starred Peter Lorre (as Latimer) and Sydney Greenstreet, two film noir stalwarts first teamed in *The Maltese Falcon* (1941).

The annual Ambler releases were interrupted after 1940 by World War II. Ambler entered the service and became an important figure in the army's cinema unit, documenting the war and producing propaganda for the Allies. The contacts and experience he gained would lead to screen writing work for British and American movie companies. His credits include scripts for the films *The Magic Box*, *The Purple Plain*, and *A Night To Remember* (the British film about the *Titanic* disaster). Ambler returned to novel-writing after the war, but his comeback novels (*Judgment on Deltchev* and *The Schirmer Inheritance*), contemporary tales of intrigue, lacked the old zest. More readable were a series of light suspense adventures Ambler wrote with Charles Rodda under the pen name of Eliot Reed. *The Night-Comers* (also published as *State of Siege*), Ambler's first novel set in the Far East, was a return to form, with a suspenseful account of an Englishman trapped in a Southeast Asian capital during a coup d'état. *Passage of Arms* was even better, with a more intricate plot and big cast of colorful characters in a story about gun-running and revolution in Malaya and environs.

Ambler's most enjoyable postwar work was a comical adventure caper with no cold war angst or international crises whatever. The narrator is Arthur Abdel Simpson, a hapless and hopelessly untrustworthy Anglo-Egyptian roustabout, part-time tour guide, pimp, and pornographer. In Greece, Simpson not quite innocently comes into the employ of a gang plotting to rob the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul. Simpson, in the dark, thinks he is working for terrorists and is forced to be a secret agent for the Turkish police, before ultimately joining the jewel thieves in their ingenious heist. The wonderful book became a superb movie, *Topkapi*, with Peter Ustinov as Ambler's "hero."

Simpson returned in a single sequel, *Dirty Story* (the title refers to an official description of Arthur's life: "one long, dirty story"). This was a

less clever but equally enjoyable read: the narrator stumbles out of his Mediterranean stomping ground and ends up a reluctant mercenary sent to stage a coup in a small African nation. In the same jauntily cynical frame of mind, Ambler produced his next novel, and his last great work, *The Intercom Conspiracy*, the story of a muckraking newsletter published in Switzerland that is used as a front for extorting payoffs from foreign intelligence agencies. The unwitting nemesis of the world's espionage communities is another of Ambler's seedy, amusingly unlikable protagonists, another in the author's gallery of unsavory journalists and writers; the book also left room for the unexpected return of Dimitrios's old pursuer, mystery writer Charles Latimer, who has once again uncovered a good story, although this one costs him dearly—he is dispatched by an unfortunate "accident" on a roadside in France.

There was a gradual slackening of the pace and tension in the works that followed, but whatever the books' individual merits, for Ambler's fans they all offered a welcome return visit to a world—of glamorous and/or exotic settings beset by intrigue, revolution, corruption, colorfully populated by shabby antiheroes, ruthless villains, terrorists thieves, dictators—that was as identifiably and irresistibly Ambler's as the London of Arthur Conan Doyle and the Los Angeles of Raymond CHANDLER.

Works

Ability to Kill and Other Pieces, The (1963); *Care of Time, The* (1981); *Cause for Alarm* (1938); *Dark Frontier, The* (1936); *Dirty Story* (1967); *Doctor Frigo* (1974); *Epitaph for a Spy* (1938); *Intercom Conspiracy, The* (1969); *Journey into Fear* (1940); *Judgment on Deltchev* (1951); *Kind of Anger, A* (1964); *Levanter, The* (1972); *Light of Day, The* (1962); *Mask of Dimitrios, The* (U.S. title: *A Coffin for Dimitrios*) (1939); *Night Comers, The* (U.S. title: *State of Siege*) (1956); *Passage of Arms* (1959); *Schirmer Inheritance, The* (1953); *Send No More Roses* (1997); *Uncommon Danger* (U.S. title: *Background to Danger*) (1937)

As Eliot Reed:

Charter to Danger (1954); *Maras Affair, The* (1953); *Passport to Panic* (1958); *Skytip* (1950); *Tender to Danger* (U.K.: *Tender to Moonlight*) (1951)

Ambler, Dail (Betty Mabel Lilian Williams)
(1919–1974) *Also wrote as: Danny Spade*

This obscure hard-boiled novelist deserves greater acclaim as a rare female holding her own amidst an otherwise fraternal order of hack crime fiction writers in postwar Britain. Under the Ambler and then Danny Spade pen names, she churned out a series of tougher-than-tough detective novels about a hard-drinking, fist-flying, frequently-screwing Manhattan private eye, first-person narrator Spade—perhaps the long-lost brother of Dashiell HAMMETT’s Sam Spade? The stories, and the style, were less HAMMETT than Spillane gone nutty, crammed with sex, violence, and a jolly good try at the slang of American mean streets.

Born Betty Mabel Lilian Williams in Aldershot (information uncovered by England’s ace literary sleuth Steve Holland), she appears to have had a lively early career as a Fleet Street journalist and roving correspondent, including a possible stay in Hollywood, where she may have taken a screenwriting gig or two before returning to London and the world of the “mushroom jungle” (the term for the United Kingdom’s postwar pulp paperback industry). By 1950 she was comfortably ensconced with Scion Ltd., one of the leading purveyors of Brit lit trash, producing one or more Spade novels every month. Possessed of striking looks and platinum hair, Williams/Dail’s author photo might have come direct from her paperback cover illustrations of voluptuous vixens in low-cut gowns. In the ’50s her books, with such titles as *Waterfront Rat*, *Honey, You Slay Me*, and *White Curves and Black Chiffon*, came out like clockwork, at Scion until a dispute with the law put the raunchy publisher on the skids, and then at Milestone.

When, in the mid-’50s, the pulp paperback boom in the United Kingdom dissolved in a sea of arrests, obscenity trials, and bankruptcies, Danny Spade retired and Dail Ambler began working in the local film industry. Her screenplay credits include at least one notable work, *Beat Girl* (1960), directed by the singular Herbert Greville. The film is a slang-packed look at London’s beatnik scene that *Time Out* magazine called “fascinating partly for the sheer prurience of its content.” After many years of hectic creativity, Dail Ambler moved to

the Surrey countryside, her byline thereafter appearing rarely until her death at the age of 55.

Works

Calling Mr. Spade (1952); *Curtain of Glass, A* (1954); *Dame Plays Rough, The* (1950); *Danny Spade Sees Red* (1954); *Desert Guerrillas* (1971); *Dial Death* (1951); *Don’t Die On Me* (1951); *Duet for Two Guns* (1952); *Girl Called Coffee, A* (1954); *Gun for Sale, A* (1952); *Hi Jack* (1953); *Honey, You Slay Me* (1953); *How Far Can You Go* (1953); *It Had to Happen* (1948); *Johnny Gets His* (1952); *Kiss Me as You Go* (1953); *Lady Likes to Sin* (1953); *Lady Says When, The* (1952); *Not Killed—Just Dead* (1952); *Nothing to Hide* (1953); *She Liked It That Way* (1950); *Silk and Cordite* (1951); *Spades Are Trumps* (1951); *Strong Arm Stuff* (1952); *Three Men for the Job* (1975); *Twice as Dead* (1953); *Virgin Collector, The* (1971); *Waterfront Rat* (1951); *What’s with You* (1952); *White Curves and Black Chiffon* (1953); *Wildcat* (1952); *You Slay Me* (1951)

Anderson, Edward

(1905–1969)

Anderson was one of the writers of the 1930s who found inspiration and literary success in the travails of the Great Depression. His two novels, published within a couple of years of each other, remain among the small body of work that appears to have truly captured the feelings of the American underclass in those dark days: the aimlessness, resentment, and desperation that left many wandering the country as hoboes, and some turning to a life of crime.

Born in Weatherford, Texas, Anderson grew up in various towns in that state and in Oklahoma. He began working for newspapers as a teenager, and by the time he was 25 he had held jobs on about two dozen papers around the Southwest. For a time he settled down at his parents’ house in Abilene, Texas, where a neighbor and friend, John Knox, a busy pulp writer, gave him pointers on writing and peddling stories. He sold his first piece of fiction, a prizefight story called “The Little Spic,” to one of the sports pulps. Anderson then hit the road, spending a year as a hobo, riding the rails, begging for handouts, eating in soup

kitchens, dodging the police. His experiences resulted in a huge stack of notes that slowly became a novel called *Hungry Men*, the picaresque adventures of Acel Stecker, an out-of-work musician—his aimless hoboing on freight trains, his odd jobs, his love affair with an unemployed New York typist. Anderson's flat, hard-boiled style perfectly captured the coarsening effects of hard times, as in the couple's blunt courtship:

"You had much experience, honey?"

"Sure."

"I mean, you know the kind of experience I mean."

"Sure."

"I mean sex experience."

"Sure."

While waiting to sell *Hungry Men* to a publisher, Anderson settled in New Orleans and began producing "true crime" stories. The true crime magazines, like *True Detective*, *Master Detective*, and a dozen or so others that thrived in the '30s and '40s, were a nonfiction alternative to the mystery and detective pulps. They featured the same sort of lurid, oil-painted covers of voluptuous women in distress, but inside the stories were held to be strictly factual, narrative retellings of actual crimes, mostly murders, with real and staged photographs as illustrations. With his wife helping him as researcher, Anderson banged out dozens of the grisly tales, including "Twin Trunk Murders," "The Mystery of the Man with the Cardboard Box," and "Uncovering the Vice Cesspool in New Orleans." He would meet many interesting and unusual persons in the course of his true-detective work, including Louisiana's official hangman, who had trained for his job by hanging his own pet dog.

Anderson's idea for a second novel grew, like the first one, out of the desperate climate of the depression. It was a story about bank robbers, the kind of young people like Bonnie and Clyde and Pretty Boy Floyd, who had turned to crime because there seemed to be no other way to survive, and whose exploits made them folk heroes among the poor and dispossessed. In *Hungry Men*, Anderson had already expressed the sort of sentiment the second book would address: "The difference

between a bank president and a bank bandit is that the robbery of the banker is legal. The bandit has more guts."

Anderson already knew quite a bit about crime from his journalism, but to give the story the kind of intimate, firsthand detail of his first book, he turned to a cousin in Texas who was doing time for armed robbery and who generously shared the secrets of his unlawful experience. Anderson wrote of a gang of bandits—Bowie, Chicamaw and T-Dub—roaming the Texas-Oklahoma byways, small-time criminals who dream of robbing enough for a small grubstake and money to pay for their burial. The novel was titled *Thieves Like Us* (referring to the robbers' philosophical belief that policemen and bankers are essentially crooks, too), and would turn out to be a memorable piece of unconventional Americana, a synthesis of the proletarian novel and the hard-boiled crime story, with wonderful tough-but-tender dialogue and a lyrical evocation of a dusty, wasted Southwest. At first, however, the author had trouble finding a publisher for it, and considered rewriting it for the true-detective magazines.

Awaiting the novel's publication (in 1937 by Frederick A. Stokes) Anderson managed to secure a screenwriting job in Hollywood. He passed some time in the movie capital, working for Paramount and Warner Bros., but did not make the grade and was soon back looking for work. He returned to newspapering while trying to find the material, and the energy, to write another book, but he was on a downhill slide. In the '40s Anderson's philosophical leanings seemed to take a turn away from the pro-prole stance of his '30s fiction. He alienated employers and acquaintances with his sympathies for Germany's Nazi leader, Adolf Hitler, and later espoused virulently anti-Semitic views, before joining the cult religious movement known as Swedenborgianism. His alcoholism and sometimes bizarre behavior made him increasingly unemployable even on the small-town papers where he looked for work. A well-received film adaptation of *Thieves Like Us*, directed by Nicholas Ray and released in 1949 under the title of *They Live By Night*, and subsequent paperback reprintings of the novel, did little to resurrect his name. He died in obscurity, working at a Texas border town paper.

Works

Hungry Men (1935); *Thieves Like Us* (1937)

Andrews, V. C. (Virginia Cleo Andrews)
(1924–1986)

The Emily Brontë of the MTV generation, V. C. Andrews has attracted a devoted and usually young following for her strange, perverse stories of madness, revenge, horror, family curses, and eternal love. *Flowers in the Attic*, Andrews's first published novel, appeared in 1979, and became almost an instant cult classic, casting a spell on countless readers who were both fascinated and appalled. The book read like a cross between a Grimm fairy tale and an episode of *The Jerry Springer Show*, had such a forum for the grotesque love affair and dysfunctional family existed then. The novel concerns the tragic and sociopathic Dollanganger family. A widowed mother with her four young children in tow is forced to return to Foxworth Hall, the grand manor house of her wealthy parents. Obeying the irrefutable logic of the Gothic tradition, the widow and her own horrid mother conspire to lock the kids away in the attic to keep their vicious grandfather from knowing of their existence (and so the mother will not be cut off from her father's money). The greed and inherited psychosis of the kids' mother turns their temporary imprisonment into a permanent condition as she comes to enjoy her pampered existence. Years of abuse and neglect follow, times of horror, fear, death, and a sexual coming of age that results in a loving—yet damning—act of incest.

No great literary stylist, and with a story line that left some critics repulsed or contemptuous, Andrews nevertheless connected deeply with millions. To the susceptible, Andrews had endowed her cruel nightmare with an emotional force that haunted many readers. *Flowers in the Attic* and the sequels that followed found their largest audience among young teens. Like Stephen King, Andrews was an adult whose fears and fantasies made a particularly direct connection with the adolescent mind.

Five volumes comprised the Dollanganger sequel, including the prequel, *Garden of Shadows*,

which explained the peculiar events that led to the ugly familial relationships in *Flowers in the Attic*. All of the author's work played on similar motifs or recurring obsessions: family, disintegration, incest, promiscuity, greed. Andrews published seven novels in all, and had written notes and outlines for many more when she died. Not many people had been aware that V. C. was a woman, Virginia Cleo, nor that she had had a life of tragedy and confinement that echoed some of the drama of her characters. Andrews suffered a fall as a 15-year-old girl and remained on crutches or in a wheelchair for the rest of her life. She lost her father when she was 20, lived with her mother, and never married. Writing for many years without success, she had piled up a large number of rejected manuscripts before *Flowers in the Attic* was accepted for publication.

Andrews died of cancer in 1986, a brief seven years after she became a published and popular author. With such a rabid fan base for the deceased, family members worked with her publishers to continue producing fiction under the V. C. Andrews name. A hired hand, Andrew Neiderman, was assigned the task of writing new novels that captured the gothic modern romanticism and shocking melodrama of the originals. The new books sold well, but the hardcore Andrews devotees tended to deride the work of the person they referred to as "the Ghost Writer." These readers felt that Neiderman could emulate Andrews's style and shocking plots but not her soul, the peculiar vulnerability, empathy, and dread that touched so many fans. Andrews herself, in a rare public statement, spoke to the strangely satisfying and uplifting effect her books and characters had on many readers: "[The characters] are wounded, but live to struggle on, and before my book is over, they have suffered perhaps, grown, become stronger undoubtedly, and have learned to cope, no matter what the circumstances."

Works

Dark Angel (1986); *Dawn* (1990); *Flowers in the Attic* (1979); *Gates of Paradise* (1989); *Heaven* (1985); *Hidden Jewel* (1995); *If There Be Thorns* (1981); *My Sweet Audrina* (1982); *Petals on the Wind* (1980); *Seeds of Yesterday* (1984); *Web of Dreams* (1990)

Ghost written by Andrew Neiderman:

All that Glitters (1995); *Brooke* (1998); *Butterfly* (1998); *Cat* (1999); *Crystal* (1998); *Darkest House* (1993); *End of the Rainbow* (2001); *Eye of the Storm* (2000); *Fallen Hearts* (1988); *Garden of Shadows* (1987); *Heart Song* (1997); *Jade* (1999); *Lightning Strikes* (2000); *Melody* (1996); *Midnight Whispers* (1992); *Misty* (1999); *Music in the Night* (1998); *Olivia* (1999); *Pearl in the Mist* (1994); *Rain* (2000); *Raven* (2000); *Ruby* (1994); *Runaways* (1998); *Secrets of the Morning* (1991); *Star* (1999); *Tarnished Gold* (1996); *Twilight's Child* (1992); *Unfinished Symphony* (1997)

Archer, Jeffrey

(1940–)

A colorful figure with a high public profile in Great Britain, Jeffrey Archer's life—a heady mix of wealth, ambition, literary and political success, and scandal—resembles nothing so much as the overblown curriculum vitae of the hero of a trashy best-seller by Harold ROBBINS, Jackie COLLINS . . . or Archer himself. He has been at various times, and often concurrently, a millionaire businessman, a writer of best-selling pop fiction, the youngest elected member of Parliament, a life peer with a seat in the House of Lords, a flashy art collector, a telegenic media pundit and controversial talking head, the star of headline-making sexual and business controversies, and a convict.

Archer's youthful doings were chronicled by his newspaper columnist mother Lola Cook Archer in her "Over the Teacups: News and Jottings for Women" (Jeffrey was known as "Tuppence" in Mum's column). After receiving his degree—in sports education, ordinarily intended for future gym teachers—from Oxford, he was soon running a successful public relations company. At 29 the Conservative Archer won a seat in Parliament, but five years later he was compelled to give up his rising political position when he became attached to a major business scandal involving fraud and massive economic losses. To recoup his own great losses and to set the record straight, he wrote a novel about grand scale revenge with a background of international finance and embezzlement. Published in 1976, *Not a Penny More, Not a*

Penny Less, with a compellingly readable story line and a large cast of colorful and glamorous characters, was a best-seller in Britain and America.

What might have been a fluke became the beginning of Archer's career as a pop novelist with brand name appeal and one top-selling release after another. In addition to providing easily-consumed stories with crackling plotlines and strong characters, Archer understood the rising value of media savviness and personal promotion. He developed an alluring talk-show persona and exploitable subject matter that guaranteed plenty of publicity in print and on television, Archer's high profile had its downside. Critics and journalists took particular delight in ridiculing the high-handed Tory's pulp offerings. The reviewer in the *Guardian*, for instance, declared that "to call his characters cardboard was to insult the packaging industry."

Archer's second novel, *Shall We Tell the President?*, stirred controversy on two sides of the Atlantic for its "alternative" premise about "President Ted Kennedy" becoming the target of an assassin. In the best-sellers ahead, Archer would continue to make provocative use of real-life figures within his fictional premises, including press baron Rupert Murdoch in *The Fourth Estate* and an adoring portrait of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in *First Among Equals*.

He continued to hold political ambitions, but the prying tabloids and his own colorful personality worked against him. He won a much-ballyhooed libel trial against a London tabloid that had linked him in a cheap hotel fling with a prostitute, but this success became a disaster when he was found to have arranged for friends to give false testimony in the libel trial. Archer was sued for millions of pounds and drummed out of the Conservative Party—just at the time when the multitasking Englishman had been planning to run for mayor of London. Even more disastrously, he was convicted of perjury and sentenced to two years in prison.

Works

After Shock (1998); *As the Crow Flies* (1991); *Eleventh Commandment, The* (1998); *First Among Equals* (1984); *Fourth Estate, The* (1996); *Honor Among Thieves* (1993); *Kane and Abel* (1980); *Matter of Honor, A* (1986); *Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less* (1976); *Prodigal Daughter*,

The (1982); *Proprietors, The* (1996); *Quiver Full of Arrows, A* (1982); *Shall We Tell the President?* (1977); *Twist in the Tale, A* (1989)

Ard, William

(1922–1960) *Also wrote as: Benn Kerr, Jonas Ward*

In a 10-year fiction writing career that ended with his death from cancer at the age of 37, William Ard produced a large and strong body of work. Ard could write tough, he could write tender, and he could write lyrical. He held his own in the bustling, competitive world of 1950s genre writers, and if he did not quite reach the level of the greats of that time, he showed the potential to do just that. His private-eye heroes were as tough as Mickey SPILLANE's but had a rueful humanity worthy of Raymond CHANDLER. His lowlife urban settings were every bit as depressed and seedy as those of David GOODIS, and his vision of a corrupt world could be as corrosive as Jim THOMPSON's. In addition, and in contrast to his noirish detective fiction, Ard also wrote spare and beatific westerns and created one of the classic western heroes, Tom Buchanan.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Ard attended Admiral Farragut Naval Academy in Florida and took a degree from Dartmouth College before beginning a six-year stint as a copywriter for the Buchanan Advertising Agency and later for the New York division of Warner Bros. With the acceptance of his first novel, *The Perfect Frame*, published by Mill and Morrow in 1951, Ard happily quit his corporate job and began turning out novels at the pace of two to three per year. *The Perfect Frame* introduced Timothy Dane, Ard's archetypal Manhattan private eye, a tough ex-marine with a law degree. Six more Dane thrillers followed, including the gripping *Hell Is a City* (1955), in which Dane tries to protect a Puerto Rican boy who has saved his sister from rape by killing a vicious cop. A kind of noir anticipation of Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, (1987) *Hell* vividly details an almost entirely corrupt New York in which cops, journalists, and politicians exploit the incident for their own vicious purposes.

In addition to the Dane books, Ard wrote numerous stand-alone noir thrillers and several sleazy lowlife melodramas, some of them under pseudonyms. In 1956, Fawcett Gold Medal brought out Ard's first western, *The Name's Buchanan*, written under the pen name of Jonas Ward. Tom Buchanan (the name a tribute to Ard's old advertising agency) is a big, low-key, laughing drifter, from nowhere special, going nowhere in particular. In the first novel Ard cribbed from *Hell Is a City's* plotline, with Buchanan having to save a Mexican boy who has shot the powerful gringo who tried to rape his sister. Ard completed four more Buchanan novels before he died, but they were so popular and original that the publisher continued the series, assigning it to several other writers through the years (including John JAKES). The first book was filmed as *Buchanan Rides Alone* (1958), starring Randolph Scott and directed by Budd Boetticher; many consider the movie one of the best westerns of the '50s.

Works

All I Can Get (1959); *Cry Scandal* (1956); *Diary, The* (1952); *Don't Come Crying to Me* (1954); *Girl for Danny* (1953); *Hell Is a City* (1955); *Like Ice She Was* (1960); *Mr. Trouble* (1954); *Naked and the Innocent* (1960); *No Angels for Me* (1954); *Perfect Frame, The* (1951); *Private Party* (1953); *Root of His Evil* (1957), also published as *Deadly Beloved Sins of Billy Serene* (1960); *.38* (1952), also published as *You Can't Stop Me; When She Was Bad* (1960)

As Ben Kerr:

Blonde and Johnny Malloy, The (1958); *Club 17* (1957); *Damned if He Does* (1956); *Down I Go* (1955); *I Fear You Not* (1956); *Shakedown* (1952)

As Jonas Ward:

Buchanan Gets Mad (1958); *Buchanan Says No* (1957); *Name's Buchanan, The* (1956); *One Man Massacre* (1958)

Arsan, Emmanuelle (Marayat Bibidh Andriane)

(unknown)

One of the literary touchstones of the sexual revolution of the 1960s, *Emmanuelle* was a fictionalized

memoir by the wife of a French diplomat, an account of her sexual awakening and experimentation during her husband's tour of duty in the torrid zone of Bangkok, Thailand. "Emmanuelle Arsan" was in reality Marayat Andriane (née Bibidh), the daughter of a Thai ambassador, a sometime actress who had married a French diplomat named Andre Andriane. The couple had gone to Thailand as part of a French delegation from UNESCO, and it was there that Andriane presumably found the material with which to fill her pseudonymous, seductive work.

The author details what was offered as an authentic journey from uptight Parisienne to sexual adventuress, an odyssey that involves her initiation into the rites of public masturbation, lesbianism, voyeurism, group sex, and sexual masochism. The book was relentless in its ardor, with scene after gratuitous scene of orgiastic activity, some of it very strong stuff even in the 1960s. It was as clear-cut in its intent to arouse as any under-the-counter porn from the past, but *Emmanuelle* transcended the sleaziness and subtext of shame that clung to most traditional erotica. The author offered a playgirl philosopher's view of pleasure as a noble pursuit, explicating the notion that sex for pleasure alone, far from "bestial," was exactly what distinguished humankind from the animals, which have sex only for procreation. Written in a dreamy, sensuous style, like perfume ad copy gone out of control, aimed as much or more at the female reader as the male, *Emmanuelle* was a worldwide success and advanced the case for a more explicit sexual literature acceptable to the mainstream (although the book was frequently banned, including, for a time, in France, where President Charles de Gaulle was outraged not by the sexuality but by the unflattering portrait of French diplomats overseas). The book, with its upscale, jet-setting modern characters, philosophical amorality, and glamorous settings, anticipated and idealized the 1960s and 1970s subculture of upper-middle-class, wife-swapping "swingers," and helped to create the concept of "porno chic."

A film version, directed by Just Jaeckin and starring Dutch actress Sylvia Kristel, repeated the book's controversial reception and international appeal. The film's success spawned numerous se-

quels, only a few of them officially sanctioned (the producers of the unofficial entries getting around the copyright problem by spelling their heroine's name with one "m," as in *Emanuelle's Amazon Adventure*).

Works

Emmanuelle (1966)

Asimov, Isaac

(1920–1992) *Also wrote as: Paul French*

Isaac Asimov was born in Petrovichi, Russia, not long after the revolution, and arrived on American shores with his immigrant parents at age three. His brilliant mind and a burgeoning interest in science were apparent from a very young age. For the career that lay before him, Asimov's timing and precocity were perfectly matched—the mid-1920s was a period in the United States that saw great new developments in the world of science and in the birth of a genre of popular literature that would come to be known as science fiction (SF). Asimov's remarkable career encompassed the mastery of hard science—as a doctor and professor of biochemistry—and of its imaginative offshoot. Advanced to higher learning as a young teen, he received his master's degree from Columbia University at 21. After serving in the U.S. Army during World War II, Asimov earned his Ph.D. from Columbia at 28 (his doctoral thesis was titled "The Kinetics of the Reaction Inactivation of Tyrosinase During Its Catalyzing of the Aerobic Oxidation of Catechol"). By that time he was already a 10-year veteran contributor to the science fiction pulp magazines.

Asimov's first sale was a story called "Marooned Off Vesta," sold to *Amazing Stories* in 1939. Soon after that Asimov's own amazing qualities were discovered by John W. Campbell Jr., the highly respected young editor of the innovative and leading SF pulp *Astounding*, and the nurturer of much of the first generation of "hard" science fiction writers (whose fiction emphasized scientific principle over romance). *Astounding's* publication of "Nightfall" in 1940 caused a sensation among the magazine's readers and established Asimov's

name as one of the great new talents in the field. In the pages of *Astounding*, Asimov would write the Foundation stories, a staggering series stretching far into the future that took the outer-space adventure format to a new and altogether more complex level. Asimov would then make further innovations within his own groundbreaking series in the more humanistic volumes *Pebble in the Sky*, *The Stars Like Dust*, and *The Currents of Space*. The writer's intriguing robot stories (collected as *I, Robot*) and his propagation of the so-called laws of robotics were further evidence that Asimov's name on a magazine or book cover signaled to SF readers a guarantee of something different, thought-provoking, and fun to read.

In addition to his pulp and then paperback and hardcover science fiction, Asimov wrote SF aimed at young readers (some under his "Paul French" pen name), and wrote nonfiction books for various age groups on the study of science, philosophy, history, Shakespeare, astronomy, dinosaurs, ecology, the proper use of the slide rule, and sex (the pseudonymous *The Sensuous Dirty Old Man*)—to name but a sampling. On occasion he would cross genre lines, or blur them, to write crime fiction, or crime science fiction, as in *The Caves of Steel* which features a robot detective. He was also a prodigious editor and anthologist, and for some years a science fiction digest magazine bore his name. With a near-constant supply of books to be publicized, the writer was a ubiquitous guest on television shows for decades. For several generations of Americans, Asimov, with his egghead enthusiasms, untamed hair, and heavy grey muttonchops, was the embodiment of the eccentric, brilliant man of science and the best known representative—the public face—of science fiction itself.

Works

STORIES

"Belief" (1953); "Black Friar of the Flame" (1942); "Blind Alley" (1945); "Breeds There a Man?" (1951); "Button Button" (1953); "Callistan Menace, The" (1940); "Catch That Rabbit" (1944); "Christmas on Ganymede" (1942); "C-Shute" (1951); "Darwinian Poolroom" (1950); "Day of the Hunters" (1950); "Death Sentence" (1943);

"Deep, The" (1952); "Escape" (1945); "Everest" (1953); "Evidence" (1946); "Files" (1953); "Fun They Had, The" (1951); "Green Patches" (1950); "Half-Breed" (1940); "Half Breeds on Venus" (1940); "Hazing, The" (1942); "Heredity" (1941); "History" (1941); "Homo Sol" (1940); "Hostess" (1951); "Imaginary, The" (1942); "In a Good Cause" (1951); "Inevitable Conflict, The" (1950); "Kid Stuff" (1953); "Legal Rites" (1950); "Liar" (1941); "Little Lost Robot" (1947); "Little Man on the Subway, The" (1950); "Magnificent Possession, The" (1940); "Marooned Off Vesta" (1939); "Monkey's Finger, The" (1953); "Mother Earth" (1949); "Nightfall" (1941); "Nobody Here But" (1953); "No Connection" (1948); "Not Final" (1941); "Reason" (1941); "Red Queen's Race, The" (1949); "Ring Around the Sun" (1940); "Robbie" (1940); "Robot AL-76 Goes Astray" (1942); "Runaround" (1942); "Sally" (1953); "Satisfaction Guaranteed" (1951); "Secret Sense, The" (1941); "Shah Guido G." (1951); "Super Neutron" (1941); "Time Pussy" (1942); "Trends" (1939); "Victory Unintentional" (1942); "Weapon, The" (1942); "Weapon Too Dreadful to Use, The" (1939); "Youth" (1952)

BOOKS

Asimov's Mysteries (1968); *Asimov's Sherlockian Limericks* (1978); *Bicentennial Man and Other Stories* (1976); *Buy Jupiter and Other Stories* (1975); *Caves of Steel, The* (1954); *Complete Robot, The* (1983); *Currents of Space, The* (1952); *David Starr: Spaceranger* (1952); *Death Dealers, The* (1958); *Earth Is Room Enough* (1957); *Edge of Tomorrow, The* (1985); *End of Eternity, The* (1955); *Fantastic Voyage* (1966); *Fantastic Voyage II* (1987); *Forward the Foundation* (1993); *Foundation* (1951); *Foundation and Earth* (1986); *Foundation and Empire* (1952); *Foundation's Edge* (1982); *Gods Themselves, The* (1972); *Good Taste* (1976); *Have You Seen These?* (1974); *Heavenly Host, The* (1975); *I, Asimov: A Memoir* (1994); *I, Robot* (1950); *In Joy Still Felt* (1980); *In Memory Yet Green* (1979); *Lecherous Limericks* (1975); *Like Dust* (1951); *Limericks, Too Gross* (1978); *Lucky Starr and the Big Sun of Mercury* (1956); *Lucky Starr and the Moons of Jupiter* (1957); *Lucky Starr and the Oceans of Venus* (1954); *Lucky Starr and the Pirates of the Asteroids* (1953); *Lucky Starr and the Rings of Saturn* (1958); *Martian Way and Other Stories, The* (1955, 1982); *More Lecherous Limericks* (1976); *More Tales of the Black Widowers* (1976); *Murder at the ABA* (1976); *Naked Sun, The* (1957); *Nemesis* (1989); *Nightfall* (1990); *Nightfall and Other Sto-*

ries (1969); *Nine Tomorrows: Tales of the Near Future* (1959); *Norby, the Mixed-Up Robot* (1983); *Norby and the Court Jester* (1993); *Norby and the Invaders* (1985); *Norby and the Lost Princess* (1985); *Norby and the Oldest Dragon* (1990); *Norby and the Queen's Necklace* (1987); *Norby and Yobo's Great Adventure* (1989); *Norby Down to Earth* (1988); *Norby's Other Secret* (1984); *Pebble in the Sky* (1950); *Positronic Man, The* (1993); *Prelude to Foundation* (1988); *Rest of the Robots, The* (1964); *Robots and Empire* (1985); *Robots of Dawn, The* (1983); *Second Foundation* (1953); *Sensuous Dirty Old Man, The* (1971); *Stars, The* (1951); *Still More Lecherous Limericks* (1977); *Tales of the Black Widowers* (1974); *Through a Glass, Clearly* (1967); *Winds of Change and Other Stories, The* (1983); *Yours, Isaac Asimov* (1995)

Avallone, Michael

(1924–1999) *Also wrote as: Nick Carter, Troy Conway, Priscilla Dalton, Dorothea Nile, Edwina Noone, Vance Stanton, Sidney Stuart*

Avallone published hundreds of paperback originals in his long and bumpy career, everything from a hard-boiled detective series to assorted gothics, spy stories, nurse novels, erotica, juveniles, horror stories, science fiction, a driving manual for teenagers, movie trivia quiz books, and novelizations of such movies as *Shock Corridor* and *A Bullet for Pretty Boy* and such television shows as *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *The Girl from U.N.C.L.E.*, *Hawaii Five-O*, *Mannix*, and *The Felony Squad*—all of it turned out at white-hot speed, in some cases in less than a week. He crowned himself “The Fastest Typewriter in the East,” a sobriquet that unfortunately brought to mind the old punch line, “That’s not writing, that’s typing.” High-speed key pounding and concomitant facile imagination were both Avallone’s great asset and his handicap. Avallone created an often loopy fiction that transcended the niceties of grammar, logic, realism, or common sense. At his most unconstrained and subliterate, his work bore comparison to the slaphappy writings of Harry Stephen KEELER and the hard-boiled unrealities of Robert Leslie BELLEM, comically overblown, awkwardly personalized, zipping along on its own private wavelength. At his best he was a fertile pro who delivered a good read and never condescended

to any assignment no matter how unpromising—in fact, Avallone’s vibrant self-regard tended to elevate all of his work, and in conversation he could discuss his artistic intentions in one of his Partridge Family novels (based on the family sitcom of the ’70s) with the detail and fervor of a Shakespeare scholar annotating Hamlet.

A New Yorker born into a large, voluble family, Avallone grew up under tough conditions in the Great Depression. He was a dedicated moviegoer and a reader of the pulp magazines, with a particular fondness for the “hero pulps” starring the Shadow, the Spider, and Doc Savage. He was also devoted to the adventure novels of earlier years, especially Alexandre Dumas and his musketeers, and daydreamed of an adventurous life for himself as a spy or an FBI agent. Avallone served in the army in World War II and came out a sergeant and a decorated hero. He had been writing bits and pieces all along and kept a detailed diary throughout his time in the service. He worked at odd jobs in New York until he published his first novel at the age of 29. *The Tall Dolores* (1953) was the initial case from the files of Ed Noon, a tough, jaunty, humane private eye and an obsessed movie buff (the author’s close identification with his creation would become increasingly apparent as more Noon books appeared). Subsequent Noon adventures were published at the rate of one or two a year. For unknown reasons, the series bounced around from one paperback publisher to another, and two of the novels—*The Case of the Violent Virgin* and *The Case of the Bouncing Betty*—were published together as an Ace double edition (two novels printed back to back in a single edition). Avallone continued the series for the rest of his life, and there may have been some manuscripts, in later decades, that never found publication. Noon was originally a rather straightforward variation on the classic pulp private eye as well as the best-selling first-person narrations of Mike Hammer by Mickey SPILLANE. As the series developed, though, it became increasingly original and eccentric, filled with nutso characters and plot devices. Noon himself became an unlikely sometime-operative for the president of the United States with a direct hot line to the White House, and was sent off on unlikely top

secret assignments like the one in *The Hot Body*, in which Noon has to stop a virtual Jackie Kennedy ex-First Lady from defecting to Castro's Cuba. As delineated by bibliophiles like Bill Pronzini, Avallone's peculiar approach to storytelling could be breathtaking, full of unfortunate similes, strange sentence structure, bad jokes and puns, and undigested political rhetoric and cultural rants.

In the 1960s, Avallone's most productive period, he wrote books in nearly every category of commercial fiction under his own name and various pen names and house names (his gothic fiction pseudonym was an awkward in-joke, putting his private eye hero into drag as "Edwina Noone"). Many of these assignments were for small flat fees with no royalties, even though some of the books—like his *Man from U.N.C.L.E.* novelizations—were big sellers.

In later years Avallone became embittered by various slights and lost opportunities that he believed he had suffered at the hands of publishers and fellow authors. In amateur publications aimed at fans of the old pulps and paperbacks, Avallone sometimes wrote enviously of more successful writers and referred to conspiracies to keep his own career down. But he could also write with sympathy and insight about older writers and literary heroes like Cornell WOOLRICH whom he had been able to meet in earlier times. To people who expressed an interest in his work—or in old books, old movies, old radio programs—he was an ebullient, good-humored, warm-hearted, and knowledgeable character.

Works

Bullet for Pretty Boy, A (1970); *Alarming Clock, The* (1973); *All the Way Home* (1960); *And Sex Walked In* (1963); *Ara-bella Nude, The* (1992); *Assassins Don't Die in Bed* (1968); *Bedroom Bolero, The* (1963); *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (1970); *Birds of a Feather Affair, The* (1966); *Blazing Affair, The* (1966); *Cannonball Run* (1981); *Case of the Bouncing Betty, The* (1957); *Case of the Violent Virgin, The* (1957); *Cloisonné Vase, The* (1970); *Coffin Things, The* (1968); *Crazy Mixed-up Corpse* (1957); *Dead Game* (1954); *Death Dives Deep* (1971); *Doctors, The* (1970); *Doomsday Bag, The* (1969); *Fallen Angel* (1974); *Fat Death* (1972); *February Doll Murders, The* (1966); *Felony Squad, The* (1967); *Flight Hostess Rogers* (1962); *Flower Covered Corpse, The*

(1969); *Friday the 13th Part Three: 3-D* (1982); *Girl in the Cockpit, The* (1972); *Girls in Television, The* (1974); *Hawaii Five-O* (1968); *Hawaii Five-O: Terror in the Sun* (1969); *High Noon at Midnight Hornets' Nest* (1970); *Horrible Man, The* (1968); *Hot Body, The* (1973); *Incident, The* (1968); *Kaleidoscope* (1966); *Kill Her—You'll Like It* (1973); *Killer on the Keys* (1973); *Krakatoa, East of Java* (1969); *Little Black Book* (1961); *Little Miss Murder* (1971); *Living Bomb, The* (1972); *London, Bloody London* (1972); *Lust at Leisure* (1963); *Lust Is No Lady* (1964); *Madame X* (1966); *Man from AVON, The* (1967); *Man from U.N.C.L.E., The: The Thousand Coffins Affair* (1965); *Mannix* (1968); *Meanwhile Back at the Morgue* (1960); *Missing* (1969); *Never Love a Call Girl* (1962); *One More Time* (1970); *Open Season on Cops* (1992); *Partridge Family, The* (1970); *Partridge Family, The: Keith the Hero* (1970); *Partridge Family, The: Love Comes to Keith Partridge* (1973); *Platinum Trap, The* (1962); *Sex Kitten* (1962); *Shock Corridor* (1963); *Shoot It Again, Sam* (1972); *Sinners in White* (1962); *Spitting Image, The* (1953); *Stag Stripper* (1996); *Station Six Sahara* (1964); *Tall Dolores, The* (1953); *There Is Something About a Dame* (1963); *Violence in Velvet* (1956); *Voodoo Murders, The* (1957); *Werewolf Walks Tonight, The* (1974); *Women in Prison* (1961); *X-Rated Corpse, The* (1973)

As Nick Carter:

China Doll, The (1964); *Run Spy Run* (1964); *Saigon* (1964)

As Troy Conway:

All Screwed Up (1971); *Big Broad Jump, The* (1969); *Blow Your Mind Job, The* (1970); *Come One, Come All* (1968); *Cunning Linguist* (1970); *Had Any Lately?* (1969); *Stiff Proposition, A* (1971)

As Priscilla Dalton:

Darkening Willows, The (1965); *90 Gramercy Park* (1965)

As Edwina Noone:

Corridor of Whispers (1965); *Craghold Legacy, The* (1971); *Daughter of Darkness* (1966); *Heirloom of Tragedy* (1965); *Seacliffe* (1968); *Victorian Crown, The* (1966)

As Vance Stanton:

Keith Partridge, Master Spy (1971); *Young Dillinger* (1965)

As Sidney Stuart:

Night Walker, The (1964)

B

Babcock, Dwight V. (1909–1979)

Babcock was one of the stars of the “second generation” of Joseph Shaw’s *Black Mask* boys, nurtured by the famous editor after *Black Mask*—the most esteemed of all pulp magazines—had already established its particular literary school in the writings of Dashiell HAMMETT, Horace MCCOY, Raoul WHITFIELD, Paul CAIN, and the others. Babcock wrote well, and no matter how quickly he completed it, his material was solidly crafted, full of swift word pictures and tough dialogue. Spreading his wings in the 1940s, after the years in the pulps, Babcock wrote a series of detective novels. In these, his best work, Babcock’s sense of humor came to the fore; the books were breezy fun while still tough and realistic.

“Like all true Californians,” as he once wrote, Babcock was born in Iowa. He went to college, but took his studies lightly. Music was his main interest, and he played banjo and sang with local dance bands by night. He married, quit school, got work, and lost it with the arrival of the Great Depression. He put his savings in a gas station and the station went bust. He tuned pianos, played music at weddings and speakeasies, and ended up picking peaches on his father-in-law’s ranch. “Then for some unaccountable reason was hit by the writing bug,” he recalled, “and baptized my typewriter with a detective yarn. . . . So now it’s write or starve—and maybe a little of both.” He wrote a story about a tough detective named Maguire, who happens to

be standing at a drugstore lunch counter when some gangsters kill two people, including an innocent female cashier. Babcock called it “At the Bottom of Every Mess,” and sent it to a bottom-rung pulp, *Underworld Magazine*, thinking that would be the easiest to crack. The magazine lost the manuscript. Revising his strategy, Babcock sent off another copy to what was commonly known as one of the hardest pulps to crack: *Black Mask*. Editor Joe Shaw bought it, paying Babcock \$100. Shaw’s only complaint was that Babcock didn’t know what he was talking about when he had a character blasting repeatedly with an automatic after a single squeeze of the trigger. The story appeared in the first issue of 1934.

Babcock continued writing for *Black Mask*, while selling rejects and lesser efforts to other detective pulps. In 1935, Babcock began his best-known series in the pulps, the adventures of “Chuck Thompson, G-Man,” as agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Shaw thought it would be a salable idea to piggyback on a big Warner Bros. Jimmy Cagney movie in release called *G Men* (with the new and censorious production code in place, Warners was forced to retool the Cagney image from lowlife criminal to two-fisted good guy). Babcock obliged, giving *Black Mask* a more socially acceptable sort of hero than its usual array of cynical, ambivalently honest private dicks, and assorted denizens of the underworld. Thompson tried to make the stories seem fresh and authentic, basing several of them on actual cases he had read about. Seven “Chuck

Thompson, G-Man” stories were published between 1935 and 1937, by which time Joe Shaw’s replacement at *Black Mask*, Fanny Ellsworth, decided that FBI agents were passé.

Babcock had never been one of the big producers in the pulps. Like Raymond CHANDLER, he preferred to work on longer stories and to craft each one until it was as good as he could make it. As the ’30s closed out he was averaging less than one sale per month. Soon he was following Chandler’s footsteps into hardcovers and a distinguished New York publishing house, Alfred A. Knopf. Babcock’s first book, *A Homicide for Hannah*, was a wonderful combination of humor and the hard-boiled, a bit reminiscent of Dashiell Hammett’s *The Thin Man* and of novels by Jonathan Latimer, but with its own original approach as well. Babcock’s heroine, Hannah Van Doren, is known as “Hannah the Horrible” and “Homicide Hannah the Gorgeous Ghoul” because she specializes in writing about and photographing the violently deceased for a lurid publication called *True Crime Cases* (“She’s bloodthirsty,” someone explains. “She just goes around hoping for a homicide to happen to someone. . . . The gorier the better, and with a sex angle if possible.”) Tough and gorgeous, Hannah is introduced on a barstool, cocktail in hand, wearing a black skunk-fur coat, looking “angelic,” hair “like misty sunshine” sparkling all over “like a fragile, beautiful jewel.” The man who becomes her sidekick and quasi-boyfriend in a three-book series is a custom car salesman named Joe Kirby, and surrounding the pair is an equally colorful collection of characters from every stratum of society and both sides of the law. *A Homicide*, set in Los Angeles on Christmas Eve, opens with Kirby discovering a beautiful, nude, brutally beaten young woman crawling along an alleyway, then meanders along an entertaining course studded with murders, wisecracks, brawls, drinking, and sexy banter:

[Hannah] looked directly at Kirby. “Where’ve you been all this time, my fine-feathered friend? Trying to desert me, too? I guess I’ve lost my charm, or maybe my underthings have that certain odor the ads warn us about.”

“I didn’t know you wore any,” Kirby said, grinning down at her.

A Homicide for Hannah got a very good reaction from critics and the buying readers, and Babcock followed up later that same year, 1941, with a sequel, *The Gorgeous Ghoul*. It was another highly entertaining case, with the same breezily caustic tone and attractive crime-solving duo. A third and final Homicide Hannah/Joe Kirby novel, *Hannah Says Foul Play*, did not make it to hardcover publication but appeared as a paperback digest in 1946. Like the other two it was well-plotted, entertainingly digressive, sharp, and sexy.

The move from the literary publisher Knopf to Avon Murder Mystery Monthly was a steep drop, but Babcock had stopped worrying about his fiction writing income or direction by this time. Beginning in 1943 with a berth at Universal Pictures, he had begun a new career as screenwriter. At Universal he worked on horror scripts (including *The Jungle Captive* and *The Mummy’s Curse*, the last of the original Mummy series) and “weird suspense” like *Dead Man’s Eyes* and *Pillow of Death*, two from the studio’s Inner Sanctum series, which starred Lon Chaney Jr. For the same studio he penned the scripts for the two “Creeper” movies, *House of Horrors* and *The Brute Man*, starring the tragic real-life “monster” Rondo Hatton. Babcock moved over to Columbia, where he worked on their Crime Doctor and Whistler series and also scripted the cult classic, *So Dark the Night*, a film noir set in a French village, brilliantly directed by Joseph H. Lewis. Babcock continued to be steadily employed by Hollywood production companies throughout the ’50s and into the ’60s as well, writing for small studios and independents and working on numerous television series (including *Superman*, *Sky King*, and *Hawaiian Eye*). He is known to have published only one additional novel, a sexy melodrama called *Chautauqua*, published under the name Dwight Vincent, in actuality a collaboration between Babcock and an old pulp writer friend, Day Keene; the book sold to the movies and became the basis for an execrable Elvis Presley feature released in 1969 and called *The Trouble with Girls*.

Babcock’s comic hard-boiled novels never came back to print, other than in the early (abridged) pa-

perback reprints of the first two. In more recent years they may have appeared too dated or frivolous to have found a place among the roster of revived hard-boiled classics, the works of Babcock's better known, one-time peers. But to the small but devoted fans of the Hannah novels, they are dated in much the same way as Hollywood screwball comedies of the '30s or '40s film noir, that is to say timeless—richly detailed, wonderfully entertaining artifacts of a lost style that cannot be recreated.

Works

STORIES

"At the Bottom of Every Mess" (1934); "Black Rose, The" (1944); "Blonde Alibi" (1935); "Blood in the Snow" (1939); "Bloodless Murder" (1934); "Bonus Blond Baby" (1937); "Careless Killer" (1938); "Case of the Gold Monkey, The" (1934); "Corpse at the Carnival, The" (1939); "Death Goes Free" (1935); "Death's Ransom" (1935); "Dumb Cluck" (1934); "Flight at Sunrise" (1937); "Free Ride to Rio" (1936); "G-Man Chuck Thompson" (1936); "Hide Out" (1935); "Hit and Run" (1939); "It's Murder Now" (1934); "Jitterbug Murder, The" (1939); "Jumbled Justice" (1934); "Killer's Souvenir" (1940); "Lady in Black" (1944); "Lady Killer" (1940); "Live Bait" (1935); "Men of the FBI" (1936); "Milk and Blood" (1937); "Murder After Midnight" (1935); "Murder for Hire" (1937); "Murder in Hell" (1934); "Murder in the Family" (1938); "Murder on the Gay Way" (1939); "Murder on the Side" (1936); "Murder Preview" (1939); "Murder Snare" (1935); "Pay Off" (1934); "Pearls Without Publicity" (1934); "Private Murder Party" (1935); "Prodigal Pearls" (1938); "Rat Bait" (1936); "Raw Deal, The" (1935); "Renegade in Reno" (1939); "Reward Chaser" (1939); "Scandal Racket" (1934); "State Narcotic Dick" (1937); "Storm Victim" (1939); "Too Many Slips" (1934); "Vengeance Is Mine" (1934); "Welshers Pay Off" (1936); "Widow Regrets, The" (1938); "You Listen!" (1938)

BOOKS

Gorgeous Ghoul, The (1941); *Hannah Says Foul Play* (1946); *Homicide for Hannah, A* (1941)

Bannon, Ann (Ann Weldy) (1932–)

Known as the Queen of Lesbian Pulp, Ann Bannon wrote paperbacks in the 1950s and 1960s

about female homosexuals that were originally marketed as sensationalism and later reclaimed as an important literary record from a time when few other cultural manifestations of lesbianism were permitted in the American mainstream. Born Ann Weldy in Joliet, Illinois, she went to college, then married and had two children while still in her early twenties. The content of her first novel, *Odd Girl Out* (1957), she claimed, was based on other girls she had heard about at school. Her husband refused to let her publish it under her own name, and the Ann Bannon nom de plume was assumed. The marriage soon collapsed. Bannon returned to an academic life and continued writing novels. Fawcett published each of her subsequent five novels between 1959 and 1962.

In books with titles like *I Am a Woman* (1959) and *Women in the Shadows* (1959), Bannon wrote of young lesbians coping with love, sex, and society's disapproval and disgust. In *The Marriage*, she described the dramatic upheavals in the life of a sometime lesbian who weds a man and tries to live as a heterosexual. Bannon's most famous character was Beebo Brinker, a butch teenager who abandons a repressive Midwest for the unrepressed Greenwich Village of beatniks and gay bars. Fawcett at first sold the books as provocative trash with beautiful, feminine cover girls offering come-hither looks, but by the time of *Beebo Brinker's* publication in 1962 the company had gone tasteful, abandoning the prurient covers and offering instead a moody oil painting.

Bannon abandoned writing as she pursued her career in academia. She would later become a dean at California State University at Sacramento. The books went out of print but were well remembered by a generation of lesbians who looked back at Bannon's corpus with both nostalgia and pride. Feminist and lesbian publishing houses, among them Cleis Press, later returned those legendary paperbacks to print and made Bannon and her characters cult figures for a new and less circum-spect generation of readers.

Works

Beebo Brinker (1962); *I Am a Woman* (1959); *Journey to a Woman* (1960); *Marriage, The* (1960); *Odd Girl Out* (1957); *Women in the Shadows* (1959)

Barrett, William E.

(1900–1986)

Barrett was a first-rate writer who made regular contributions to the pulps in the 1930s. Early on he was a regular for the air war magazines (chronicling the air aces and dogfights of World War I) and later became a staple on the covers of *Dime Detective* between 1935 and 1939, arguably the summit years of that great magazine. For *Dime Detective* Barrett wrote two very good series. The Blue Barrel stories were about tough newsman Dean Culver, whose eponymous column dished the dirt on the criminal underworld. Barrett's pulp masterpiece was the Needle Mike series, gloriously seedy adventures of a crime-solving tattoo artist. Needle Mike was a gray-haired, gold-toothed, jaundiced-looking lowlife who practiced his trade in a ratty office building otherwise occupied by lawyers and mail-order tricksters. In reality, Mike is young Ken McNally, the son of a St. Louis millionaire, who occasionally drops out of polite society and, heavily disguised, assumes his grubby alternate identity:

He looked into the mirror. . . . The face that stared out at him was the tough, uncompromising face of Needle Mike, the character he had created to be his other self—the self that went adventuring into the grim fringes of the underworld when life and luxury became too boring to be endured.

Barrett told *Dime Detective* readers, “I met several needle wielders and, although I haven't a single blue mark on my hide, the guild has fascinated me ever since.” Neither these lower-depth adventures nor anything else of Barrett's pulp years were mentioned much in later years when he became a respected author of cherished, religious-themed works such as a biography of Pope Paul VI and the novel *The Lilies of the Field* (1962).

Works

“Bad to the Last Drop” (June 1939); “Behind the Star” (Feb. 1933); “Blue Barrel, The” (Mar. 1936); “Crimson Kickback” (Dec. 1937); “Death on the Double O” (July 1936); “Devil's Dice, The” (May 1938); “Mad Mayor, The” (Feb. 1939); “Man's Last Hours, A” (Sept. 1936); “Murder of Needle Mike, The” (Aug. 1938); “Ring

Around a Murder” (Dec. 1936); “Tattooed Card, The” (July 1937); “Tattooed Chain, The” (Oct. 1935); “Tattooed Champ, The” (Oct. 1936); “Tattooed Chief, The” (Feb. 1938); “Tattooed Chinaman, The” (Aug. 1936); “Tattooed Circle, The” (June 1936); “Tattooed Claw, The” (Jan. 1937); “Tattooed Cobra, The” (Aug. 1935); “Tattooed Combination, The” (Nov. 1938); “Tattooed Cop, The” (Feb. 1936); “Tattooed Corpse, The” (Jan. 1935); “Tattooed Countess, The” (Mar. 15, 1935); “Tattooed Curse, The” (May 15, 1935)

Beach, Rex

(1877–1949)

For a time, roughly between the turn of the 20th century until the 1920s, tales of Alaska and the Great White North posed a serious challenge to the western as the most popular form of frontier literature. In 1898, gold was discovered in the Yukon Territories of Canada, a harsh and remote region bordering Alaska. A rush was on, and soon the area was the scene of a bustling, chaotic wilderness civilization, filled with hopeful treasure hunters from around the world and the merchants, saloon keepers, and whores to service them. It was a scene of desperation (with a killing winter climate), exploitation, and violent lawlessness. The Yukon gold rush inspired a new subgenre of popular literature that would include stories and novels, poetry, plays, and movies. The first and most famous of the gold rush writings were those by Jack London, author of *The Call of the Wild* (1903), *White Fang* (1907), and assorted notable short stories.

The most popular of London's many emulators was Rex Beach, a young man from Michigan who had graduated from law school in 1900 only to toss his degree aside and head for the Klondike to become a gold miner. Beach struck gold all right, not from the ground but from his pen. In 1906 he published his first novel, *The Spoilers*, a zestful, colorful, and authentically detailed tale of prospectors, grubstakers, and claim jumpers in the freezing North. Beach's plot centered on the rampant corruption among the Yukon establishment, with various government officials and lawyers out to grab the gold through chicanery from the miners who have risked their lives, and how frontier justice sets things straight. The book was a tremendous success and

was adopted for the stage version by Beach and James MacArthur. It became a Broadway hit in 1907 and a staple of touring companies for many years after. *The Spoilers* also became a movie in 1914, starring William Farnum and Tom Santschi. The film was legendary for its climactic saloon fight between the prospector hero and the crooked claims-agent villain; it was hailed for many years as the greatest fight scene in the movies. The story was so popular that it was refilmed in the 1920s, then again in 1930—with sound and Gary Cooper—and again in 1942, with John Wayne and Randolph Scott, and once more in 1956, starring Jeff Chandler and Rory Calhoun, each version attempting to top the last with a spectacular final brawl.

Beach's other "northerns" included *The Barrier* (1908), *The Silver Horde* (1909), and *The Iron Trail: An Alaskan Romance* (1913). He later wrote other types of stories, set in less chilly locales, including several novels about the later prospectors for oil in the Asian jungles. Toward the end of his life Beach returned to the scene of his earliest triumph with the 1946 adventure novel *The World in His Arms*, about an American sea captain and his rivals—including the Russian navy—hunting for seals in the Bering Strait.

Works

Auction Block: A Novel of New York Life, The (1914); *Barrier, The* (1908); *Crimson Gardenia and Other Tales of Adventure* (1916); *Flowing Gold* (1922); *Goose Woman and Other Stories, The* (1924); *Iron Trail: An Alaskan Romance, The* (1913); *Jungle Gold* (1935); *Laughing Bill Hyde and Other Stories* (1917); *Men of the Outer Islands* (1932); *Ne'er Do Well, The* (1911); *Net, The* (1912); *North of Fifty-Three* (1924); *Padlocked* (1926); *Partners* (1905); *Silver Horde, The* (1909); *Son of the Gods* (1930); *Spoilers, The* (1906); *Too Fat to Fight* (1920); *Valley of Thunder* (1939); *Wild Pastures* (1935); *Winds of Chance, The* (1918); *Woman in Ambush* (1951); *World in His Arms, The* (1946)

Behm, Marc (1925–)

The American-born Behm has lived most of his life as an expatriate in France, where his published

works have earned him much acclaim. In his own country, however, he remains a cult item, and many of his novels, at this writing, have been published only in French translations. This is unfortunate, as each of Behm's books is a brilliant and unique creation, and his masterpiece, *The Eye of the Beholder*, ranks with a handful of best crime novels of all time.

Born in New Jersey in 1925, Behm worked as an actor before World War II, for a while in creative partnership with future movie star and television whiz Ernie Kovacs (Kovacs's skewed, world-weary wit and hip sensibility echoes in Behm's fiction). After the war and the army, Behm stayed in Europe, taking classes under the G.I. Bill and looking for work in the entertainment industry, eventually finding screenwriting jobs with an array of polyglot and runaway producers. In the 1960s his name appeared most notably in the script credits for the Beatles' second film, *Help!* (1965) and in the Cary Grant–Audrey Hepburn classic *Charade* (1963). Through the '70s and '80s Behm maintained a comfortable Parisian residence on the income from movie work, rewrite jobs, and European exploitation originals. He published his first novel at the age of 52. "I had always wanted to write a book about a Nazi," said the author. "I also wanted to write from a feminine point of view, which was very difficult." Turned down by numerous publishers before finding a home, *The Queen of the Night* was a tour de force, the savagely funny and chillingly incisive tale of a beautiful, brilliant, and omnisexual female Nazi. This frighteningly droll creature, Edmonde Sieglinde Kerrl, mingles with Hitler and his inner circle, and has a more intimate friendship with Eva Braun, before drifting into an increasingly surreal and apocalyptic series of adventures across Europe and Russia. A kind of pornographic Wagnerian black comedy, the extraordinary *Queen of the Night* should have established Behm's reputation, but the book made no impact and disappeared.

His second and even greater novel was something of a fluke. Behm had scripted a conventional chase story for Madrid-based film producer Philip Yordan, but when the movie was never made Behm decided to turn the script into a novel with an American setting. *The Eye of the Beholder* was a

chase story, all right, but there was nothing conventional about it. While Behm was capable of taking on the most banal and unpromising screenwriting assignments—such as *Lady Chatterley's Lover* for Cannon Films, with Dutch sex bomb Sylvia Kristel as her ladyship—his novels were off-beat, experimental. He professed little interest in genre writing as such, and claimed that even Raymond CHANDLER and Dashiell HAMMETT left him cold (*The Maltese Falcon* excepted). Graham Greene was Behm's idea of a role model, and Behm also professed great fondness for Marcel Proust, the surreal Fantomas stories of Marcel AL-LAIN and Pierre Souvestre, and the exuberant pornographic memoirs of Frank Harris. *Eye*, said Behm, was "The story of God in disguise as a private eye. Searching for his daughter: a quest for grace." The book describes a psychologically troubled investigator following the cross-country trail of an alluring serial killer. A relationship develops between the watcher and the watched that is perverse, voyeuristic, haunting, and profound. The novel was filmed twice, very nicely in France (with Isabelle Adjani as the Beheld) and then horribly in an American production (with Ashley Judd as same).

The Ice Maiden, Behm's third published novel, provided further evidence of his dazzling creativity with its mordantly humorous mingling of the horror and crime genres in the story of a vampire/casino croupier who has a taste for cash as well as blood. *Afraid to Death*, first published in France in 1991 as *Trouille* but seeing print in the English language only in 2000, was promoted as a "literary Siamese twin" to *Eye of the Beholder*. Told in the same spare, cinematic/poetic prose as the earlier novel, *Afraid* follows the lifelong waking nightmare of one Joe Egan, a drifter and gambler pursued everywhere by a luscious blonde angel of death. For such an amazing talent to remain largely unpopular—and worse, unpublished—in his native land, is a fate not even Behm's cast of amoral, unpredictable, and dangerously insane characters should have to suffer.

Works

Afraid to Death (2000); *Eye of the Beholder*, *The* (1980); *Ice Maiden*, *The* (1983); *Queen of the Night* (1977)

Bellem, Robert Leslie

(1894–1968) *Also wrote as: Franklin Charles, John Saxon*

Robert Leslie Bellem, the Shakespeare of the Spicys, was one of the speed demons of the pulps' golden age. He was capable of churning out a roomful of copy every day of the week and he often wrote whole issues of the lesser sort of pulps' with which he was associated, using his own and an assortment of pen names on the bylines. Most of his work was merely competent, and today he would be one more obscure pulp hack if not for his creation of a singular character and the prose style to go with it: Dan Turner, a Hollywood private eye who took the tough, wisecracking, simile-clogged style now closely associated with Raymond CHANDLER and turned it into an over-the-top, absurdist self-parody. In Turner's mouth, the sort of lines that might have been intended to sound racy and streetwise came out as if composed by P. G. Wodehouse for some ultra-violent Bertie Wooster: "Will you come along willingly," the detective would bark, in a typical line, "or do I bunt you over the crummet till your sneezer leaks buttermilk?"

Dan Turner first appeared in the June 1934 issue of *Spicy Detective* in a story titled "Murder by Proxy." The magazine was part of the Spicy line published by Harry Donenfeld and Frank Armer at Culture Publications, along with *Spicy Mystery*, *Spicy Adventure*, and *Spicy Western*. There had been pulps before with a high quotient of sexual content, but most had affected an ersatz sophistication and dealt with a liberated high life in New York, Paris, and other sin centers. Culture's innovation was to put sex into genre fiction—cowboy, private eye, exotic adventure. The stories it published were similar to those published by other top-selling pulps, but with the addition of pruriently detailed erotic activities and the detailed description of female body parts, plus black-and-white illustrations of said women with their breasts bared. Depending on the skill of the individual Spicy writer, the sexual content could be integral or entirely gratuitous. Either way, the reader of the Spicys could almost always be assured, every few hundred words, that another luscious female character would enter the scene and the plot would

stop for a salacious description—the “hot parts” of the Spicy pulps that would keep them hidden behind the counter where pulps were sold and that would quicken the pulse of impressionable males in the Great Depression Years.

While many writers were ashamed to write for the Spicys and many did it merely to pay the rent, Robert Leslie Bellem, among the few Spicy regulars to use his real name instead of a pseudonym, seems to have found in those raunchy publications his true literary home. What so distinguished the Turner stories, and found them a number of unusual fans among them S. J. Perelman, the *New Yorker* humorist and Marx Brothers screenwriter, was their wacky colloquial voice, a revved-up, out-of-control, tin-eared version of that slang-and-simile-laden hard-boiled style. A gun, for instance, never fired, but rather a “roscoe” “belched Chowchow” or “sneezed Ker-Choob!” Breasts were not breasts in Turner land, but “creamy bon-bons,” “firm little tiddlywinks,” “perky pretty-pretties,” “gorgeous whatchacallems,” and so on.

Dan Turner quickly became the Spicys’ most popular offering and eventually the character would have his own personal pulp, *Hollywood Detective*. By the end of Turner’s run, his adventures, all written by Bellem, would number in the hundreds. Bellem never cracked the bigger, more prestigious pulp markets, let alone the slick magazines like the *Saturday Evening Post*, but he never lacked for sales. He wrote a handful of hard-boiled novels for the lending-library publishers, two (*The Vice Czar Murders* and *No Wings on a Cop*) in collaboration with Cleve ADAMS. Then, in the 1950s, Bellem managed to find work on a new “assembly line” for fast-producing pros, series television, writing for such shows as *Superman*, *The Lone Ranger*, and *Death Valley Days*.

Works

STORIES

“Action Camera Drop Dead” (Apr. 1950); “Badger Bump” (Feb. 1940); “Blackmail Book” (July 1942); “Blizzard in August” (July 1942); “Blonde Motive” (7/42); “Brunette Bump-off” (May 1938); “Bullet from Nowhere” (Jan. 1942); “Bund Blockade” (Nov. 1939); “Cameo Code” (Apr. 1945); “Comet Passes, A” (Jan. 1942); “Comet’s

Consort” (Apr. 1945); “Cooked” (May 1936); “Cool Her Off” (Feb. 1936); “Corpse in the Cabinet, The” (Jan. 1935); “Crimson Comedy” (Dec. 1941); “Curtains for a Corpse” (Oct. 1950); “Dame Dies Twice” (Feb. 1943); “Dead Man’s Bed” (Aug. 1934); “Death Drop” (July 1942); “Death in the Spotlight” (Oct. 1950); “Death’s High Parallel” (Dec. 1938); “Design for Dying” (Apr. 1939); “Diamonds of Death” (July 1934); “Die, Witch, Die” (Apr. 1945); “Dummy Kill” (Oct. 1938); “Fall Guy for a Forgery” (Sept. 1946); “Find That Corpse” (Nov. 1937); “Girl with Green Eyes” (Dec. 1934); “Gypsum Blizzard” (May 1937); “Half Size Homicide” (Nov. 1943); “Homicide Hotfoot” (Sept. 1946); “Homicide Spike” (Nov. 1948); “Horoscope Case, The” (Jan. 1942); “Lady Scarface” (July 1942); “Latin Blood” (Aug. 1945); “Make with the Mayhem” (Feb. 1949); “Million Buck Snatch” (Jan. 1942); “Million Buck Snatch, The” (June 1936); “Million in Celluloid, A” (Mar. 1936); “Morgue Case” (Feb. 1945); “Movie Mad, Murder Mad” (Apr. 1950); “Murder at Malibu” (Oct. 1934); “Murder by Proxy” (June 1934); “Murder Claws” (Apr. 1940); “Murder for Fame” (Nov. 1934); “Murder for Metrovox” (Nov. 1936); “Murder Masquerade” (June 1935); “Murder Muscles In” (Feb. 1949); “Murder on the Sound Stage” (Jan. 1942); “Off Stage Murder” (Nov. 1948); “Petticoat Payoff” (Dec. 1942); “Pleasure Peddler” (Aug. 1938); “Quickie Kill” (Jan. 1950); “Ransomed Reminders” (July 1942); “Reckoning in Red” (Mar. 1941); “Riddle in the Rain” (Jan. 1943); “Screen Test Kill” (Apr. 1945); “Silverscreen Shakedown” (Apr. 1938); “Silver Screen Spectre” (Oct. 1936); “Sleeping Dogs” (Sept. 1934); “Slow Burn” (Sept. 1946); “Snatch Buster” (Apr. 1945); “Spur of the Moment” (July 1942); “Star Dice” (May 1943); “Temporary Corpse” (May 1935); “Terror on the Doorstep” (Jan. 1950); “The Doomed Quartet” (Oct. 1950); “Unfinished Melody” (Jan. 1937); “Voice from Beyond” (Sept. 1935)

BOOKS

Blue Murder (1938); *Dan Turner, Hollywood Detective* (1938); *No Wings on a Cop* (1950); *Window with the Sleeping Nude, The* (1950)

As Franklin Charles (in collaboration with Cleve Adams):

Vice Czar Murders, The (1941)

As John Saxon:

Half-Past Mortem (1947)

Biggers, Earl Derr (1884–1933)

A Harvard-educated journalist and for many years a columnist at the *Boston Herald*, Biggers made his mark as a popular novelist at the age of 29 with a comic mystery called *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, about a mystery writer trying to get through the night at a seemingly haunted old inn. George M. Cohan (author of “Yankee Doodle Dandy”) turned the novel into a hit Broadway play that became a perennial favorite of small-town theater companies, and the property was subsequently turned into a motion picture no fewer than five times. But this was nothing compared to the welcome Hollywood gave to another of Biggers’s creations.

In 1925 the *Saturday Evening Post* serialized *The House Without a Key*, a mystery story about the murder of a wealthy old man and the solving of the crime by a sergeant in the Honolulu Police Department. The sergeant is a Chinese-American from the Hawaiian Territories, resident of Punchbowl Hill, a family man with a wife and 11 children; his baby-skinned, well-upholstered figure and his unassuming, unflappable demeanor veil the methods of an extremely wise and perspicacious policeman, whom Biggers soon promoted to Detective Inspector. His name is Charlie Chan.

The serial, soon published in book form, was well received, and Biggers followed with five more Charlie Chan mysteries: *The Chinese Parrot*, *Behind That Curtain*, *The Black Camel*, *Charlie Chan Carries On*, and *Keeper of the Keys*. One of these, *The Black Camel*, concerned a murder on Charlie’s home ground, but other cases would take him away from Hawaii’s golden shores to California and to the decks of a San Francisco-bound cruise ship. The stories were all eminently readable (in the carefully constructed, bloodless way of pre-hard-boiled crime writing), and Chan—though often “offstage” for whole chapters—was a delight.

In an era when Asian characters in American popular fiction were represented as either the exotic, ghetto-dwelling creatures of Chinatown or as the evil representatives of a “Yellow Menace,” Chan, an educated, highly intelligent, respected officer of the law, represented a refreshing if not outright startling innovation. In

choosing to write a contemporary mystery with an Asian protagonist and detective, Biggers had no particular interest in Asian culture to express and no sociological point to make. It was simply an entertainer’s notion, a gimmick that, so far as he knew, had never been done before. While some controversy now clings to the character—largely on the basis of the cinematic incarnations played by non-Asian actors, which some Asians have declared as racist stereotypes—Biggers’s Charlie Chan was a thoroughly admirable and distinguished figure. The comic underpinnings of the later movie series—such elements as slapstick and Chan’s sparring with his Number One Son, and the inauthentic and strained Oriental aphorisms—were largely absent from the novels (Biggers tended to go for actual Confucian quotes). The literary series was ended abruptly at only six volumes when Biggers died suddenly in 1933 at age 49. “Death,” as the honorable Charlie Chan once said, “is the black camel that kneels unbidden at every gate.”

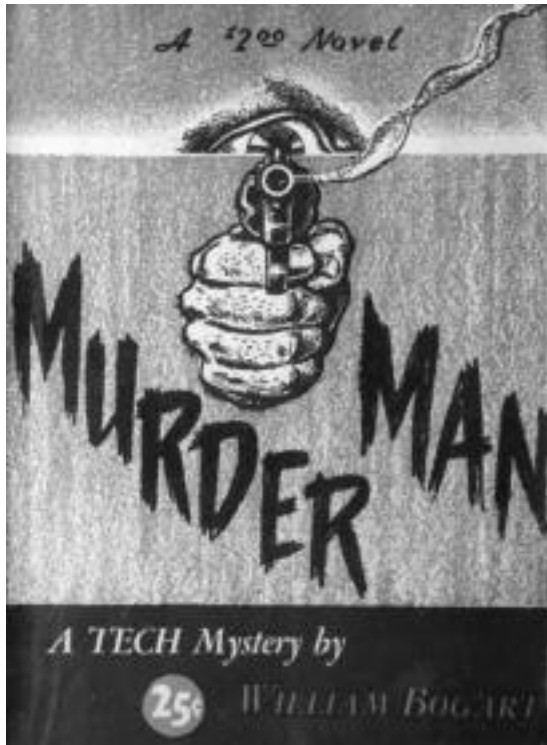
Works

Agony Column, The (1916); *Behind That Curtain* (1928); *Black Camel, The* (1930); *Charlie Chan Carries On* (1931); *Chinese Parrot, The* (1926); *Earl Derr Biggers Tells Ten Stories* (1933); *Fifty Candles* (1926); *House Without a Key, The* (1925); *Keeper of the Keys* (1932); *Love Insurance* (1914); *Seven Keys to Baldpate* (1913)

Bogart, William G.

(1903–1977) *Also wrote as: Kenneth Robeson*

The *other* hard-boiled Bogart of the 1940s, William G. wrote good, entertaining crime novels about a private eye with a classic tough guy moniker, Johnny Saxon, and an unusual sideline, writing tough-guy detective stories for the pulp magazines. Bogart himself was a denizen of the pulp jungle for two decades, working both sides of the business, as writer and editor. Sometime near the tail end of the Great Depression, he took a job with Street & Smith, the leading publisher of pulp magazines. He remained a staff editor for many years, working in various capacities on various titles. Along the way



William G. Bogart's *Murder Man* (first published as *Hell on Fridays*) is a mystery set in the pulp magazine world.

he began contributing his own stories. By the late '30s he had built up enough contacts and confidence to quit the editorial job and try writing for a living. He was soon appearing in the pages, and often on the covers, of numerous pulp magazines of every sort, from *Range Romances* to *Unknown*. "One of the best of the younger writers," an editor wrote of him in an issue of *The Avenger*, published by his former full-time employer, Street & Smith. "He shows every sign of reaching the top in a very short time."

It didn't quite go that way. But Bogart was good. Lester DENT, the wizard behind Doc Savage, turned to Bogart when he needed a good backup to ghost write some of Doc's monthly adventures. Bogart's first was *World's Fair Goblin*, printed in April 1939. The ghost writer didn't bring Dent's intensity to the job—it wasn't his personal baby, after all—but he was clearly up to

the job, turning out 13 Savage novels between 1939 and 1947. Dent was said to have polished or revised the ghost work, but Bogart also did some of his Docs directly for Street & Smith, published without changes.

Like many of his peers, Bogart in the early '40s, started writing mystery novels for hardcover publishers. Most were about Johnny Saxon, the Manhattan P.I. with the pulp stories to his credit. The first of these is the best and, from a historical perspective, makes fascinating reading. In *Hell on Fridays* (retitled *Murder Man* for later paperback publication), Bogart used the world of the pulp magazines as the backdrop for a crime story. The original title referred to the hectic payday at most rough-paper publishers, when writers converged on the pulps to collect their checks for the week.

Hell on Fridays' hero is a hard-boiled P.I. turned hard-boiled pulp writer and now, with his muse missing in action, about to go back to detecting. On a snowswept winter morning in a crumbling Manhattan office building, Johnny Saxon wakes up in the seedy suite he shares with his business partner, "Moe Martin—Literary Agent." The walls are covered with magazine covers, evidence of Saxon's five years as the "prince of the pulps." Once he had had his own detective agency and all the business he could handle, but he had walked out on it when he made his first sale. Bogart, a voice of experience, gives Saxon's back story:

He learned formula, bought an electric typewriter, and ground out words by the ream for the fast action magazines. He wrote furiously, sometimes up to ten thousand words in a single day. In a year he was the most prolific writer in America. He started a whole new school of pulp writing . . . he'd written emotion instead of bang-bang. It was only natural. He was a romantic guy. He was—for a time—the boy wonder. It came to a point where he either had to graduate into the slicks, or burn out. He did neither. After three years he simply stopped writing. The business had lost its kick for him. . . . All he had left was the immortality of those three years.

Bogart goes on to describe Saxon's past attempts to live off his reputation, going into the "literary consultant" racket, bleeding money from amateur writers, then trying for a comeback "via the ghost writer scheme," putting his byline on the work of paid collaborators. "This worked fine," he wrote, "but the ghosts were for the most part rum-sodden hacks, and once a check came in they'd disappeared. One committed suicide in a sordid Greenwich Village bar after a four-day bout—he was sixty-three years old; another landed in a straight-jacket in Bellevue."

Was this crime fiction or confessional? Bogart's first chapter details a hack writer's world as bleak as Gissing's Grub Street. But that's only the beginning of *Hell on Fridays'* tour of a largely sordid pulp world. Bogart puts his insider's knowledge to use in the entire tale—describing barely disguised companies and real-life characters as Saxon is hired by one dime magazine publisher to guard a hot new writer stolen away from a rival pulp house; the writer is kidnapped, the publisher is murdered, justice is served, and private eye Johnny Saxon even gets to sell another story. For guys like Bogart this was the best possible sort of happy ending.

Works

Hell on Fridays (1940); also published as *Murder Man*; *Murder Is Forgetful* (1944); also published as *Johnny Saxon*; *Queen City Murder Case* (1946); *Sands Street* (1942); *Singapore* (1947)

As Kenneth Robeson:

Angry Ghost, The (1940); *Awful Dynasty, The* (1940); *Bequest of Evil* (1941); *Death in Little Houses* (1946); *Disappearing Lady* (1946); *Fire and Ice* (1946); *Flying Goblin, The* (1940); *Hex* (1939); *Magic Forest, The* (1942); *Spotted Men, The* (1940); *Target for Death* (1947); *Tunnel Terror* (1940); *World's Fair Goblin* (1939)

Brackett, Leigh

(1915–1978)

A born writer who is said to have scribbled stories since infancy, Brackett was particularly enamored of the swashbuckling fantasies and space operas she read in the pulp magazines of the 1920s and

1930s. She devoured the stories of such imaginative authors as Edgar Rice BURROUGHS, Robert E. HOWARD, and C. L. MOORE (Brackett's direct predecessor as a major female presence in the almost exclusively male bastion of science fiction adventure stories). She sold her first science fiction tale at age 25 to *Astounding Science Fiction*. It was a red-planet adventure called "Martian Quest."

Brackett soon became a regular contributor to *Planet Stories*, the popular pulp devoted almost exclusively to stories of interplanetary adventure. Most of her stories were exciting sword-and-sorcery swashbucklers in the vein of Burroughs's "John Carter on Mars" series and similar works by her other mentors. They were set on the familiar planets, but these were strictly "soft science" set-



Space opera specialist Leigh Brackett as a teenager, c.1930 (*Brackett estate*)



Leigh Brackett with the writer Robert Bloch in New York, 1956 (*Brackett estate*)

tings, without atmospheric or geographic realities. *Planet Stories* readers cared about action and color, not textbook data or authentic geography. Trying to avoid two stories set on the same planet in the same issue, for example, Brackett's editors once simply changed the title of Brackett's piece from "The Dragon Queen of Venus" to "The Dragon Queen of Jupiter" and did a quick copy-edit to switch the planet names in the story.

Brackett also had a feel for the hot new type of hard-boiled mystery fiction and wrote a novel, *No Good from a Corpse*, that was one of the better emulations and amalgams of the Dashiell HAMILTON and Raymond CHANDLER styles. It had a Hollywood setting and a tough private eye hero named Ed Clive. When a beautiful ex-girlfriend of the detective's is murdered he goes on the killer's trail, uncovering the lost love's sordid past and meeting an assortment of likely suspects, getting painfully bashed and knocked out by most of them during his investigation. The prose was lean and sharp, the dialogue brutally colorful. It wasn't Chandler—there was no poetry, no vision—just good, readable pulp with a little extra flair. Working in what was considered male writers' territory, Brackett overcompensated, if anything, for poten-

tial gender bias in the blunt (for 1944 and for a "lady writer") dialogue, and in a cast of female characters at least as tough as the guys: "The blonde's fist caught him on the side of the head. Clive turned over three times and hit a table, causing a crash and an explosion of splinters . . . 'Now,' she roared, 'he busts my furnicha.'"

At times, Brackett's interplanetary tales also employed the hard-boiled style, as in these opening lines (written with Ray BRADBURY) from "Lorelei of the Mist," printed in *Planet Stories'* summer 1946 issue:

The Company dicks were good. They were plenty good. Hugh Starke began to think maybe this time he wasn't going to get away with it.

His small stringy body hunched over the control bank, nursing the last ounce of power out of the Kallman. The hot night sky of Venus fled past the ports in tattered veils of indigo. Starke wasn't sure where he was anymore. Venus was a frontier planet, and still mostly a big X, except to the Venu-tians—who weren't sending out any maps.

In her hometown of Los Angeles there was much socializing among the West Coast-based science fiction writers, who often felt exiled, thousands of miles from the publishing houses back east. Brackett met and befriended many of her fellow pulpsters, including Bradbury. She married one of them, Edmond HAMILTON, in 1946, and they were together until his death, a year before her own in 1978.

It was the mystery fiction, not the science fiction, that gave Brackett a second and equally significant career in motion pictures. Producer-director Howard Hawks had read and liked *No Good from a Corpse*, and thought the author would be a good—and inexpensive—choice to write a screenplay out of Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*, which Hawks was going to film with Humphrey Bogart as Philip Marlowe. Hawks was reportedly shocked when Brackett arrived at the studio and he discovered that the hard-boiled author was a woman. But Hawks's movies were distinguished by their many tough-talking dames, and

he put her to work on the script with a surprising collaborator: William Faulkner. Brackett and company made Chandler's complex story into a relatively lucid, smooth screenplay which then became a near perfect motion picture—witty and tough, yet sophisticated, cynical, and intriguing. Brackett would continue to take screenwriting assignments for the rest of her life, but she would never give herself over to the profession. The movies would be a lucrative break in her preferred endeavor, writing novels and stories. Her first Hollywood patron remained her most devoted Hollywood employer. She wrote or cowrote for Hawks the scripts to the John Wayne western *Rio Bravo*, the African adventure comedy *Hatari!* (Wayne again), *El Dorado* (with Wayne and Robert Mitchum), and more. In the '70s she was hired to adapt another Chandler novel, *The Long Goodbye*. Her last movie job before her death was the screenplay for George Lucas's *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980).

Brackett continued to write swashbuckling space operas long after the pulps folded and the paperbacks took up the slack. Some of her more popular titles included *The Sword of Rhiannon*, *The Secret of Sinharat*, *The Starmen*, and a more serious, allegorical novel, *The Long Tomorrow*, about a fascistic, postapocalyptic America. Her returns to crime fiction were rarer: a few short stories and two novels, *Silent Partner* (1969) and a gripping tale of vigilante justice, *The Tiger Among Us* (1957).

Works

STORIES

"Ark of Mars, The" (1953); "Beast, The" (1948); "Black Amazon of Mars" (1951); "Blue Behemoth, The" (1943); "Case of the Wandering Redhead, The" (1943); "Child of the Green Light" (1942); "Child of the Sun" (1942); "Citadel of Lost Ages" (1950); "Citadel of Lost Ships" (1943); "City of the Lost Ones" (1949); "Dancing Girl of Ganymede, The" (1950); "Death Dealer, The" (1943); "Demons of Darkside, The" (1941); "Design for Dying" (1944); "Dragon-Queen of Jupiter, The" (1941); "Enchantress of Venus" (1949); "Halfling, The" (1943); "I Feel Bad Killing You" (1944); "Interplanetary Reporter" (1941); "Jewel of Bas, The" (1944); "Lake of Gone Forever, The" (1949); "Last Call for Sector 9G" (1955); "Lord of the Earthquake" (1941); "Lorelei of the Red Mist"

(1946); "Mars Minus Bisha" (1954); "Martian Quest, The" (1940); "Moon That Vanished, The" (1948); "Murder in the Family" (1943); "Murder Is Bigamy" (1945); "No Man's Land in Space" (1941); "No Star Is Lost" (1944); "Other People, The" (1957); "Out of the Sea" (1942); "Outpost on Io" (1942); "Queen of the Martian Catacombs" (1949); "Queer Ones, The" (1957); "Retreat to the Stars" (1941); "Sea King of Mars" (1949); "Shadow over Mars" (1944); "Shadows, The" (1952); "Shannach of the Last" (1952); "So Pale, So Cold, So Fair" (1957); "Sorcerer of Rhiannon, The" (1942); "Starman of Llyrdis, The" (1951); "Stellar Legion, The" (1940); "Sword of Rhiannon, The" (1949); "Terror Out of Space" (1944); "Thralls of the Endless Night" (1943); "Truants, The" (1950); "Vanishing Venutians, The" (1945); "Veil of Astellar, The" (1944); "Woman from Altair, The" (1951); "World Is Born, A" (1941)

BOOKS

Alpha Centauri or Die! (1963); *Big Jump, The* (1955); *Coming of the Terrans* (1967); *Eye for an Eye, An* (1957); *Follow the Free Wind* (1963); *Ginger Star, The* (1974); *Halfling and Other Stories, The* (1973); *Hounds of Skaith, The* (1974); *Jewel of Bas, The* (1990); *Long Tomorrow, The* (1955); *No Good from a Corpse* (1944); *People of the Talisman* (1964); *Reavers of Skaith, The* (1976); *Rio Bravo* (1959); *Secret of Sinharat, The* (1964); *Shadow Over Mars* (1951); *Silent Partner* (1969); *Starmen, The* (1952); *Stranger at Home* (1946); *Sword of Rhiannon, The* (1953); *Tiger Among Us* (1957)

Bradbury, Ray (1920–)

Although his work and his fame eventually made him a part of serious modern literature, Ray Bradbury was first a star among the readers of the rough paper pages of the pulp science fiction magazines of the more fantastic sort with lurid covers of sword-wielding spacemen, bosomy blondes, and rampaging, ray-gun-firing Martians. As a young boy Bradbury developed a taste for fantastic and horrific tales. He cultivated friendships with other young readers and aspiring writers and edited an early fan magazine. At age 21, writing with a friend named Henry Hasse, he sold his first story, "Pendulum," to *Super Science Stories*. He became a regular

contributor to *Planet Stories*, the most popular of the “soft science” SF pulps (the magazines devoted more to swashbuckling space adventure than to stories of real science-based speculation). *Planet Stories* published such early Bradbury classics as “Morgue Ship” and “Lazarus, Come Forth.” With each story he refined his style, known for the philosophical themes that interested him and the quietly poetic prose. In the summer 1946 issue of *Planet Stories*, Bradbury published “The Million Year Picnic,” the first of the stories that would eventually make up the acclaimed collection *The Martian Chronicles*.

Unlike so many of the technology-obsessed, dispassionate SF writers, Bradbury was something of a romantic Luddite when it came to scientific

progress. He expressed a rueful view of science and progress in his stories of an ordinary family that has fled to Mars just before Earth’s inevitable self-destruction:

Science ran too far ahead of us too quickly, and the people got lost in a mechanical wilderness, like children making over pretty things, gadgets, helicopters, rockets, emphasizing the wrong items, emphasizing machines instead of how to run the machines. Wars got bigger and bigger and finally killed Earth . . . that way of life proved wrong and strangled itself with its own hands . . .

When published in book form in 1950, *The Martian Chronicles* made Bradbury famous. In 1953 he published another cautionary volume, this one even more pointed. *Fahrenheit 451* was the tale of a thought-controlled future when alarms send fire brigades across the landscape to *set* fires—to burn hidden collections of the government’s most feared contraband, books. Written in a time of industry blacklists, rampant censorship, and anti-intellectualism in the name of patriotism, the novel was obviously symbolic, but it also proclaimed through lucid, lyrical prose a more timeless theme, the power and allure of books.

Bradbury’s acclaim brought him readers who had previously disdained genre fiction, and brought unusual offers like that from filmmaker John Huston to script his production of Herman Melville’s 1851 novel *Moby-Dick*. That Bradbury was the best-known “science fiction writer” in America created a certain amount of resentment among more hardcore SF readers and critics, who thought most of his work was only marginal to the genre and, in any case, not as good as others they could name. It is better to consider Bradbury as a category of one. Through the decades he has produced a unique, wide-ranging body of work, including poetry, children’s books, screenplays, and memoirs.



Ray Bradbury (left) with fellow science fiction writer Edmond Hamilton and a copy of *Captain Future* in Los Angeles, 1940 (*Brackett estate*)

Works

Ahmed and the Oblivion Machine (1998); *Dandelion Wine* (1957); *Dark Carnival* (1947); *Dinosaur Tales* (1983);

Driving Blind (1997); *Fahrenheit 451* (1951); *Golden Apples of the Sun, The* (1953); *Graveyard for Lunatics, A* (1990); *Green Shadows White Whale* (1992); *Illustrated Man, The* (1951); *I Sing the Body Electric* (1969); *I Sing the Body Electric and Other Stories* (1998); *Long After Midnight* (1976); *Machineries of Joy, The* (1964); *Martian Chronicles, The* (1950); *Medicine for Melancholy, A* (1959); *October Country, The* (1955); *Quicker Than the Eye* (1996); *R Is for Rocket* (1962); *Silver Locusts, The* (1952); *S Is for Space* (1966); *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1962); *Switch on the Night* (1955); *Toynbee Convector, The* (1988)

Bradley, Marion Zimmer

(1930–1999) *Also wrote as: Lee Chapman, Miriam Gardner, Morgan Ives*

One of the leading writers of science fiction and fantasy from the 1960s to the 1990s, Bradley is a particular favorite of college-age women who appreciate the author's strong female characters and the feminist perspective she brought to much of her genre fiction. Born in Albany, New York, a SF and fantasy fan from her teenage years, Bradley wrote for some amateur publications before making her first sale to a commercial science fiction magazine in 1952. Bradley went to college in Texas, married in 1949 and had three children. She later divorced and returned to academic studies at the University of California at Berkeley. Her novel-writing career began in the early '60s. She sold science fiction and fantasy to Ace Books and other paperback publishers. In this period Bradley also wrote softcore and semi-hardcore erotica under a variety of pseudonyms, including a series of lesbian novels published under the pen name of Miriam Gardner. Bradley seemed to have a particular interest in the last subject: she worked on a bibliographic "checklist" of lesbian literature, privately printed (something, along with the sex novels, Bradley apparently preferred not to talk about in later years).

Begun in 1962 with *Planet Savers*, the Darkover novels would become Bradley's signature series, stories of life on a distant planet colonized by the survivors of a crashed spaceship, where the sky is lit by a blood-red sun and society is run by the

use of psychic powers. The series continued—with the help of collaborators in later years, due to the author's health problems—until her death in 1999, nearly 30 volumes in all. But Bradley was probably most widely known for her best-selling Avalon series, begun in 1983 with *The Mists of Avalon* and followed, after an 11-year pause, by three sequels/prequels: *The Forest House* (1994), *The Lady of Avalon* (1997), and *Priestess of Avalon* (2000). The books followed the legends of King Arthur and company from the perspective of the Arthurian women, Morgaine (Morgan LeFay), Gwendwyfar (Guinevere), and the rest. Anticipating and perhaps influencing the subsequent revival of interest in ancient goddess cults and female deities, *The Mists of Avalon* reveled in an age of dominating pagan feminism (and would, through the years, elicit an occasional criticism for a presumed anti-Christian and antimale bias).

Bradley also wrote many stand-alone science fiction novels, "sword and sorcery" fantasies and straight historicals, including *The Firebrand* (1987), her tale of the women of the Trojan War, and her savage gladiator fantasy, *Warrior Woman* (1985).

Works

Black Trillium (with Elizabeth Waters) (1995); *Bloody Sun* (1964); *Bluebeard's Daughter* (1968); *Brass Dragon, The* (1970); *Castle Terror* (1965); *Catch Trap, The* (1979); *City of Sorcery* (1984); *Colors of Space* (1983); *Dark Intruder and Other Stories, The* (1964); *Dark Satanic* (1988); *Darkover Landfall* (1972); *Door Through Space* (1961); *Drums of Darkness* (1976); *Endless Universe, The* (1979); *Endless Voyage, The* (1975); *Exile's Song* (with Adrienne Martine Barnes) (1996); *Falcons of Narabedla* (1964); *Fall of Atlantis* (1987); *Firebrand, The* (1987); *Forbidden Tower* (1977); *Forest House, The* (1994); *Hawkmistress* (1982); *Heirs of Hammerfell* (1989); *Heritage of Hastur* (1975); *House Between the Worlds* (1981); *Hunters of the Red Moon* (with Paul Edwin Zimmer) (1973); *Inheritor, The* (1984); *Lady of Avalon, The* (1997); *Lady of the Trillium* (with Elizabeth Waters) (1995); *Mists of Avalon, The* (1983); *Night's Daughter* (1985); *Planet Savers* (1962); *Priestess of Avalon* (2000); *Rediscovery* (with Mercedes Lackey) (1993); *Ruins of Isis, The* (1980); *Seven from the Stars* (1962); *Sharra's Exile* (1981); *Shattered Chain* (1976); *Souvenir of Monique* (1967); *Spell Sword, The* (1974); *Star of Danger* (1965);

Stormqueen (1978); *Survey Ship* (1980); *Survivors, The* (with Paul Edwin Zimmer) (1979); *Sword of Aldones* (1962); *Thendara House* (1983); *Two to Conquer* (1980); *Warrior Woman* (1985); *Winds of Darkover* (1970); *Witch Hill* (1990); *World Wreckers* (1971)

As Lee Champman:

I Am a Lesbian (1962)

As Miriam Gardner:

My Sister, My Love (1963); *Strange Woman, The* (1962); *Twilight Lovers* (1964)

As Morgan Ives:

Knives of Desire (1964); *Spare Her Heaven* (1963)

Brand, Max (Frederick Schiller Faust)

(1892–1944) *Also wrote as: George Owen Baxter, Walter Butler, George Challis, Evan Evans, John Frederick, Frederick Frost, David Manning, Peter Henry Morland*

The man who would do as much or more than anyone to popularize the mythical dimensions of the American West and to make cowboy fiction the most popular of all pulp genres professed to find the actual West “disgusting,” and wrote most of his popular tales of cowboys and the American frontier while sprawled amidst the Renaissance splendors of his villa near Florence, Italy. Max Brand was the best-known pen name—one of 18—belonging to pulp wordsmith extraordinaire Frederick Schiller Faust. An inexhaustibly creative figure who could write in all genres and could produce as many as 20,000 words in a day, Max Brand was one of the most popular writers of the 20th century. Faust as Brand wrote spy stories, horse racing stories, historicals, doctor stories (he was the creator of Dr. Kildare, eventually the hero of a successful movie and television series), and mysteries, but he was best known for his stories of the Old West.

Frederick Faust was an aimless, penniless 24-year-old college-educated poet at loose ends in New York City when he wangled a letter of recommendation from the sister of Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) to Robert Davis at Muncey’s, the leading pulp publisher. Davis, who disliked the im-

portuning of Faust’s elderly patrons, gave him paper and a plot and dismissed him. Faust stunned Davis when he returned before the end of the day with a completed, professional piece of fiction. The story, “Convalescence,” appeared in the March 1917 issue of *All-Story*, and an extraordinary career began.

Faust began turning out first-rate pulp fiction, earning \$8,281 in the first nine months at the job, an enormous sum of money by the standards of the time. His first western, *The Untamed*, was published in serial form beginning with the December 1918 issue of *All-Story*. It set the course for much of his fiction to come. Previously, western literature had been concerned with an aura of realism and a historical context. Faust had no interest in these things. His west was a poeticized location with few reference points to specific times or locales. He used the idea of a violent frontier America as an almost abstract setting for retellings of ancient epics and classical myths. The hero of *The Untamed*, the mysterious youth “Whistlin’” Dan Barry, is explicitly linked to “the great god Pan.” *Trailin’* uses the story of Oedipus, *Pillar Mountain* the Theseus myth, and *Hired Guns* is a western version of Homer’s *Iliad*. Characteristically, when Faust’s publishers sent him on a trip out west to soak up atmosphere, he spent nearly all his time inside a hotel room, writing more of his inauthentic and phenomenally popular Westerns.

Faust’s production rate was so high that *Western Story* or one of his other regular markets would print several of his stories in a single issue, each under a different pen name. This, of course, was unknown to the readers, who wrote in to debate the relative artistry of Faust’s various identities—which included, besides Brand, John Frederick, George Challis, George Owen Baxter, David Manning, Nicholas Silver, Martin Dexter, Evin Evan, Evan Evans, Frederick Frost, Dennis Lawton, Nicholas Silver, and Peter Henry Morland. Some names would come to be identified with a certain type of story, as in the historicals and swashbucklers of George Challis. But Max Brand was by far the most frequently used and the most popular of Faust’s multiple identities. “Max Brand” itself was originally created with the help of the playwright Sophie Treadwell (1885–1970), who advanced the

theory that the successful pseudonym always consisted of two monosyllables with the same vowel sound in each. Her theory, at least as applied to Max Brand, was proven absolutely right.

Faust personally preferred to write tragic, epic poetry instead of pulp. He was an extremely learned man and not a bad classical poet. He lavished great time and effort on his poetry cycles. But although he was capable of using two-dollar words, he knew that the ones the pulps paid four cents for were the ones that kept him a rich man. In the years before the Great Depression, when fewer pulp titles shared the huge pulp readership, publishers could pay their top writers relatively high rates. His pulp income plus many sales to Hollywood meant a good income for Faust. Looking for a residence conducive to the creation of epic poetry, he settled in Italy, buying a villa on the bank of the Arno, overlooking the birthplace of the Renaissance. In the morning he would apply a furious hunt-and-peck technique to a typewriter perched on a desk that once belonged to a Benedictine monastery. In the afternoons, he stretched out in a leather easy chair, quill pen in hand, and worked on poems with such titles as "Dionysus in Hades." In the evenings he taught himself Greek so he could read Homer in the original. Faust was by all accounts a fascinating, knowledgeable, and generous individual.

During the Great Depression, Faust's regular pulp markets began to cut their rates. His agent began selling his work to the slick magazines like *Collier's*, but Faust disliked the narrative and ideological restrictions they sometimes imposed. He returned to the pulps and their lower rates. When war became imminent in Europe he returned to America and spent some of his last years at the Hollywood studios, earning a large salary as screenwriter for Warner Bros. and MGM. A few years later, with the United States finally at war, Faust pulled some strings and got himself assigned as a combat correspondent, covering the Italian campaign. Accompanying a platoon of infantrymen into battle against an enemy stronghold, facing a heavy artillery barrage, Faust was hit in the chest with shell fragments and died on the battlefield. He was 52 years old. Following his death, the "King of the Pulps" received editorial tributes in a



Max Brand was just one of the many pen names belonging to Frederick Faust, famous for his stories about the Old West. (*Golden West Literary Agency*)

range of international publications, from *The Infantry Journal* to the *London Times*. The journalist Quentin Reynolds wrote: "No man could invent so many plots (not even Balzac) or so crowd a few thousand words with action as Max Brand." Faust's biographer, Robert Easton, believed the writer was an exemplar of his age: "what Babe Ruth and Red Grange were to sports, Charles Lindbergh to flying, Henry Ford to industry, the expression of an expansive time, when horizons seemed larger and possibilities less limited."

Works

STORIES

"Adopted Son, The" (1917); "Back to His Own" (1930); "Bad-eye" (1918); "Bad News for Bad Men" (1934); "Bait

and The Trap" (1935); "Battle for Mike, The" (1925); "Beggar My Tailor" (1935); "Bells of San Carlos, The" (1938); "Beyond the Finish" (1934); "Black O'Rourke, The" (1936); "Bottle in the Sea" (1937); "Brute, The" (1924); "Bulldog" (1937); "Brain and Brawn" (1919); "By Their Work" (1944); "Captain" (1935); "Cat and the Perfume" (1935); "Charlie" (1935); "Consuming Fire, The" (1920); "Convalescence" (1917); "Crazy Rhythm" (1935); "Cure of Silver Canyon, The" (1921); "Death and Jimmy Warner" (1938); "Death of Love, The" (1937); "Doctor Kildare's Hardest Case" (1942); "Dust Storm" (1937); "Eagles over Crooked Creek" (1938); "East Wind" (1941); "Emerald Trail, The" (1922); "Fighting Coward, The" (1935); "Fixed" (1936); "Flaming Finish, The" (1938); "Gambler and the Stake, The" (1917); "Ghost, The" (1919); "Gilded Box" (1935); "Going Straight" (1925); "Golden Coyote" (1930); "Great Stroke, The" (1918); "Gunfighters in Hell" (1935); "Half a Partner" (1939); "Hole-in-the-wall Barrett" (1919); "Hound of the Hunter, The" (1936); "Interns Can't Take Money" (1936); "Islands of Safety" (1935); "John Ovington Returns" (1918); "Just Irish" (1937); "King Charlie One Year Later" (1922); "Kinsale, The" (1936); "Laughter of Slim Malone" (1919); "Last Flight, The" (1938); "Little Father of Death" (1935); "Lost Garden, The" (1920); "Man in the Dark, The" (1924); "Man in the Shroud, The" (1935); "Man Who Followed, The" (1921); "Master and Man" (1924); "Mercy Anne" (1933); "Mother" (1930); "Mr. Cinderella" (1917); "No Man's Friend" (1925); "Old Bean, The" (1938); "One Way Trail, The" (1922); "Outcast Breed" (1934); "Outlaws All" (1921); "Out of the Dark" (1920); "Partners" (1938); "Pringle's Luck" (1937); "Receding Brow, The" (1919); "Rifle Pass" (1935); "Rodeo Ranch" (1923); "Rose of India" (1931); "Safety McTee" (1923); "Sagebrush Cinderella, A" (1920); "Saint, The" (1937); "Satan's Gun Rider" (1934); "Shiver-Nose" (1930); "Silent Witness, The" (1938); "Sleeper Pays a Debt" (1934); "Sleeper Turns Horse Thief" (1934); "Sole Survivor, The" (1917); "Something Honest" (1937); "Special Occasion, A" (1934); "Spot Lester" (1931); "Strange Villa" (1935); "Sun Stood Still" (1934); "Survival" (1943); "Taming of Red Thunder" (1942); "Thoroughbred" (1935); "True Steel" (1939); "Two Sixes" (1923); "Under His Shirt" (1923); "Victory" (1919); "Viva! Viva!" (1937); "Wedding Guest, The" (1934); "Welding Quirt" (1924); "Wet Money" (1934); "White Hunger" (1930); "Whiskey Sour" (1938); "Wings Over Moscow" (1935); "Woodward's Devil" (1918); "Yellow Dog" (1930)

BOOKS

As Max Brand:

Alcatraz (1923); *Ambush at Torture Canyon* (1971); *Bandit of the Black Hills, The* (1949); *Battle's End* (1990), also published as *The Three Crosses*; *Bells of San Filipo, The* (1977); *Big Game* (1973); *Big Trail* (1956); *Black Jack* (1926); *Black Rider and Other Stories, The* (1996); *Blood on the Trail* (1957); *Bluejay, The* (1927); *Border Guns* (1952); *Border Kid, The* (1941); *Brothers on the Trail* (1934); *Calling Dr. Kildare* (1940); *Cheyenne Gold* (1972); *Children of the Night* (1923); *Chip Champions a Lady* (1990), also published as *Forgotten Treasure*; *Clung* (1924); *Coward of the Clan* (1991); *Cross Brand, The* (1993); *Dan Barry's Daughter* (1924); *Danger Trail* (1940); *Dead Man's Treasure* (1974); *Dead or Alive* (1938); *Desert Pilot* (1994); *Destry Rides Again* (1930); *Drifter's Vengeance* (1973); *Dr. Kildare Goes Home* (1941); *Dr. Kildare's Crisis* (1942); *Dr. Kildare's Search* (1943); *Dr. Kildare's Trial* (1942); *Fate's Honeymoon* (1926); *Fightin' Fool* (1939); *Fighting Four, The* (1944); *Fire Brain* (1926); *Flaming Irons* (1948); *Free Range Lanning* (1921); *Fugitives' Fire* (1991); *Galloping Broncos, The* (1950); *Galloping Danger* (1979); *Gambler, The* (1954); *Garden of Eden, The* (1927); *Gentle Desperado* (1985); *Gentle Gunman* (1964); *Golden Lightning* (1964); *Gun Gentlemen* (1924); *Gunman's Gold* (1939); *Gun Tamer, The* (1929); *Hair-trigger Kid, The* (1951); *Happy Jack* (1936); *Happy Valley, The* (1931); *Harrigan* (1926); *Hired Guns* (1948); *His Third Master* (1925); *Hunted Riders* (1935); *Invisible Outlaw* (1954); *Jackson Trail, The* (1932); *King Bird Rides, The* (1936); *King of the Range* (1935); *Larramee's Ranch* (1966); *Lawless Land* (1983); *Long Chance, The* (1941); *Long Chase, The* (1960); *Longhorn Feud, The* (1933); *Luck* (1920); *Luck of the Spindrift* (1972); *Lucky Larabee* (1957); *Man from Mustang, The* (1942); *Man from the Wilderness* (1980); *Marbleface* (1939); *Mighty Lobo* (1963); *Mistral* (1929); *Mountain Guns* (1985); *Mountain Riders* (1946); *Murder Me* (1995); *Mystery Ranch* (1930); *New Frontier, The* (1989); *Nighthawk Trail, The* (1987); *Night Horseman, The* (1920); *One Man Posse* (1987); *Outlaw Breed* (1955); *Outlaw of Buffalo Flat, The* (1974); *Outlaw, The* (1933); *Phantom Spy, The* (1973); *Pillar Mountain* (1928); *Pleasant Jim* (1928); *Pride of Tyson* (1927); *Rancher's Revenge, The* (1934); *Range Jester/Black Thunder* (1991); *Range-land Avenger, The* (1924); *Rawhide Justice* (1975); *Red Bandanna/Carcajou's Trail* (1991);

Return of Free Range Lanning, The (1995); *Reward, The* (1977); *Rider of the High Hills* (1977); *Riders of the Plains* (1940); *Riders of the Silences* (1920); *Ride the Wild Trail* (1966); *Rogue Mustang* (1984); *Rustlers of Beacon Creek* (1935); *Sacking of El Dorado, The* (1994); *Seven of Diamonds, The* (1935); *Seventh Man, The* (1921); *Seven Trails* (1949); *Shotgun Law* (1976); *Silvertip* (1941); *Silvertip's Chase* (1944); *Silvertip's Roundup* (1943); *Silvertip's Search* (1945); *Silvertip's Strike* (1942); *Silvertip's Trap* (1943); *Singing Guns* (1938); *Single Jack* (1950); *Six Golden Angels* (1937); *Sixteen in Nome* (1995); *Slow Joe* (1933); *Smiling Charlie* (1931); *Smiling Desperado* (1953); *South of Rio Grande* (1936); *Speedy* (1955); *Stingaree, The* (1968); *Stolen Stallion, The* (1945); *Storm on the Range* (1978); *Stranger, The* (1963); *Stranger at the Gate, The* (1926); *Streak, The* (1937); *Tamer of the Wild* (1962); *Tenderfoot, The* (1953); *Thunderer, The* (1933); *Thunder Moon* (1969); *Thunder Moon's Challenge* (1982); *Tiger* (1923); *Torture Trail* (1965); *Tragedy Trail* (1951); *Trailin'* (1920); *Trail Partners* (1956); *Trouble in Timberline* (1984); *Trouble Kid* (1970); *Trouble Trail* (1937); *Twenty Notches* (1932); *Untamed, The* (1919); *Valley of Jewels* (1993); *Valley of Vanishing Men* (1947); *Valley Thieves* (1946); *Valley Vultures* (1932); *Vengeance Trail* (1941); *Whispering Outlaw, The* (1926); *White Cheyenne, The* (1960); *White Wolf, The* (1926); *Wild Freedom* (1981); *Wine on the Desert and Other Stories* (1940); *Young Dr. Kildare* (1941)

As George Owen Baxter:

Brother of the Cheyenne (1935); *Donnegan* (1923); *Killers, The* (1931); *King Charlie* (1925); *King of the Range* (1935); *Long, Long Trail, The* (1923); *Shadow of Silver Tip, The* (1925); *Trail to San Triste, The* (1927); *Train's Trust* (1927); *Whispering Outlaw, The* (1927); *Wooden Guns* (1925)

As David Manning:

Bandit's Honor (1927); *Bull Hunter* (1924); *Bull Hunter's Romance* (1924); *Mustang Herder, The* (1928); *On the Trail of Four* (1927); *Outlaw Tamer, The* (1927); *Señor Jingle Bells* (1928); *Western Tommy* (1927)

As John Frederick:

Bronze Collar, The (1925); *Sword Lover, The* (1927)

As Peter Henry Morland:

Beyond the Outpost (1925); *Ronnicky Doone* (1926)

As George Challis:

Bait and the Trap, The (1951); *Firebrand, The* (1950); *Monsieur* (1927); *Splendid Rascal, The* (1926); *Naked Blade, The* (1938)

As Evan Evans:

Border Bandit, The (1947); *Gunman's Legacy* (1949); *Montana Rides* (1933); *Montana Rides Again* (1934); *Outlaw's Code, The* (1954); *Outlaw Valley* (1953); *Rescue of Broken Arrow* (1948); *Sawdust and Sixguns* (1950); *Smuggler's Trail* (1950)

As Walter Butler:

Cross Over Nine (1935); *Night Flower* (1936)

As Frederick Frost:

Bamboo Whistle, The (1937); *Secret Agent Number One* (1936)

Brody, Marc (W. H. "Bill" Williams)

(?–1990)

Marc Brody was both the byline and protagonist of dozens of sexy thrillers written between 1955 and 1960. Brody was a tough American newspaperman, in later years a television crime reporter, who pursued hot stories and even hotter women in popular softcover digests, and a few comic book versions, put between covers by Horwitz, Australia's leading publisher of lurid pulp. And what covers they were! In an age of spectacularly sexy cover art, the Brodys offered some of the most memorable, full of fetching, alluring young models with come-hither looks demanding the books' purchase. Like the popular novels of Hank JANSON, Carter BROWN, James Hadley CHASE, and others, the Brodys impersonated the American hard-boiled style, replicating its broad outline—the slangy patter, the violence, the cynicism, the abundance of voluptuous, ever-available females—and making them broader. Brody the hero plied his trade in a fictional U.S. metropolis, although his assignments sometimes took him to exotic foreign locations and at least once to the land down under. The books were not as successful as those other ersatz American tough-guy novels from Australia written by Carter Brown, which were pub-



Marc Brody's late-1950s thrillers featured memorably sexy covers.

lished in the United States with great success, but they were no less authentic and just as much fun. “Brody” the author was in reality Bill Williams, an Australian journalist, editor of the muckraking newspaper *Melbourne Truth*.

Works

Babe Bound to Kill (1958); *Baby Your Racket's Busted* (1957); *Baby Your Type's Murder* (1958); *Blackmail in Red Headlines* (1955); *Blackmail Was a Brunette* (1957); *Blonde at Bay* (1959); *Blonde Cries Blackmail, The* (1957); *Blueprints for Murder* (1955); *Cover Girl Cries Murder* (1959); *Dames in His Death, The* (1956); *Deadline for a Dame* (1957); *Flame Was Fatal* (1958); *Her Halo in Headlines* (1957); *Hers Is a Hearse* (1957); *High Tide Temptress* (1966); *Hot Line for a Honey* (1958); *Justice for a Jinx* (1957); *Kitten You're a Killer* (1958); *Lady's Out of Circulation, The* (1957); *Lady, Don't Shroud Me!*

(1958); *Larceny for a Lovely* (1957); *Late Final Blonde* (1958); *Libel Was a Blonde* (1957); *Maid for the Morgue* (1956); *Maid Up for Murder* (1957); *Murder Is a Maiden's Handicap* (1960); *One Shot for Sadie* (1958); *Page Me a Pinup* (1955); *Penthouse Preview* (1958); *Red Hot and Morgue Bound* (1958); *Second Story Sinner* (1958); *Set Up for a Sinner* (1957); *Sinister Sister* (1956); *Strictly Corruptible* (1956); *Step Swiftly Sinner* (1956); *Sweet Svelte and Sinful* (1956); *Undercover Cutie* (1958); *Write Off the Redhead* (1958)

Brown, Carter (A. G. Yates)

(1923–1985)

The hard-boiled detective story had slowly, steadily made its way around the world in the years following its invention in America in the early 1920s. The original stories and novels were distributed in other countries with great success and certain foreign publishers and writers began to attempt to copy the form. By the 1930s the style had been adopted by English hard-boiled imitators like James Hadley CHASE and Peter CHEYNEY, and in the 1940s it was given a Gallic transfer by such French writers as Leo Malet (b. 1909) and Boris Vian (1920–59). In the 1950s, the Australians produced a number of their own homegrown masters of American-style crime fiction, and none was more successful or prolific than Alan Geoffrey Yates, better known by his durable pen name of Carter Brown.

Born in England, Yates immigrated to Australia after World War II and service in the Royal Navy. He worked as a traveling salesman before starting to sell pulp fiction stories to Australian periodicals. In the beginning he wrote anything—crime, horror stories, and westerns under the pen name of Tex Conrad. From the early '50s, however, he began to concentrate almost exclusively on his American-style detective stories. In early years he used the name of Peter Carter Brown. Like Chase and Cheyney and others before him, Yates's knowledge of America and the sort of underworld milieu and jargon he imitated came strictly from reading the earlier works in the genre. His own sensibility dictated an imitation not so much of the realistic hard-boiled strain of Dashiell HAMMETT and Ray-

mond CHANDLER but of the more hyperbolic and tongue-in-cheek hard-boiled pros like Carrol John DALY and Robert Leslie BELLEM, and perhaps the newly launched Shell Scott series of zany hard-boiled mysteries by Richard Prather. Carter Brown's mock American prose read a bit like the conclusion of a game of "telephone," in which the person at the end of the line can repeat the gist of the story but gets a lot of the words wrong. It didn't matter much in the beginning, since Brown's early books were intended only for an Australian audience.

Horwitz, one of Sydney's leading paperback houses, had great success with Carter Brown's zesty adventures, and Brown supplied them at the rate of more than one per month. Eventually the series was picked up by the New American Library paperback publisher in the United States, and either American readers didn't notice Brown's sometimes tin-eared version of U.S. speech patterns and slang, or else they were so agreeably entertained by Brown's brisk, breezy style and abundance of sexual content that they just didn't care. The Carter Brown paperbacks sold in the tens of millions for the decades Brown supplied them, almost as popular in America as they were in Australia and Great Britain. Brown wrote simple, fast, and furious, with a brisk plot, lots of dialogue, wisecracks, action, and beautiful women. The American versions of the books were attractively packaged with sleek, pulpy cover illustrations, usually by Barye Phillips or Robert McGinnis.

In the beginning Brown's books were stand-alone mysteries and detective stories, but after a few years of those he developed a number of series characters and featured them in the bulk of his subsequent hundreds of titles. In addition to a number of fairly conventional trench-coated, hard-drinking crime fighters, Brown featured a few more original protagonists, notably his curvaceous, bubbly female private eye Mavis Seidlitz (star of *Honey, Here's Your Hearse*, *A Bullet for My Baby*, *Good Morning, Lament for a Lousy Lover*, and possibly more), and Larry Baker, a studio screenwriter who must solve the sorts of crimes only the crackpot denizens of Tinsel Town would think of committing.

The Carter Brown books evolved through the years with changing market trends, adjusting to

the craze for Ian FLEMING's James Bond gimmickry, and in the 1970s feeding book buyers' supposed need for more, and more explicit, sex scenes.

In the 1980s one of the Carter Brown mysteries became the basis for a stage musical called *The Stripper*, staged by the Sydney Theatre Company.

Works

And the Undead Sing (1974); *Angel* (1962); *Angry Amazons, The* (1972); *Aseptic Murders, The* (1972); *Baby, You're Guilt-Edged* (1956); *Bella Donna Was Poison* (1957); *Bid the Babe Bye-Bye* (1956); *Black Lace Hangover, The* (1966); *Blonde, Beautiful, and Blam!* (1956); *Blonde, The* (1955); *Blonde on a Broomstick* (1966); *Blonde on the Rocks* (1963); *Blonde Verdict* (1956); *Body, The* (1958); *Bombshell, The* (1960); *Booty for a Babe* (1956); *Born Loser, The* (1973); *Brazen, The* (1960); *Bribe Was Beautiful, The* (1956); *Bullet for My Baby, A* (1955); *Bump and Grind Murders, The* (1964); *Burden of Guilt* (1970); *Caress Before Killing* (1956); *Catch Me a Phoenix* (1965); *Charlie Sent Me* (1963); *Charmer Chased, The* (1958); *Chorine Makes a Killing* (1957); *Clown, The* (1972); *Coffin Bird, The* (1970); *Corpse, The* (1958); *Corpse for Christmas, A* (1965); *Covert, The* (1971); *Creative Murders, The* (1971); *Curtains for a Chorine* (1955); *Curves for the Coroner* (1955); *Cutie Cashed His Chips* (1955), also published as *The Savage Salome*; *Cutie Takes the Count* (1958); *Dame, The* (1959); *Dance of Death, The* (1964); *Darling You're Doomed* (1956); *Deadly Kitten, The* (1967); *Deadly Miss* (1958); *Death of a Doll* (1956), also published as *The Everloving Blues*; *Deep Cold Green, The* (1968); *Delilah Was Deadly* (1956); *Desired, The* (1959); *Die Anytime, After Tuesday* (1969); *Donavan* (1974); *Donavan's Day* (1975); *Donna Died Laughing* (1956); *Dream Is Deadly, The* (1960); *Dumdum Murder, The* (1962); *Early Boyd, The* (1975); *Exotic, The* (1961); *Flagelator, The* (1969); *Frame Is Beautiful, The* (1953); *Fraulein Is Feline* (1953); *Girl from Outer Space, The* (1965); *Girl in a Shroud* (1963); *Girl Who Was Possessed, The* (1963); *Goddess Gone Bad* (1958); *Good Year for Dwarfs*, (1970); *Graves, I Dig* (1960); *Had I But Groaned* (1968); *Hammer of Thor, The* (1965); *Hang Up Kid, The* (1970); *Hellcat, The* (1962); *Hi Fi Fadeout* (1958); *High Fashion in Homicide* (1958); *Homicide Hoyden* (1954); *Honey, Here's Your Hearse* (1955); *Hong Kong Cap'er, The* (1962); *Hoodlum Was a Honey, The* (1956); *House of Sorcery* (1967); *Ice Cold in Ermine* (1958); *Ice Cold Nude, The* (1962);

Invisible Flamini, The (1971); *Iron Maiden, The* (1975); *Jade Eyed Jungle, The* (1963); *Kiss and Kill* (1955); *Lady Has No Convictions, The* (1956); *Lady Is Available, The* (1963); *Lady Is Chased, The* (1953); *Lady Is Transparent, The* (1962); *Lament for a Lousy Lover* (1960); *Last Note for a Lovely* (1957); *Lover, The* (1958); *Lover, Don't Come Back* (1962); *Loving and the Dead, The* (1959); *Luck Was No Lady* (1958); *Madam, You're Mayhem* (1957); *Maid for Murder* (1954); *Manhattan Cowboy* (1973); *Master, The* (1973); *Mermaid Murmurs Murder* (1953); *Mini-Murders, The* (1968); *Minx Is Murder, The* (1957); *Miss Called Murder* (1955); *Mistress, The* (1958); *Model of No Virtue* (1956); *Morgue Amour, A* (1954); *Murder Among Us, The* (1962); *Murder by Miss-Demeanor* (1956); *Murder in the Family Way* (1971); *Murder in the Key Club* (1962); *Murder Is the Message* (1969); *Murder Is a Package Deal* (1964); *Murder Is My Mistress* (1954); *Murder Is So Nostalgic* (1972); *Murder on High* (1973); *Murder Wears a Mantilla* (1957); *Myopic Mermaid, The* (1961); *Negative in Blue* (1974); *Nemesis Wore Nylons* (1954); *Never Was Girl, The* (1964); *Night Wheeler* (1975); *No Blonde Is an Island* (1965); *No Body She Knows* (1958); *No Future, Fair Lady* (1958); *No Halo for Hedy* (1956); *No Harp for My Angel* (1956); *No Tears from the Widow* (1966); *No Time for Leola* (1967); *None but the Lethal Heart* (1959); *Nude with a View* (1965); *Nymph to the Slaughter* (1963); *Only the Very Rich* (1969); *Passionate, The* (1959); *Passionate Pagan, The* (1963); *Phreak Out* (1975); *Play Now—Kill Later* (1966); *Plush Lined Coffin, The* (1967); *Pornbroker, The* (1972); *Ride the Roller Coaster* (1975); *Sad Eyed Seductress, The* (1961); *Scarlet Flush, The* (1963); *Seidlitz and the Super-Spy* (1967); *Seven Sirens, The* (1972); *Sex Clinic, The* (1971); *Shady Lady* (1953); *Shamus, Your Slip Is Showing* (1955); *Silken Nightmare, The* (1964); *Sinfully Yours* (1958); *Sinner, You Slay Me* (1957); *So Deadly, Sinner* (1959), also published as *Walk Softly, Witch*; *So Lovely She Lies* (1958); *So Move the Body* (1973); *So What Killed the Vampire?* (1966); *Sob Sister Cries Murder* (1955); *Sometime Wife, The* (1965); *Star-Crossed Lover, The* (1974); *Streaked Blonde Slave, The* (1969); *Strictly for Felony* (1956); *Stripper, The* (1961); *Stroud for My Sugar* (1955); *Suddenly by Violence* (1959); *Sweetheart, This Is Homicide* (1956); *Target for Their Dark Desire* (1966); *Tempt a Tigress* (1958); *Temptress, The* (1960); *Ten Grand Tallulah and Temptation* (1957); *Terror Comes Creeping* (1959); *Tigress, The* (1961); *Tomorrow Is Murder* (1960); *True Son of the Beast* (1970); *Two Timing*

Blonde, The (1955); *Unorthodox Corpse, The* (1957); *Until Temptation Do Us Part* (1967); *Up Tight Blonde, The* (1969); *Velvet Vixen, The* (1964); *Venus Unarmed* (1953); *Victim, The* (1959); *W.H.O.R.E.* (1971); *Wanton, The* (1959); *Wayward Wahine, The* (1960); *Wench Is Wicked, The* (1955); *Wheeler Fortune* (1974); *Wheeler, Dealer!* (1975); *Where Did Charity Go?* (1970); *White Bikini, The* (1963); *Who Killed Dr. Sex?* (1964); *Widow Bewitched* (1958); *Wind Up Doll, The* (1963); *Wreath for a Redhead* (1957); *Wreath for Rebecca* (1965); *Yogi Shrouds Yolanda* (1965); *Zelda* (1961)

As A. G. Yates:

Cold Dark Hours (1958)

Brown, Fredric

(1906–1972)

“A genius of sorts,” his friend and fellow writer Walt Sheldon called Fredric Brown. “He was a compulsive storyteller; and made up stories or bits of stories in his every waking moment. Wherever he went he would look at something or somebody . . . and say to himself, ‘What if?’”

That compulsive imagination, plus an unpredictable way with plot and a playful, impish desire to provoke and shock were the building blocks of Brown’s unique, ingenious body of work. An anomalous figure in many ways, Brown was the pulp writer who upset the pulp clichés. A writer of tough and shocking scenes who was also one of the funniest American writers, he was among the rare genre writers who wrote science fiction and crime fiction with equal flair and inventiveness. Even rarer, he could blithely mix genres and styles without losing his way or his chance at another publisher’s paycheck.

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, Brown briefly attended the University of Cincinnati and Hanover College, then spent his twenties at a deadening office job. A move to work as a proofreader on the *Milwaukee Journal* took him out of his old rut and introduced him to a new circle of friends, among them such local aspiring and tyro writers as Robert Bloch, Stanley Weinbaum, and William Campbell GAULT. He put a pulp short story together and sent it to Street & Smith’s *Detective*

Story Magazine. “The Moon for a Nickel,” set in a park on Lake Michigan, was a crudely exciting short-short story, anticipating Alfred Hitchcock’s 1954 film *Rear Window* (and its Cornell Woolrich story source) in its plot about a man who sees a crime and a getaway through his telescope and then, as an eyewitness, becomes the criminals’ next target. It appeared in the March 1938 issue. The *Detective Story* editors did not know it—the author’s cleverness was still in embryo—but a star was born. Brown kept writing. By the early ’40s he had become a regular contributor to the multitudinous crime pulps, including *Clues*, *Thrilling Mystery*, *Dime Mystery*, *Thrilling Detective*, *New Detective*, *Ten Detective Aces*, *G-Man Detective*, *Popular Detective*, and *Detective Fiction Weekly*. When he branched into science fiction he sold stories to *Unknown*, *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, *Planet Stories*, *Captain Future*, and more. He wrote some 200 stories for the pulp magazines in less than 10 years, nearly all of it while working full time as a proofreader.

He went to New York in the 1940s to take a job with one of the pulp publishers. When this did not work out, Brown decided to try writing full time. He published his first novel in 1947. The inventive and delightful *The Fabulous Clipjoint* was awarded the Best First Novel Edgar Allan Poe Award by the Mystery Writers of America. The book was the first in a brief series about an amateur detective couple, Ed and Am Hunter. Brown’s early nonseries crime books included *The Screaming Mimi*, about a reporter’s search for a “ripper,” with a fairy-tale subtext, and *Night of the Jabberwock*, an inventive mystery. Brown’s imagination seemed never to lag as he wrote one remarkable book after another throughout the ’50s, including the psychologically complex *The Deep End* and the experimental *The Lenient Beast*, which used multiple perspectives.

Brown’s science fiction was also highly creative, best known for strong infusions of humor. *What Mad Universe* (1949), his first science fiction novel, was a self-reflexive farce dependent on the readers’ shared knowledge of the clichés of science fiction itself. Just as amusing was *Martians, Go Home*, (1955) in which the terrifying notion of an invasion from outer space becomes

ridiculous, the aliens a bunch of annoying Peeping Toms. Fredric Brown’s irreverence and constant flow of new ideas showed just how much variety and innovation could thrive in the supposedly circumscribed realms of pulp and genre fiction.

Works

Angels and Spaceships (1954); *Before She Kills* (1984); *Bloody Moonlight, The* (1949); *Brother Monster* (1987); *Case of the Dancing Sandwiches, The* (1951); *Case of the Dancing Sandwiches, The* (collection) (1985); *Complications of a Fiend* (1950); *Daymares* (1968); *Dead Ringer, The* (1948); *Death Has Many Doors* (1951); *Fabulous Clipjoint, The* (1947); *Far Cry, The* (1951); *Five Day Nightmare, The* (1963); *Freak Show Murders, The* (1985); *Gibbering Night, The* (1991); *Happy Ending* (1990); *Here Comes a Candle* (1950); *His Name Was Death* (1954); *Homicide Sanitarium* (1984); *Honeymoon in Hell* (1958); *Knock Three-One-Two* (1959); *Late Lamented, The* (1959); *Lenient Beast, The* (1956); *Lights in the Sky Are Stars, The* (1953); *Madball* (1953); *Madman’s Holiday* (1984); *Martians, Go Home* (1955); *Mind Thing, The* (1961); *Mrs. Murphy’s Underpants* (1963); *Murderers, The* (1961); *Nightmare in Darkness* (1987); *Nightmares and Geezenstacks: 47 Stories* (1961); *Night of the Jabberwock* (1950); *Office, The* (1958); *One for the Road* (1958); *Pardon My Ghoulish Laughter* (1986); *Pickled Punks, The* (1991); *Red Is the Hue of Hell* (1986); *Rogue in Space* (1957); *Screaming Mimi, The* (1949); *Selling Death Short* (1988); *Sex Life on the Planet Mars* (1986); *Shaggy Dog and Other Stories, The* (1963); *Space on My Hands* (1951); *30 Corpses Every Thursday* (1986); *Three Corpse Parlay* (1988); *We All Killed Grandma* (1952); *Wench Is Dead, The* (1955); *What Mad Universe* (1949); *Whispering Death* (1989); *Who Was That Blonde I Saw You Kill Last Night?* (1988)

Brown, Wenzell

(1912–1981)

Wenzell Brown was a top name in the popular ’50s subgenre of juvenile delinquency (JD) fiction, acclaimed by present-day connoisseurs like Miriam Linna as one of the “Big Three” (with Hal ELLSON and Irving SHULMAN) of JD lit. The books, with titles like *The Big Rumble*, *Gang Girl*, and *The Hoods Ride In*, chronicled the wild lives

of wayward teens—deprived big-city punks stoked on reefers and goofballs, armed with zip guns and shiny switchblade knives—the action excitingly related in Brown’s vivid prose. Unlike some of the other juvenile delinquency authors, such as Ellson and Sam Kolman (author of *The Royal Vultures*) Brown did not draw on work-related experience with deviant youth, but as a seasoned social historian and researcher he turned up plenty of juicy reality to use in his novels. His *Teen-age Terror* was in fact a nonfiction volume, authentic case studies merely touched up by Brown’s narrative skills. But neither was Brown constrained by reality. He could take the subject of juvenile menace to wild extremes, as in *Teen-age Mafia*, in which the old neighborhood gangs become a national miscreant network.

Brown had a peripatetic life, studying in New York, London, and Denmark, and teaching in China and Puerto Rico in the 1930s. His later travels around the Caribbean produced several books, both novels and nonfiction. *Dark Drums* and *They Called Her Charity* were colorful, melodramatic historical novels set in Jamaica and the Virgin Islands. Several of his books were pioneering efforts in the “true crime” genre, including *Introduction to Murder*, his account of the notorious “Lonely Hearts” murderers (their story told on film many years later, in 1970, as *The Honeymoon Killers*), and the Edgar Allan Poe Award–winning volume about executed females, *They Died in the Chair*.

Works

An Act of Passion (1962); *Bedeveled: The True Story of the Interplay of the Aggressor and the Victim in Sexual Attacks* (1961); *Big Rumble, The* (1955), also published as *Jailbait Jungle*; *Cry Kill* (1955); *Dark Drums* (1950); *Gang Girl* (1954); *Golden Witch, The* (1964); *Hong Kong Aftermath* (1943); *Hoods Ride In, The* (1959); *How to Tell Fortunes with Cards* (1963); *Introduction to Murder* (1952); *Kept Women* (1966); *Monkey on My Back* (1953); *Murder Kick, The* (1961); *Murder Seeks an Agent* (1945); *Possess and Conquer* (1975); *Prison Girl* (1958); *Run, Chico, Run* (1952); *Sherry* (1964); *Teen-age Mafia* (1959); *Teenage Terror* (1958); *They Called Her Charity* (1951); *They Died in the Chair* (1958); *Wicked Streets, The* (1957); *Women of Evil* (1963)

Burnett, W. R. (William Riley Burnett)

(1899–1982) *Also wrote as: John Monahan, James Updyke*

W. R. Burnett is one of the godfathers of crime fiction. He virtually introduced the realistic professional criminal as protagonist to modern popular literature and was instrumental in establishing the parameters, and the clichés, of the gangster story in fiction and in film. Burnett’s first novel, *Little Caesar* (1929), set the stage for every urban mob tale to come. In *High Sierra* (1940) and *The Asphalt Jungle* (1949), which revolve around elaborate heists, he created a great subset of crime fiction known as “the caper.” In addition to these works specifically concerned with the criminal class, Burnett explored various unsavory worlds of American life, including gambling, sports, hoboing, and politics. His storytelling talent extended even farther, to the writing of such great westerns as *Saint Johnson* (1930) and *The Dark Command* (1938), and lively historical fiction, including his novel of 19th-century Irish rebels, *Captain Lightfoot* (1954).

A native of Springfield, Ohio, Burnett was a college athlete and then worked for several years in a dull job as a statistician for the state of Ohio. A belated, obsessive desire to write led Burnett to turn out a half-dozen novels in his spare time, none relating to his future subject matter, all of them rejected by publishers. Looking for an escape from his drab life, he moved with his new bride to Chicago in 1927. The city, then in the throes of the Prohibition era and the consequent growth spurt of organized crime, was ruthless and almost lawless. “Why, you could be run over by a bus in Chicago and nobody would even look at you,” he recalled. “It was a great thing for a writer, because it hit me with such impact.” Working as a night clerk in a seedy hotel, picking up the street gossip (he claimed to have looked in on the results of the St. Valentine’s Day Massacre, the notorious slaughter of some of Al Capone’s gangland rivals), consuming the daily news reports of a city run by mobs, and becoming friendly with a talkative insider—a lieutenant in the Chicago gang run by Bugs Moran—Burnett collected enough incidents, biographies, and “viewpoint”—the gangsters’ think-

ing patterns and amorality—to make his next attempt at a novel very publishable indeed. *Little Caesar*, brought out by Dial Press in 1929, told of the rise and fall of Cesare Bandello, known as Rico, an Italian immigrant who becomes a mob boss. Burnett told the story mostly through tough, slangy dialogue, with sparse paragraphs of description taking the characters along from gang confab to speakeasy party to shootout. The authorial perspective was largely objective, unblinking, but with a dollop of deadpan, contemptuous humor reserved for his ambitious crook, a primitive narcissist who “loved but three things: himself, his hair and his gun,” and who reads the newspaper reports of his latest outrages with the mixed feelings of a playwright getting the opening night reviews:

“. . . the thug who shot Police Captain Courtney, was . . . probably an Italian . . . Courtney’s murderer was described by one eyewitness as a small, unhealthy-looking foreigner.”

Rico tore up the clipping.

“Where do they get that unhealthy stuff!” he said. “I never been sick a day in my life.”

In the same year that Burnett’s first book appeared and caused a sensation (which only increased with the release of the 1930 film version starring Edward G. Robinson as Rico), he also published *Iron Man*, a hard-boiled novel about a prizefighter, and *Saint Johnson*, his take on Wyatt Earp and the bloody events at Tombstone, Arizona, based in part on recollections he gathered from people who had been present at the time of the O.K. Corral gunfight.

From the time of *Little Caesar*’s release, Burnett was in demand by the Hollywood studios and had constant screenwriting assignments—which included scripts and script contributions for *Scarface* (1932), *Beast of the City* (1932), *This Gun for Hire* (1942), *Wake Island* (1942), *The Racket* (1951), *I Died a Thousand Times* (1956), *Sergeants Three* (1962), and *The Great Escape* (1963). The screenwriting grind no doubt played a part in the mixed quality of Burnett’s fiction during those years, but great books continued to appear: *Dark*

Hazard (1933), a tough but poignant novel of a lowlife gambler and his relationship with a lovable canine, a reject from the dog track; *High Sierra* (1940), the story of a last score by a John Dillinger–like bank robber, a fading legend named Roy Earle; *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950), a big-city thriller full of sharply etched portraits of working criminals, and the source for the masterful film version released the same year and directed by John Huston; and *Vanity Row* (1952), a caustic delineation of big city corruption and of the thin line between the criminals and the establishment.

Works

Adobe Walls (1953); *Asphalt Jungle, The* (1949); *Bitter Ground* (1958); *Captain Lightfoot* (1954); *Conant* (1961); *Cool Man, The* (1968); *Dark Command: A Kansas Iliad, The* (1938); *Dark Hazard* (1933); *Giant Swing, The* (1932); *Goldseekers, The* (1962); *Goodbye, Chicago* (1981); *Goodbye to the Past* (1934); *Goodhues of Sinking Creek, The* (1934); *High Sierra* (1940); *Iron Man* (1930); *King Cole* (1936); *Little Caesar* (1929); *Little Men, Big World* (1951); *Mi Amigo* (1959); *Nobody Lives Forever* (1943); *Pale Moon* (1956); *Quick Brown Fox, The* (1942); *Romelle* (1946); *Saint Johnson* (1930); *Silver Eagle, The* (1931); *Stretch Dawson* (1950); *Tomorrow’s Another Day* (1945); *Underdog* (1957); *Vanity Row* (1952); *Widow Barony, The* (1962); *Winning of Mickey Free* (1965)

As John Monahan:

Big Stan (1953)

As James Updyke:

It’s Always Four O’Clock (1956)

Burroughs, Edgar Rice (1875–1950)

The February 1912 issue of *All-Story*, a popular pulp magazine of the day, marked the professional fiction-writing debut of Edgar Rice Burroughs, a 37-year-old roustabout who had failed at a dozen vocations from gold miner to salesman. In six installments, *All-Story* published Burroughs’s strange and imaginative fantasy (under the pseudonym of Normal Bean) called “Under the Moon of Mars” (later, in book form, *A Princess of Mars*), the

“romance of a soul story of a Virginia squire named John Carter mysteriously teleported to the red planet known among its local citizenry as ‘Barsoom’.” Carter has various eye-popping adventures among the planet’s various warring empires and falls hard for the lovely, copper-colored Dejah Thoris, humanoid Princess of Helium. He restores her to her throne, marries and impregnates her, and awaits the hatching of their first plump progeny when a sudden whirlwind of events brings him back to Earth, ending the bizarre, action-packed epic in a whirlwind of unresolved suspense. Breathless readers waited for a sequel. Burroughs delivered one, “The Gods of Mars,” appearing just six months after the first story concluded. It was another explosion of crazed imagination: strange creatures, hair’s-breadth escapes, fierce battles, a welter of bloodshed, and another cliff-hanging climax.

Between these twin doses of unhinged Martian extravagance, in October 1912 came another tale,



Edgar Rice Burroughs in 1916 (*Burroughs Memorial Collection, University of Louisville Library*)

this one even more spectacularly successful with the *All-Story* readers: “Tarzan of the Apes.” In the prologue, Lord and Lady Greystoke are abandoned on an uninhabited African coast by a mutinying ship’s crew. A baby boy is born, the parents die of fever and despair, but the child is saved by Kala, an adoring ape who has just lost her own baby. The child, called by the apes “Tarzan” (“White Skin”) grows to young manhood with his primate family, loved by his adoptive mother and hated by Tublat, Kala’s mate. Tarzan’s superior intelligence and the knife he finds in the abandoned cabin of his human parents enable him to defeat the fierce patriarch in a primal and epiphanic fight to the death.

“I am Tarzan!” he cried. “I am a great killer. Let all respect Tarzan of the Apes and Kala, his mother. There be none among you as mighty as Tarzan. Let his enemies beware . . .”

Edgar Rice Burroughs, failed clerk, had found success at last. Pulp fiction fans had found the new master of imagination and adventure. He began churning out fiction nearly as fast as an avid and ever-growing readership could consume it—more tales of Tarzan (not, incidentally, the primitive ape-man of the movies, but an urbane fellow, as comfortable in London as in the jungle, a linguist, and an airplane pilot); many more tales of John Carter on Mars, as well as a rival adventurer’s struggles on Venus; plus westerns, historicals, and fantasies like the Pellucidar series and *The Land That Time Forgot*.

As a writer, Burroughs was uneven. His prose was ragged, his plots often no more than a piling-on of events, coincidence following coincidence without apology. But Burroughs had other qualities in abundance: a wild imagination, a gift for describing action, a powerful sense of myth. Burroughs claimed that his stories came to him in the form of daydreams in which his unconscious shaped ideas into near-finished form before releasing them to his conscious mind. However it worked, for most of three decades, and the name of Edgar Rice Burroughs remained a watchword for printed pleasure long after his death in 1950. He made a fortune many times over, was the first



Edgar Rice Burroughs (center) with director W. S. Van Dyke and Johnny "Tarzan" Weissmuller, 1932 (*Burroughs Memorial Collection, University of Louisville Library*)

writer to become a corporation, and his fame was such that the southern California town where he resided was renamed Tarzana in his honor.

Works

Apache Devil (1933); *At the Earth's Core* (1922); *Back to the Stone Age* (1937); *Bandit of Hell's Bend, The* (1925); *Beasts of Tarzan, The* (1916); *Carson of Venus* (1939); *Cave Girl, The* (1925); *Chessmen of Mars, The* (1922); *Deputy Sheriff of Comanche County* (1940); *Escape on Venus* (1946); *Eternal Lover, The* (1925); *Fighting Man of Mars, A* (1931); *Girl from Hollywood, The* (1923); *Gods of Mars, The* (1918); *Jungle Girl* (1932); *Jungle Tales of Tarzan* (1919); *Lad and the Lion, The* (1938); *Land of Terror* (1944); *Land That Time Forgot, The* (1924); *Llana of Gathol* (1948); *Lost on Venus* (1935); *Mad King, The* (1926); *Master Mind of Mars, The* (1928); *Monster Men, The* (1929); *Moon Maid, The* (1926); *Mucker, The* (1921); *Oakdale Affair and the Rider, The* (1937); *Outlaw*

of Torn, The (1927); *Pellucidar* (1923); *Pirates of Venus* (1934); *Princess of Mars, A* (1917); *Return of Tarzan, The* (1915); *Son of Tarzan, The* (1917); *Swords of Mars* (1936); *Synthetic Men of Mars* (1940); *Tamar of Pellucidar* (1929); *Tarzan and the Ant Men* (1924); *Tarzan and the Castaways* (1965; written in 1940); *Tarzan and the City of Gold* (1933); *Tarzan and the Forbidden City* (1938); *Tarzan and the Foreign Legion* (1947); *Tarzan and the Golden Lion* (1923); *Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar* (1918); *Tarzan and the Leopard Men* (1935); *Tarzan and the Lion Man* (1934); *Tarzan and the Lost Empire* (1929); *Tarzan and the Madman* (1964; written in 1940); *Tarzan and the Tarzan Twins* (1936); *Tarzan and the Earth's Core* (1930); *Tarzan of the Apes* (1914); *Tarzan the Invincible* (1931); *Tarzan the Magnificent* (1939); *Tarzan the Terrible* (1921); *Tarzan the Untamed* (1920); *Tarzan Triumphant* (1932); *Tarzan Twins, The* (1927); *Tarzan's Quest* (1936); *Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle* (1928); *Thuvia, Maid of Mars* (1920); *War Chief, The* (1927); *Warlord of Mars, The* (1919)

Busch, Niven (1903–1990)

Niven Busch's place in the pulp fiction hierarchy is largely due to his authorship of the 1944 novel *Duel in the Sun*, a strikingly innovative western that brought psychological dimension, a female protagonist, and sexual sensationalism to the ordinarily conservative, manly, and modest genre. *Duel* is the story of Pearl Chavez, a beautiful "half-breed" who comes to live with rancher relatives in the sun-baked Southwest. Pearl's hot-blooded voluptuousness and her irresistible allure to two rival brothers (and everyone else in pants), combined with an already turbulent familial scene, leads to jealous rivalries, rape, violence, and murder.

Educated at Princeton University, Busch worked as a journalist and writer for *Time* and the *New Yorker*. He was 28 when he took an offer to work in Hollywood. In the writing department at Warner Bros. At first he scripted many tough, lively melodramas and gangster pictures. He moved on to prestigious assignments for Fox and Samuel Goldwyn. In 1939 he published his first novel and from then on moved back and forth from one storytelling medium to the other.

Readers more familiar with the plotting of Zane GREY found the frank melodrama of *Duel in the Sun* startling. Busch's writing combined big-scene melodrama that belied his years as a Hollywood screenwriter with the relentless pacing and hard-boiled style of James M. CAIN (whose novel *Postman Always Rings Twice* Busch adapted to film in the 1946 version starring John Garfield and Lana Turner). Busch had written a couple of A-budget westerns during his years at the studios, including the acclaimed Gary Cooper film *The Westerner*, which paired his drifting cowpoke hero with real-life scalawag Judge Roy Bean (played by Walter Brennan). Though the film was a great success, Busch had known very little about the real West during the writing and made up his mind to study the subject, visit the authentic locales, and write what he hoped would be a great western novel. He went to stay with a rancher friend in Arizona, then toured the state, visiting museums and libraries and looking up old publications and documents from the wild and wooly era. On this roam across Arizona he came up with the idea for his novel, which, in the end, owed more to his talent for commercial storytelling than to his skills as a historian. "The idea was, simply, instead of writing about two guys and wondering how to get a girl in," Busch told film historian David Thomson, "to write about a girl and let the guys come in as they happened. Having a woman was new, especially a very sexy woman in a family consisting entirely of men. It was dynamite."

Securing the novel's mega-selling status in the postwar years, *Duel in the Sun* became a notorious, David O. Selznick production starring Selznick's own object of lust, Jennifer Jones, as the trouble-making Pearl. With *Duel*, along with the novel *The Furies* and its film version directed by Anthony Mann, and his original story and screenplay for *Pursued* starring Robert Mitchum and the writer's then-wife, Teresa Wright, Busch was the central force in the invention of the "adult western"—introducing sex, symbolism, psychology, and various mature themes—that would define the genre in the 1950s and beyond.

Busch continued writing to the end of his long life. His last novel, *The Titan Game*, a techno-

thriller in the style of Tom Clancy or Frederick Forsyth, was published when he was 86.

Works

Actor, The (1955); *California Street* (1959); *Carrington Incident, The* (1939); *Continent's Edge* (1980); *Day of the Conquerors* (1946); *Duel in the Sun* (1944); *Furies, The* (1948); *Gentleman from California* (1965); *Hate Merchant, The* (1953); *No Place for a Hero* (1976); *San Franciscans, The* (1962); *Takeover, The* (1973); *They Dream of Home* (1944); *Titan Game, The* (1989)

Butler, John K.

(1908–1964)

One more first-rate, forgotten writer from the pulps of the 1930s and 1940s, Butler wrote taut, vivid hard-boiled prose and swift, satisfying stories. He stuck to the short form or the novelette in his magazine work and moved on to movie writing when many of his peers were writing the novels that would ensure them a more lasting literary profile. A native of northern California, he moved to Los Angeles as a young man and found office work in the scenario department at Universal Studios. He might have contributed to some scripts in the early days of talking pictures, although no official credits have turned up. He began writing crime fiction in the mid-'30s and his stories first appeared in the two most distinguished pulp detective magazines within months of each other in 1935. The April 1 issue of *Dime Detective* included Butler's "Murder Alley," the first of his stories about tough San Francisco cop Rex Lonergan. In November, Butler's "'G' Heat" found a coveted spot in the pages of editor Joseph T. Shaw's *Black Mask*. The complicated tale, set on an offshore gambling boat, featured FBI man Brick Hammond. The prose was sharp and hard, the way Shaw demanded it. Butler contributed another 10 stories to the magazine, all featuring one-shot heroes until the August 1941 introduction of Rod Case, a telephone company troubleshooter who figured in a total of four cases set in various locales in Southern California. Butler surprisingly managed to find phone-line plots that were both realistic and exciting.

For *Dime Detective* Butler wrote eight stories in all about Rex Loneragan, intermittent with six about Tricky Enright, a secret agent for the California governor. Best of all was Butler's last series for the magazine and his superb swan song to the detective pulps. Steve Midnight, featured in nine exciting stories appearing between May 1940 and March 1942, was a graveyard-shift Los Angeles cab driver. Midnight—Steven Middleton Knight—passes as a simple working man but has a complicated past as a wealthy reprobate who hit bottom. Now, like the hero of David GOODIS's *Shoot the Piano Player*, he just wants to do his mundane job and forget the past. But strange events have a way of finding Steve Midnight, even when he is only trying to find a fare, and each new story draws him into a dangerous adventure. Butler's smooth, tough style and the atmosphere of a sleeping city made the Midnight stories terrific reads.

But even as the last of the *Dime Detective* stories was appearing in print, Butler had gone back to the Hollywood studios, finding steady employment as a screenwriter. He wrote various obscure low-budget movies, horror flicks, comedies, and crime pictures, but specialized in B-grade westerns, writing more than two dozen vehicles for Roy

Rogers, Gene Autry, and numerous less well-remembered cowboy stars of the era. Butler spent most of his movie years at Republic Pictures, where screenwriters did not get famous or rich.

Works

"Blood on the Buddha" (1936); "Coffin for Two" (1937); "Corpse Parade" (1935); "Corpse That Couldn't Keep Cool" (1942); "County Cleanup" (1939); "Dark Return" (1936); "Dead Letter" (1942); "Dead Man's Alibi" (1941); "Dead Ride Free, The" (1940); "Death and Taxis" (1941); "Death Has My Number" (1941); "Doctor Buries His Dead, The" (1939); "Don't Make It Murder" (1941); "Fog Over Frisco" (1935); "Gallows Ghost" (1937); "'G' Heat" (1935); "Guns for a Lady" (1936); "Hacker's Holiday" (1940); "Hearse from Red Owl, The" (1941); "I Killed a Guy" (1937); "Killer Was a Gentleman, The" (1941); "Mad Dogs of Frisco" (1936); "Man from Alcatraz, The" (1940); "Murder Alley" (1935); "Murder for Nickels" (1941); "Never Work Night" (1942); "No Rest for Soldiers" (1936); "Parole for the Dead" (1936); "Saint in Silver, The" (1941); "Secret of the Wax Lady, The" (1937); "Seven Years Dead" (1936); "Stairway to Hell" (1935); "Walking Dead, The" (1937); "Why Shoot a Corpse?" (1938); "You Can't Bribe Bullets" (1936)

C

Cain, James M. (1892–1977)

Dashiell HAMMETT, Raymond CHANDLER, and James M. CAIN are the father, son, and holy ghost of American hard-boiled literature. Appearing on the cultural scene—that is, as respectable hard-cover authors—at well-spaced intervals between 1929 and 1939, each brought his own separate but equally powerful and influential style to the new form of realistic/poetic crime fiction. This trio could be said to have been the progenitor for every hard-boiled crime story and movie that followed.

Born in Annapolis, Maryland, Cain had originally dreamed of a very different artistic pursuit. Young Jimmy wanted to be an opera singer (his educator father had dabbled in opera before him). Although Cain lacked the natural vocal equipment for the job and gave it up, opera would remain a great love, and as a novelist he would work the subject into several of his stories, with some bizarre results.

He began to think about a writing career while in college and in the spring of 1917, after a brief stint as a teacher, he took a job as a reporter at the *Baltimore American*. Interrupted only by his time as a soldier in World War I (he saw action in the battle of the Meuse-Argonne in France) he would work as a journalist for the next 14 years. He moved on to the *Baltimore Sun*, building a reputation as a reporter and writer. The town's literary celebrity, H. L. Mencken, befriended him and served as something of a mentor. Cain would go on

to editorial positions in New York and became an important figure in the journalistic circles of the day, a protégé of the legendary newsman Walter Lippmann and briefly the managing editor of a start-up magazine called *The New Yorker*. Unlike Hammett and Chandler, ne'er-do-wells who stumbled into writing through the back door of the pulp magazines, Cain was a great success long before his first book was published. But he was unsatisfied with his journalistic work, and his attempts to write plays and novels in New York had all come to nothing. He needed a fresh start, he thought, and with the help of an agent he managed to secure a screenwriting contract with Paramount Pictures in Hollywood.

The movies did not turn out to be Cain's true calling but the new scenery and a group of new screenwriter buddies including Samson Raphaelson and Vincent Lawrence encouraged Cain in his creation of a novel. He had an idea about a guy and a dame, a couple of nobodies running a gas station, who kill a man. Someone got him thinking about the Ruth Snyder–Judd Gray case, a tabloid sensation: a corset salesman and a married woman killed the woman's husband and eventually turned on each other. Cain told a writer friend, "That jells the idea I've had for just such a story; a couple of jerks who discover that a murder, though dreadful enough morally, can be a love story too, but then wake up to discover that once they've pulled the thing off, no two people can share this terrible secret and live on the same earth. They turn on each other, as Judd and Ruth did."

Cain started writing. It took a while and some coaching and advice from Lippmann, Lawrence, and others, but in the end Cain had something good. He was calling it *Bar-B-Que*. The publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, didn't like it. Cain stumbled around for another title, considering *The Black Puma* and *The Devil's Checkbook* before Vincent Lawrence came through for him again. He related a time when he was waiting day after day for an important letter to come in the mail. Lawrence knew when it was the postman at the door: "The son of a bitch always rang twice," he said. Cain thought, wasn't that an old English tradition or something, the postman ringing or knocking twice before going away? It evoked something about the book, the delayed punishment bestowed on his murdering characters. Cain had a title: *The Postman Always Rings Twice*.

And he had a story. A bum wanders into the lives of an ugly Greek man and his sexy wife, the proprietors of a roadside gas station and cafe. The bum and the wife are drawn into a sexual affair. They decide to kill the husband. They screw up the first attempt and make good on the second. The relationship between the killer couple goes sour, then reignites, but an ironic justice catches up with them both.

The book was a sensation, and Cain became famous. From the much quoted first sentence—"They threw me off the hay truck about noon"—the novel gripped the reader with a blunt, sordid, compulsive readability. The copywriters did not exaggerate this time: the book was "like a ride on a rollercoaster . . ." with "the speed and violence and energy of dynamite." The first-person narration, the voice of a not-too-smart drifter, an everyman-as-loser, and a simple yet supercharged telling of events, ripped through the polite, distancing layers of literature. The book read with the clarity and immediacy of a tabloid front-page story but was shot through with an ineffable lingering romanticism and poetry. Cain had taken some of the realistic effects and hard-boiled style developed in the pulps—and in the tabloids, and in the work of Ernest Hemingway and Ring Lardner—and added a crucial new ingredient, passion. *Postman* was above all a love story, drifter Frank Chambers and the hellcat Cora a gutter Tristan and Iseult. This

was a tragic love story like nothing else in American literature nothing, anyway, that had been sold above the counter:

She started for the lunchroom again, but I stopped her. "Let's—leave it locked."

"Nobody can get in if it's locked. I got some cooking to do. I'll wash up this plate."

I took her in my arms and mashed my mouth up against hers . . .

"Bite me! Bite me!"

I bit her. I sunk my teeth into her lips so deep I could feel the blood spurt into my mouth. It was running down her neck when I carried her upstairs.

With a good, tricky, twisting story to tell, Cain had stripped it of excess, stripped it to the sharp, glistening bones. *Postman* was only 35,000 words long, not much more than a novelette (Knopf had used huge type and large margins to stretch it to 188 pages in hardcover). Cain even eliminated the dead weight of "he said" and "she said," letting the reader instinctively figure out who was speaking. For years this would be the exemplar of a page-turner. The book became part of the literary and popular culture, the standard by which books about lust and love and murder would be judged for decades to come.

After waiting so long for a first good idea to coalesce into a finished novel, Cain was slow to get a second project off the ground. He wrote columns and short stories and did some work for the movies before he finally succumbed to the big-money offers from magazines to write a serial. It was meant to be a quickie job that Cain vowed would never be reprinted as a book. While researching *Postman*, Cain had talked to some insurance investigators, and with another real-life crime for inspiration he wrote a story about a woman conspiring with an insurance salesman to kill her husband and collect on his policy. "It would," he wrote his agent, "be more of a love story than a murder story, but as jealousy is the main theme that wrecks them it would move all right on an exciting end." Cain realized that this story, *Double Indemnity*, was essentially another version of *Postman*, not as well-written, but it was

also a compulsively readable work, filled with exceptional dialogue, Southern California exotica, and a richly detailed inside tour of the insurance business. It was published as a serial in *Liberty* magazine, and then it found its way to hardcover publication as part of a volume of short works (with *Career in C Minor* and *The Embezzler*) published under the title *Three of a Kind*.

Cain's next major work, *Serenade*, "about an opera singer and a Mexican whore," as he described it, offered material at least as shocking as the sex-and-violence scenes in *The Postman Always Rings Twice*—including a bisexual hero and torrid lovemaking in a Mexican church. Cain built the story out of a weird mixture of ideas and experiences, including his theories about the "sex coefficient" of an opera singer (that is, whether he was hetero- or homosexual) and how it affected his voice; his friendship with a closeted Charles Laughton, and a meeting with a prostitute in a Guatemala City whorehouse. The story combined these elements with a murder plot with another ironic plot twist of a crime catching up with you in the end.

The novel was published in 1937 to general acclaim, but also to no small degree of controversy. Many pundits and librarians, along with the Catholic Church, were angered and repulsed by its sordid contents: homicides, whores, perversions, sex in church, and the use of sacramental wine in an iguana stew. In retrospect, many critics consider the book the most problematic of Cain's major works. The author's notions of homosexuality—although he would claim they were based on clinical evidence gleaned from medical authorities—would come to seem dated at the least, at worst lending what was intended as the book's daring, cutting-edge material a feeling of absurd cluelessness. Cain's hard-boiled first-person narrative style, perfect for *Postman's* drifter, strained credibility in the person of an erudite opera star, and the terse, high-speed prose that had worked so well for a taut, straight-ahead story felt out of place in *Serenade's* amble through varying landscapes and spans of time. At its release, the book sold well, but not nearly as well as *Postman*. Cain and others believed it was because word of mouth about the homosexual element in the last half lost many readers un-

comfortable with anything to do with that subject, especially the disturbing notion that a story's "hero," making love to a voluptuous Mexican whore on one page, could turn out to be a "fairy" on another. It is always difficult to defend material others find offensive or frightening, but many of Cain's contemporary fans feel *Serenade*, for all its awkwardness, is a remarkable work.

Cain's third major work was a mingling of old and new. Like *Double Indemnity*, it was set in the Southern California milieu against a closely observed background of a particular work environment and suburban lifestyle. It moved away, however, from the easily digested murder plots and the terse first-person hard-boiled narration of his past works. *Mildred Pierce* was the story of a modern woman, a "commonplace suburban housewife with a nice figure and a way with men." Cain charted Pierce's travails with a weak husband, a series of shifty boyfriends, and an ungrateful daughter as she simultaneously finds success as a pie-baking entrepreneur. The book was more like the conventional best-sellers and slick magazine fiction serials of the day than the ruthless, breathless stuff that had made Cain's reputation, but it was strong and incisive nonetheless.

Cain would continue to write good books, including his historical novel, *Past All Dishonor*, a particularly underrated work, and continue to cause controversy with *The Butterfly*, an "Appalachian *Postman*" with the startling addition of incest. But Cain's place as a writer of importance in the American scene began to slip after the publication of *Mildred Pierce* and never quite recovered. Ironically, though, he would become a crucial name in motion pictures beginning at just this same period. Billy Wilder's stunning film version of *Double Indemnity* (with a script by Wilder and Raymond Chandler) would spark a trend for tough murder/love stories, and would finally bring to the big screen versions of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Mildred Pierce* (retooled as a film noir), and even in due time and minus the censorable content, *Serenade*.

The combination of his early titles and the film successes made Cain for many years the most famous of all the hard-boiled novelists. While the other members of the hard-boiled trinity, Hammett

and Chandler, were often dismissed as mere mystery writers, no matter how innovative, Cain's work seemed better able to fit a traditional definition of literature. He was once referred to as the "American Zola" for his brutally realistic depictions of the "human beast." Cultural poo-bahs like Edmund Wilson, who dismissed most of the tough crime writers of the day as trivialists and mere entertainers, found Cain to be a serious artist. Cain himself resented anyone who lumped him with Hammett and Chandler as the leaders of a "hard-boiled school" of fiction. He claimed never to have read either writer.

Eventually—and arguably—Cain's reputation would be eclipsed by the other two, whose relatively brief careers offered a compact and cohesive body of work. Cain, on the other hand, outlived the mainstream vogue for his work, but kept on writing, producing fiction that showed less and less of the original power. The later work diminished his standing, although those first remarkable books continued to attract fans. Portions of later books, like *Rainbow's End* from 1975 with its brisk plot, violence, and implications of incest, showed that Cain still had the old storytelling fire, an inimitable narrative gift, well into his seventies.

Works

Butterfly, The (1947); *Galatea* (1953); *Institute, The* (1976); *Jealous Woman* (1948); *Love's Lovely Counterfeit* (1942); *Magician's Wife, The* (1965); *Mignon* (1962); *Mildred Pierce* (1941); *Moth, The* (1948); *Past All Dishonor* (1946); *Postman Always Rings Twice, The* (1934); *Rainbow's End* (1975); *Root of His Evil, The* (1951); *Serenade* (1937); *Sinful Woman* (1947); *Three of a Kind: Career in C Major/The Embezzler/Double Indemnity* (1943)

Cain, Paul (George Sims)

(1902–1966) *Also wrote as: Peter Ruric*

Paul Cain, otherwise known as Peter Ruric, whose real name was George Sims, from Des Moines, Iowa, produced a small but superb body of work in the early 1930s. A favorite of *Black Mask* editor Joseph Shaw—Dashiell HAMMETT's great acolyte in the pulps—Cain took Hammett's sharp, smart, hard-boiled style and ran with it in a novel and a series of short stories about the urban American

underworld. These gemlike stories were stoic and merciless vignettes that seemed to come direct from the bootlegging front lines. The novel, *Fast One*, recounted the explosive, liquor-soaked adventure of Gerry Kells, a gambler from back east, a World War I vet addicted to morphine, who becomes the catalyst for a gang war in Prohibition-era Los Angeles. Published as a series of stand-alone segments in five issues of *Black Mask* magazine, *Fast One* was a cold-hearted, machine-gun-paced masterwork. When it was published in book form, the *New York Times* called it "a ceaseless welter of bloodshed and frenzy, a sustained bedlam of killing and fiendishness."

Knocking around in Hollywood in the '30s and '40s, enjoying a hard-drinking, brawling lifestyle, the writer—as Ruric—earned the odd film credit, including one for the script of the fantastic, Edgar Ulmer-directed *The Black Cat*, starring Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi. With his shifting identities and erratic output, Cain seemed to take a laughing, unambitious attitude towards personal fame and success. To an anthologist seeking biographical information about the author of the Cain stories, he sent a comical curriculum vitae in which he claimed to be a former Dada painter, bosun's mate, and gynecologist. After the '40s he drifted to Europe, living a seedy expatriate's life on the Spanish island of Majorca. His works unpublished for many years, he died in obscurity, but latter-day attention for his story collection, *Seven Slayers*, and one novel, *Fast One*, have secured Cain a place in the hard-boiled fiction pantheon.

Works

STORIES

"Black" (May 1932); "Chinaman's Chance" (Sept. 1935); "Death Song" (Jan. 1936); "Dutch Treat" (Dec. 1936); "Hunch" (Mar. 1934); "Murder Done in Blue" (June 1933); "One, Two, Three" (May 1933); "Parlor Trick" (July 1933); "Pigeon Blood" (Nov. 1933); "Pineapple" (Mar. 1936); "Red 71" (Dec. 1932); "Trouble Chaser" (Apr. 1934)

BOOKS

Fast One (1934), originally printed as five stories in *Black Mask* (Mar., Apr., June., Aug., and Sept. 1932); *Seven Slayers* (1945)

Cartland, Barbara

(1901–2000)

According to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, Barbara Cartland sold an estimated 1 billion copies of her 723 or so titles in her lifetime, which ended only a year shy of her centenary. Those who said she in fact wrote one story with 723 different titles were unkind, but there is no doubt that Cartland believed in a formula for her fiction: a simple, decent plot, a sweet romance, a small number of recurring character types—sweet virgin heroine, dashing hero, oily bounder of a villain—and a happy ending. Once she had established this formula, she did not veer from it. She wrote, or for most of her career dictated, on average two volumes per month, every month, for decades.

She was born in the last year of the reign of Queen Victoria to a wealthy family that went bankrupt when she was a child (her grandfather committed suicide as a result of his losses). She lost her father to the fighting on the Western Front in World War I, and she was reared by a strong, mother who opened a dress shop in Kensington. Barbara grew up attractive, smart, and independent. She became a Fleet Street reporter and gossip columnist, and a member in good standing of the glamorous crowd known as the Bright Young Things. Cartland married well, divorced, married well again, and continued to write her lending-library fiction all the while.

In the 1960s, Cartland's chaste Regency, Victorian, Edwardian, and occasionally contemporary romances began to find their way out of a niche market and into the popular culture at large. As women became the majority of the book-buying public, publishers paid new attention to a genre that had been largely ignored even as it grew in readership in both Britain and North America. Soon, no one would be unaware of the vast audience for "romance novels," and the Canadian paperback line of Harlequin Romances would become the best-known brand name in the book business.

The exploding romance genre would fragment into many and very different segments, from contemporary but still very chaste novellas in the Harlequin tradition, to the lusty subgenre known

as the "bodice ripper." Barbara Cartland's work had evolved into a quasi-historical and very non-lusty category, with mostly 19th-century settings and a world—an England—very different from what the conservative author saw as the increasingly uncouth and egalitarian modern times beset by bad manners, bad language, and sexual licentiousness. Her window into a less complicated, better-mannered, more discreet, more virginal world, became a reliable escape hatch for the armchair aristocrats and armchair virgins around the world who read Cartland's two dozen or so books per annum. The author herself would come to see her stories as a kind of sociopolitical statement, a gesture of noblesse oblige to the declining values of western civilization.

Not publicity-shy, Cartland became a familiar figure on the Anglo-American scene, giving interviews from her country castle, dressed in pink chiffon, caked with makeup, and plastered with jewelry. She was also known for her good works: she set up and promoted various charities, and gave a portion of her 300-acre estate to a band of homeless gypsies. She was also a prescient spokesperson for the benefits of such exotic health treatments as acupuncture, holistic medicine, and health foods. Her public profile only increased with the arrival on the scene of England's Princess Diana, who would turn out to be Cartland's sort-of step-granddaughter. But even Princess Di, whose early life and marriage seemed to have sprung direct from a Barbara Cartland novel, would eventually come to represent the kind of jet-setting depravity the writer had so long decried. In her nineties, still writing romances, Cartland ever more seemed the last living link to a vanished world.

Works

After the Night (1944); *Again This Rapture* (1947); *Against the Stream* (1946); *An Angel in Hell* (1976); *An Arrow of Love* (1976); *Armour Against Love* (1945); *As Eagles Fly* (1975); *Be Vivid Be Vital* (1956); *Beggar Wished, A* (1934); *Bewitched* (1975); *Beyond the Stars* (1995); *Bitter Winds* (1939); *Black Panther, The* (1939); *Blue Heather* (1953); *Blue-eyed Witch* (1976); *Bored Bridegroom* (1977); *Bride to a Brigand* (1984); *Broken Barriers* (1938); *But Never Free* (1937); *Call of the Heart*

(1975); *Captive Heart, The* (1999); *Castle of Fear* (1978); *Coin of Love, The* (1956); *Complacent Wife* (1972); *Conquered by Love* (1977); *Cruel Count, The* (1974); *Dancing on a Rainbow* (1987); *Danger by the Nile* (1964); *Dangerous Experiment* (1936); *Dark Stream, The* (1944); *Desire of the Heart* (1954); *Desperate Defense* (1936); *Devil Defeated, The* (1986); *Devil in Love* (1975); *Dream from the Night* (1976); *Dream in Spain, A* (1986); *Duel of Hearts, A* (1949); *Earl Rings a Belle* (1990); *Elusive Earl* (1976); *Enchanted Moment* (1949); *Escape from Passion* (1945); *Eyes of Love* (1995); *Fascination in France* (1996); *Fire of Love, The* (1964); *Fire on the Snow* (1975); *First Class, Lady?* (1935); *Flame Is Love* (1975); *Food for Love* (1975); *For What?* (1930); *Forgotten City, The* (1936); *Frame of Dreams, A* (1976); *Gamble with Hearts, A* (1976); *Ghost in Monte Carlo, A* (1951); *Glittering Lights, The* (1974); *Goddess of Love* (1988); *Gods Forget, The* (1939); *Golden Cage* (1986); *Golden Gondola* (1958); *Halo for the Devil, A* (1972); *Hazard of Hearts* (1949); *Heart Is Broken, The* (1983); *Heart Triumphs* (1976); *Hidden Evil, The* (1963); *Hidden Heart, The* (1946); *Hungry for Love* (1976); *Husband Hunters* (1976); *Husbands and Wives* (1961); *If We Will* (1947); *Imperial Splendour* (1980); *Impetuous Duchess* (1975); *Incomparable* (1996); *Innocent Heiress* (1970); *Innocent Imposter* (1995); *Irresistible Buck* (1972); *Isthmus Years, The* (1943); *Jigsaw* (1925); *Journey to a Star* (1983); *Journey to the Paradise* (1974); *Just Fate* (1991); *Just Off Piccadilly* (1933); *Karma of Love* (1975); *Kiss for the King, A* (1976); *Kiss of Paris, The* (1956); *Kiss of Silk, A* (1959); *Kiss of the Devil, The* (1955); *Leaping Flame, The* (1942); *Lessons in Love* (1974); *Lights of Love* (1958); *Light to the Heart, A* (1962); *Little Adventure, A* (1973); *Little Pretender* (1950); *Lost Enchantment* (1972); *Lost Laughter, The* (1980); *Love Casts Out Fear* (1986); *Love Comes West* (1984); *Love Forbidden* (1956); *Love Holds the Cards* (1965); *Love in Pity* (1977); *Love in the Ruins* (1995); *Love Is Contraband* (1968); *Love Is Dangerous* (1963); *Love Is the Enemy* (1952); *Love Leaves Midnight* (1997); *Love Locked In* (1977); *Love Me Forever* (1954); *Love on the Run* (1965); *Love on the Wind* (1983); *Love to the Rescue* (1967); *Love Under Fire* (1960); *Love with the Heart* (1994); *Love Is an Eagle* (1951); *Loveless Marriage* (1995); *Magnificent Marriage* (1975); *Many Facets of Love, The* (1963); *Marriage for Moderns* (1955); *Men Are Wonderful* (1973); *Messenger of Love* (1961); *Moon over Eden* (1976); *Mysterious Maid-servant* (1977); *Never Laugh at Love* (1976); *Never Lose*

Love (1994); *No Darkness for Love* (1974); *No Heart Is Free* (1948); *Not Love Alone* (1933); *Now Rough, Now Smooth* (1941); *Odious Duke* (1973); *Out of Reach* (1946); *Outrageous Queen, The* (1956); *Paradise Found* (1984); *Passage to Love* (1995); *Passionate Attainment* (1935); *Passionate Bridegroom* (1995); *Passionate Pilgrim, The* (1952); *Penniless Peer, The* (1974); *Polly* (1956); *Pretty Horse Breakers, The* (1971); *Price Is Love, The* (1960); *River of Love, The* (1981); *Royal Rebuke, A* (1988); *Runaway Heart, The* (1961); *Running from Russia* (1996); *Ruthless Rake, The* (1974); *Safe in Paradise* (1991); *Saved by a Saint* (1994); *Sawdust* (1926); *Say Yes, Samantha* (1975); *Scandalous Life of Queen Carol* (1957); *Secret Fear* (1970); *Secret of the Glen* (1976); *She Follows* (1945); *Sleeping Swords* (1942); *Smuggled Heart* (1959); *Someone to Love* (1996); *Spirit of Love* (1994); *Stars in Her Eyes* (1972); *Stars in My Heart* (1957); *Stolen Halo* (1940); *Sweet Enchantress* (1958); *Sweet Punishment* (1931); *Sword to the Heart, A* (1974); *Theft of a Heart* (1966); *Theresa and a Tiger* (1984); *Thief of Love, The* (1957); *This Is Love* (1994); *Three Days to Love* (1996); *Touch the Stars* (1935); *Unknown Heart* (1969); *Unpredictable Bride, The* (1964); *Very Naughty Angel, A* (1975); *Virgin in Mayfair, A* (1932); *Virgin in Paris, A* (1966); *Wanted—A Wedding Ring* (1987); *Who Can Deny Love* (1981); *Wicked Marquis* (1973); *Wild Cry of Love* (1976); *Wild Unwilling Wife, The* (1980); *Wings of Love, The* (1962); *Wings on My Heart* (1954); *Wonderful Dream* (1994); *Youth Secret* (1968)

Cave, Hugh B.

(1910–)

For longevity alone Hugh Cave would rank among the legends of 20th (and 21st)-century popular fiction: he was a published writer by 1929, a star in the pulp magazines by 1932, a popular horror novelist in the 1980s, and still successfully plying his trade at this writing in 2001. Among his peers, only Jack WILLIAMSON's résumé contains such a span. But Cave can claim much more than a continuing steady hand and an ageless imagination. From almost the start of his storytelling career Cave determined to maintain a high level of quality in his work—to give it ingenuity, lucidity, solid construction—and stuck to plan for more than 70 years. More astounding still was that Cave could



Hugh B. Cave, whose career spans more than 70 years (*Hugh Cave*)

write good stuff with the rapidity of the speed demons who often sacrificed quality in favor of stratospheric word count. And unlike Williamson, who specialized in a single genre (science fiction), Cave wrote it all, from tough-private-eye stories to jungle adventures, bizarre fantasy, westerns, sadistic “weird menace,” ghost stories, and “spicy” erotica. Although many of Cave’s stories were peddled to now-forgotten publications with titles like *Nickel Western*, *The Feds*, and *Speed Adventure Stories*, he was also a valued contributor to the two most honored magazines of the pulp era, *Weird Tales* and *Black Mask* (a distinction in itself, as most noted contributors to those two magazines wrote only for one or the other).

Cave was born in Winsford, Cheshire, England. His parents met while both were in service in South Africa during the Boer War. At age five he moved with his parents and two brothers to

America, settling near Boston, Massachusetts. A prizewinning essayist and published poet by the time he graduated from Brookline High School, Cave craved a career as a writer and a life of travel and adventure in exotic ports of call, the sort of experiences he had read about in the works of Robert Louis Stevenson, H. Rider Haggard, and Jack London. Still stuck in Boston, he wrote a story about one of his dream destinations, the South Pacific, and sold it to a general-fiction pulp called *Brief Stories*, which published “The Pool of Death” in its July 1929 issue. Cave was off and running. By the time he would move on in his writing career and the pulps themselves had begun to disappear, Cave had written and sold, by his estimate, some 800 stories. These include any number of gems, from the legendary vampire shocker “Murgunstrumm” (first published in the short-lived *Strange Tales*, January 1933) to the haunting fantasy “The Prophecy” (*Black Book Detective*, October 1934), the gruesome terror tales like “The Pain Room” (*Dime Mystery*, October 1934) and “Brides for the Dead” (*Horror Stories*, August 1935), and classics of hard-boiled crime like “Bottled in Blonde” (*Dime Detective*, January 1, 1935) and “Smoke in Your Eyes” (*Black Mask*, December 1938).

Cave shifted over to the slick magazines in the late 1940s and was equally successful writing for those much higher-paying periodicals, among them the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Liberty*. Cave came to outlast this fiction market as well, and for some time in the 1950s and 1960s he wrote less and lived on the Caribbean island of Jamaica, running a coffee plantation in the Blue Mountains. The rising popularity of fantasy and horror fiction in the 1970s brought some of Cave’s old work back into print, and a noteworthy horror/fantasy collection titled *Murgunstrumm and Others* brought Cave a new young fan base. He returned to the fold for good, writing novels of horror and the supernatural that were both contemporary and full of that classic pulp feel. In 2000 Cave had a slate of new works scheduled for publication in time for his 90th birthday, including two collections honoring his previously neglected hard-boiled detective stories (*Bottled in Blonde* and *Long Live the Dead*).

Works

Black Sun (1960); *Bottled in Blonde* (2000); *Corpse-Maker, The* (1987); *Cross on the Drum, The* (1958); *Dark Doors of Doom* (2000); *Dawning* (2000); *Death Stalks the Night* (1995); *Disciples of Dread* (1988); *Door Below* (1997); *Drums of Revolt* (1957); *Evil, The* (1981); *Evil Returns* (2001); *Fishermen Four* (1942); *Isle of Whisperers* (1999); *Lady Wore Black and Other Weird Tales, The* (2000); *Larks Will Sing* (1969); *Legion of the Dead* (1979); *Long Live the Dead* (2000); *Long Were the Nights* (1943); *Lower Deep, The* (1990); *Lucifer's Eye* (1991); *Mission, The* (1960); *Murgunstrumm and Others* (1977); *Nebulon Horror, The* (1980); *Officer Coffey Stones* (2000); *Run, Shadow, Run* (1968); *Shades of Evil* (1982); *Summer Romance and Other Short Stories, A* (1980); *Voyage The* (1988); *White Star of Egypt* (1999, as Justin Case); *Witching Lands, The* (1962)

Champion, D. A. (D'Arcy Lyndon Champion) *Also wrote as: G. Wayman Jones*

D'Arcy Lyndon Champion, an Australian by birth, had a long and colorful career as a soldier and sailor before he landed among the depression-era American pulpsters and began churning out hundreds of thousands of words per year under an assortment of pen names and house names. Posing as G. Wayman Jones, he wrote some of the adventures of Standard Publications' pulp hero, the masked, bowler-hatted Phantom Detective, and wrote of a less popular avenger named Mr. Death whose stories appeared in *Thrilling Detective* magazine between 1934 and 1939.

In the late '30s Champion began writing more often under his own byline. These stories showed a distinctive talent that had been mostly hidden in previous hack work. Like Norbert DAVIS, Champion could write hard-boiled prose with a sense of humor. In his Rex Sackler/Joey Graham private eye series, printed in *Detective Fiction Weekly* and *Black Mask* magazines, Champion undercut the heroics and spoofed the cliché of the underpaid P.I. with a running motif about Sackler's skinflint behavior (the private dick is known as the "Parsimonious Prince of Penny-Pinchers"). For *Dime Detective* he wrote what is his most highly regarded series, the stories about legless crime-solver Inspector Allhoff.

Once the greatest policeman in New York, Allhoff became the victim of friendly fire during a chaotic standoff with criminals, catching a machine gun volley in his legs that forced doctors to amputate both limbs at the knees. The police decide Allhoff is too brilliant to lose, so they set him up as a paid adviser with two assigned officers: Simmonds, the narrator, and Battersly, the man responsible for accidentally shooting the inspector and therefore the recipient of Allhoff's running bitter recriminations. The stories were clearly indebted to Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe novels, but they were considerably tougher, more caustic and—although Stout loyalists might object—better written.

One more excellent detective series, introduced in the waning years of the pulps, concerned Mariano Mercado, a dapper Mexican hypochondriac who usually uncomfortably followed clues into dusty desert locales and germ-laden border towns. Champion used the U.S.-Mexico border region for his last known work, *Run the Wild River*, a Lion Books paperback original about crime and danger among illegal immigrants.

Works

"Aaron Had a Rod" (1943); "Bed for the Body" (1942); "Blackmail Backfire" (1949); "Blood from a Turnip" (1942); "Brand of Abel, The" (1940); "Cash as Cash Can" (1944); "Coffin for a Killer" (1941); "Come Out of the Grave" (1943); "Corpse Can't Run, A" (1948); "Corpse for Christmas, A" (1939); "Corpse Grows in Brooklyn, A" (1944); "Corpse Means Cash, A" (1945); "Corpse Pays Cash, The" (1945); "Corpse That Wasn't There" (1941); "Cover the Corpse's Eyes" (1939); "Curtain Call" (1941); "Day Nobody Died, The" (1944); "Dead and Dumb" (1939); "Dead as in Blonde" (1945); "Death for a Dollar" (1950); "Death in the Sun" (1945); "Death Stops Payment" (1940); "Diplomatic Corpse, The" (1943); "Down Payment on Death" (1947); "Dumb Dick" (1939); "Extra Alibi" (1949); "Footprints on a Brain" (1938); "Go Home and Die" (1944); "Grave Brings Silence, The" (1943); "Heads—The Corpse Loses" (1943); "Hound for Murder, A" (1946); "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead" (1938); "Imperfect Alibi" (1943); "Infernal Revenue" (1946); "Killer, Can You Spare a Dime?" (1942); "Laughter in Hell" (1939); "Leg on Murder, A" (1942); "Lock the Death House Door" (1938); "Mexican Slayride" (1944);

“Money Makes the Mare Go” (1945); “Money to Burn” (1940); “Murder by the Ears” (1942); “Murder in the Mirror” (1942); “Murder Pays 7 to 1” (1942); “Murder Won’t Wait” (1943); “No Place Like Homicide” (1946); “One Killer Too Many” (1945); “Padlocked Pockets” (1947); “Pick up the Marbles” (1941); “Profitable Corpse, The” (1943); Run the Wild River (1952); “Sealed with a Kris” (1945); “Sergeants Should Never Sleep” (1940); “Shabby Shroud” (1948); “Shake Well Before Dying” (1944); “Slaying Room Only” (1947); “Spend, Killer, Spend!” (1945); “Split Fee” (1941); “Suicide in Blue” (1940); “Suitable for Framing” (1947); “Tarnished Copper” (1948); “Tell It to Homicide” (1942); “Ten-thirty to Sing Sing” (1941); “Thanks for the Ration Card” (1943); “There Was a Crooked Man” (1940); “Toast to the Killer” (1945); “Too Mean to Die” (1947); “Turn in Your Badge” (1940); “Two Death Parlay” (1946); “Upstairs to Murder” (1945); “Vacation with Pay” (1941); “Vanishing American, The” (1944); “What’s Money?” (1942); “Who Took the Corpse?” (1944); “You’re the Crime in My Coffee” (1943)

Chandler, Raymond (1888–1959)

In 1933 Raymond Chandler was a 45-year-old failed poet, recently fired from his job as the manager of a small California oil company. It was the height of the depression, and Chandler found himself at loose ends. He was not the artist he had once dreamed of becoming nor the well-paid businessman he had expected to remain till he retired. Trying to apply his dormant gift for scribbling to something more practical than romantic poetry, he began to make a closer study of the detective pulps he often read in his spare time. The pulps were known and despised in high-minded circles as cheap, sensationalistic, and poorly written reading matter intended for the working classes—weekly and monthly publications with lurid covers, generally featuring a color rendering of a half-clad girl or an act of violence, and contents filled with more of the same. Chandler, a literary elitist himself, had nonetheless found that the pulps could not be dismissed out of hand. He discovered the distinctive qualities in one of his favorite pulp magazines, a detective-and-crime

pulp called *Black Mask*, edited by Joseph T. Shaw. Month after month Chandler had been surprised and pleased to find glimmers of quality and real style in the magazine’s tough private eye capers. He also was no doubt aware that one of the magazine’s graduates, Dashiell HAMMETT, had gone on to become a famous and much-praised hard-cover author. Still, Chandler had little thought of prestige or success when he began composing his own detective story that he hoped might find a home in the pages of *Black Mask*. He was looking for a way to pay some bills.

But to make much money in the pulps was a fool’s errand, unless you could produce reams of salable pages. From the beginning, Chandler had little in common with the typical churn-’em-out pulp pro. His first story took five months to write (and in his entire career, Chandler never sold more than five stories in a year). But that story—a private eye novelette called “Blackmailers Don’t Shoot”—did sell to *Black Mask* magazine. A new career was born.

Chandler wrote more stories, laboring over every sentence, crafting a prose style that was appropriately hard-boiled and highly readable, yet fine-grained, balanced, attuned to poetic values and lingual nuances, and, increasingly as he continued to publish, overhung with an aura of rueful romanticism and bitter wit. By 1939, Chandler was ready to take his private eye protagonist to a longer form and sold the novel *The Big Sleep* to Dashiell Hammett’s own New York publisher, Alfred A. Knopf. Philip Marlowe, Hollywood-based P.I., takes on a job from a dying rich man with two wayward daughters. The case involves murder, nymphomaniacs, and a pornography racket. It was tough, fast, sexy, funny—and poetic. Chandler was on his way to perfecting his synthesis of the lyrical and the hard-boiled. It seemed that the aspiring poet had to wait for experience and middle age and the wearying toll of life’s disappointments to find his literary voice.

The Big Sleep was followed by *Farewell, My Lovely*, an even more convoluted and impressive work. Chandler would complete another five Marlowe novels, each an outstanding effort, though only *The Long Goodbye* was the equal or better of the first two. Though he received rave reviews

from the critics, Chandler's book sales remained modest in the 1940s and he felt forced to take remunerative screenwriting jobs from the Hollywood studios when they were offered. With the director Billy Wilder he wrote the script for the film version of James M. CAIN's *Double Indemnity*. The film version was a vast improvement on Cain's novella, and one of the three or four greatest film noirs ever made. While still employed by Paramount Pictures, Chandler wrote another script, an original this time, *The Blue Dahlia*, filmed with Alan Ladd and Veronica Lake. Although not in the same league as *Double Indemnity*, it was another classic film noir, drenched in postwar cynicism and typically crackling Chandler dialogue.

An intellectual and self-conscious pop fiction writer, Chandler was perhaps the first successful pulp graduate to write with sophistication about the field and about the value and meaning of hard-boiled literature of the Hammett-Black Mask school. Chandler's distinctive, simile laden prose, his ruefully cynical take on the human condition, his poetic and vivid response to landscape, and his concept of the private eye as a knight errant in a sad, corrupt world, would influence uncountable numbers of followers from the 1940s on, in print and on film. Chandler's creations became archetypes, fostering other people's clichés, but for all the imitations his timeless and shimmering work remains in a class of one.

Works

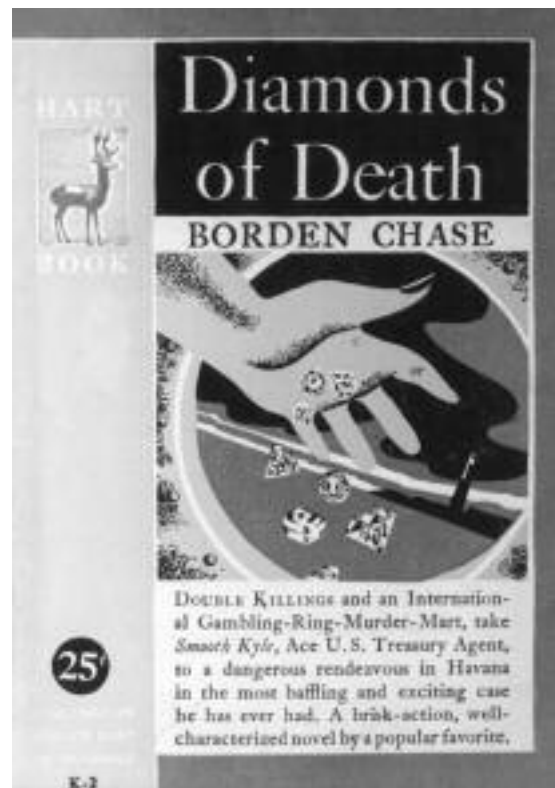
Big Sleep, *The* (1939); *Farewell, My Lovely* (1940); *Finger Man and Other Stories* (1946); *Five Murderers* (1944); *Five Sinister Characters* (1945); *High Window* (1942); *Lady in the Lake* (1943); *Little Sister* (1949); *Long Goodbye* (1953); *Pearls Are a Nuisance* (1953); *Playback* (1958); *Red Wind* (1946); *Simple Art of Murder* (1950); *Smart Aleck Kill* (1953); *Spanish Blood* (1946)

Chase, Borden (Frank Fowler)

(1900–1971)

Chase was a genuine tough guy from the slums of Brooklyn, a man whose colorful early years gave

him the background and style for his future careers writing hard-boiled pulp fiction and then, in Hollywood, ruggedly masculine screenplays. On his own from the age of 14, Chase—born Frank Fowler—spent some time in the navy, then returned to New York. He worked as a taxi driver before falling in with one of the new organized crime gangs that ran booze and other vice in Roaring Twenties Manhattan. He became the personal chauffeur of Frankie Yale, the headline-making king of the bootleggers. Yale got into a feud with Chicago's Al Capone and ended up dead from 110 pieces of hot lead. Chase went looking for another line of work. He found it underwater, working as a “sandhog” building a tunnel beneath the East River. This, as it turned out, was an even more dangerous occupation, with



Borden Chase's *Diamonds of Death* (1940) features Smooth Kyle, ace U.S. Treasury agent.

death by the “bends,” poisoned air, landslides, or drowning facing him every time he went down. This job, finally, was inspiration enough to start Frank Fowler writing. *East River* told of the brawling camaraderie and terrifying danger of the sandhog’s life. As the writer recalled it, he created his new name as he stood on a New York street corner within view of a Borden milk truck and the entrance to a Chase bank. His story was bought for the movies by the Fox studio and it became a terrific though little remembered film called *Under Pressure*, directed by Raoul Walsh. Borden Chase went west to contribute to the film’s screenplay, then returned to New York, where he began to write for the pulp magazines, quickly becoming a steady contributor to *Argosy* and *Detective Fiction Weekly*. As a writer of urban action and mystery fiction, Chase continually used his experience and knowledge to provide his work with vivid details and inside dope.

Chase was a lively storyteller, and his material continued to sell to the movies. His Dr. Broadway character from *Argosy* magazine was adapted for a wild, noirish mystery (one of the first films directed by future film noir master and frequent Chase collaborator Anthony Mann). A pulp serial about smuggling, gambling and murder featuring Chase’s hero Smooth Kyle, ace U.S. Treasury agent (and former cab driver), was published in paperback as *Diamonds of Death*, and became the source for a B-movie featuring Michael Shayne, private eye, called *Blue, White and Perfect*. Chase began publishing stories in such high-paying slick magazines as *Collier’s* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. Eventually he was lured back to Hollywood—a town he professed to loathe for its phoniness—and began juggling slick fiction works with screenplay assignments. He turned out the scripts for such noteworthy films as *The Fighting Seabees* (which starred John Wayne and drew on Chase’s background as a construction worker), and the delirious romantic drama *I’ve Always Loved You*.

Earning a good living in California, Chase had bought a ranch and became interested in owning fast quarter horses. This led to horse-buying visits in Texas and eventually inspired the writer’s interest in the history of the Old West. He wrote *Blazing Guns*

on the Chisholm Trail for serialization in the *Saturday Evening Post*. It was an epic story of a fictional cattle baron driving a huge herd up the trail of the title, and his relationship with a young protégé. The story was bought by producer-director Howard Hawks and became the classic western *Red River*. The film was a critical and box office success, but Chase scoffed at some of Hawks’s amateurish herding and use of the horses and the sentimental, crassly commercial changes to the story. In the original, Dunson, the mighty cattleman played by John Wayne in the movie, is mortally wounded in the violent climax. Reconciled with his “son” (played by Montgomery Clift in *Red River*), Dunson asks to be taken home so he can “die in Texas,” which he does. Hawks told Chase, “Look, Wayne isn’t going to die,” and wrote a new last scene with a dusty fistfight. The leading lady breaks it up and scolds them, followed by hugs all around and a happy ending. Chase called it “garbage.” (*Red River*, however, was certainly the most “authentic” of Hawks’s westerns—his subsequent forays in the genre were larded with such ersatz elements as pop songs sung by teen idols, excitable comic-Mexican stereotypes, supporting characters from popular TV sitcoms of the day, fashion model heroines, and scenes of slapstick comedy.)

Chase would go on to write several of the best westerns of all time, beginning with *Winchester .73* and followed by *Bend of the River*, *The Far Country*, and *Vera Cruz*.

Politically ultraconservative, Chase spent some of his postwar free time working with the right-wing activists and fanatics in the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals, one of the groups that goaded the McCarthy-era blacklist in Hollywood. In the ’60s, as the political climate turned and his screenwriting jobs dried up, Chase would claim that he had become a victim of a “reverse blacklist” installed by the reigning liberals. “Which is quite all right,” said Chase, who, after all, once had Al Capone on his tail. “I can dish it out and I can take it too.”

Works

Blazing Guns on the Chisholm Trail/Red River (1946–48); *Diamonds of Death* (1940); *East River* (1935); *Lone Star* (1952); *Sandhog* (1938)

Chase, James Hadley (Rene Brabazon Raymond)
(1906–1985)

Englishman James Hadley Chase aimed Annie Oakley's Broadway boast at the American inventors of hard-boiled fiction: "Anything you can do I can do better." Few would make a serious case for Chase's beating the best of the Americans—Dashiell HAMMETT, Raymond CHANDLER, Paul or James M. CAIN, and others—at their own game, but in his own way he did just fine. For all the obvious fakery he employed—the unconvincing slang, secondhand settings, and purloined plots—Chase was a storyteller, and his narrative twists, nihilistic characters, and gleefully cynical enthusiasm usually overwhelmed the phoniness and the generally indifferent writing. He wrote nearly 100 novels, and his work was popular around the world for half a century. His prose may have actually benefited from translation, for he was extremely well-regarded by literary critics in France and elsewhere in Europe.

Chase was a pen name for Rene Brabazon Raymond. Born in London, he attended King's School at Rochester, Kent, and his first job was as a traveling encyclopedia salesman. He was still on the sales side of the book business in the late '30s when he wrote his first novel, *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*, about the kidnapping of a young debutante by a depraved gang. It seemed to some to be dangerously close in content to William Faulkner's notorious novel, *Sanctuary* (Chase was later accused of sampling portions of a Raymond Chandler short story). But Chase's swift, no-nonsense prose was a lot easier to digest, and *No Orchids* was even more sordid and shocking than Faulkner's melodrama. The book would become a best-seller, and a controversial one, eliciting cries of "Pornography!" and banned in some communities. George Orwell attacked it as evidence of the end of literature. Many subsequent editions would be censored as publishers feared Chase's uninhibited sensationalism.

Chase gave up bookselling and became a full-time novelist. He wrote more hard-boiled fiction with imagined American settings and characters (he would continue this habit for most of his ca-



James Hadley Chase's *Kiss My Fist* (1939) was published in England as *The Dead Stay Dumb*.

reer, although his knowledge of American sights and sounds was largely limited to a few Florida vacations and a stack of guidebooks and slang dictionaries). Chase wrote many stand-alone novels—including the delirious *Miss Shumway Waves a Wand* (decades later turned into the delightful movie, *Rough Magic*), and *Eve*, about a Hollywood writer driven to destruction by an alluring whore. But most of Chase's books through the years featured series characters that he would use for a time and then discard. He began with reporter/detective Mark Fenner in *No Orchids* and *Twelve Chinks and a Woman*, then moved on to tough guy Vic Malloy, private eye Bricktop Corrigan, in-

insurance investigator Steve Harmas, millionaire adventurer Don Micklem, Florida PI. Frank Terrell, dissolute ex-CIA agent Mark Girland, Florida beachcomber Al Barney, and wealthy adventuress Helga Rolfe.

While Chase was clearly in debt to the Americans for providing him a canvas and a literary direction (and sometimes whole plots and characters), there was no denying the driving force of Chase's personality, a gleefully amoral, even nihilistic view of humanity so strongly felt at times that it transcended the hackery of which he was generally accused. His "heroes" are often shiftless, craven, violent, lacking in any virtues besides the ones that will find them a quick buck. Perhaps making his characters American liberated the author from any concern for queen and country, but not even Chase's CIA veteran feels the pull of patriotism or other noble feelings. Still, Chase had only a limited kinship with the pessimists of classic noir literature—he has too much fun with his fiendish plots and ruthless characters to leave the reader feeling bad about the shocking state of the world.

Works

An Ear to the Ground (1968); *Believe This, You'll Believe Anything* (1975); *Believed Violent* (1968); *Blonde's Requiem* (1945); *But a Short Time to Live* (1951); *Can of Worms* (1979); *Coffin from Hong Kong, A* (1962); *Come Easy—Go Easy* (1960); *Consider Yourself Dead* (1978); *Dead Stay Dumb, The* (U.S. title: *Kiss My Fist*) (1939); *Do Me a Favour—Drop Dead* (1976); *Double Shuffle, The* (1952); *Eve* (1945); *Fast Buck* (1952); *Figure It Out for Yourself* (U.S. title: *The Marijuana Mob*) (1950); *Goldfish Have No Hiding Place* (1974); *Guilty Are Afraid, The* (1957); *Have a Change of Scene* (1973); *Have This One on Me* (1967); *He Won't Need It Now* (1939); *Hit and Run* (1958); *I Hold the Four Aces* (1977); *I Would Rather Stay Poor* (1962); *I'll Bury My Dead* (1953); *I'll Get You for This* (1946); *In a Vain Shadow* (1951); *Joker in the Pack* (1975); *Just a Matter of Time* (1972); *Just Another Sucker* (1961); *Just the Way It Is* (1944); *Knock, Knock, Who's There?* (1973); *Lady—Here's Your Wreath* (1940); *Lay Her Among the Lilies* (1950); *Like a Hole in the Head* (1970); *Lotus for Miss Quon, A* (1961); *Make the Corpse Walk* (1946); *Mallory* (1950); *Meet Mark Girland* (1977); *Miss Callaghan Comes to Grief* (1941); *Miss Shumway*

Waves a Wand (1944); *Mission to Siena* (1955); *Mission to Venice* (1954); *More Deadly Than the Male* (1946); *My Laugh Comes Last* (1977); *No Business of Mine* (1947); *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* (1939); *Not Safe to Be Free* (U.S. title: *The Case of the Strangled Starlet*) (1958); *One Bright Summer Morning* (1963); *Safer Dead* (U.S. title: *Dead Ringer*) (1954); *Shock Treatment* (1959); *Soft Centre* (1964); *So What Happens to Me?* (1974); *Strictly for Cash* (1951); *Sucker Punch, The* (1954); *Tell It to the Birds* (1963); *There's a Hippie on the Highway* (1970); *There's Always a Price Tag* (1956); *Things Men Do, The* (1953); *This Is for Real* (1965); *This Way for a Shroud* (1953); *Tiger by the Tail* (1954); *Trusted Like the Fox* (1949); *Twelve Chinks and a Woman* (1940); *Vulture Is a Patient Bird, The* (1969); *Want to Stay Alive?* (1971); *Wary Transgressor, The* (1952); *Way the Cookie Crumbles, The* (1965); *Well Now, My Pretty* (1967); *What's Better Than Money* (1960); *Whiff of Money, The* (1969); *Why Pick on Me?* (1951); *World in My Pocket, The* (1959); *You Find Him—I'll Fix Him* (1956); *You Have Yourself a Deal* (1966); *You Must Be Kidding* (1979); *You Never Know with Women* (1949); *You're Dead Without Money* (1972); *You're Lonely When You're Dead* (1949); *You've Got It Coming* (1955)

Cheyney, Peter (Reginald Southouse Cheyney)

(1896–1951)

Anticipating the cross-cultural 1960s hybrids of Italy's spaghetti westerns and the British Invasion's co-opting of rock and roll, Peter Cheyney was an Englishman who had great success with a sincerely shameless and sometimes awkward imitation of a U.S. pop cultural style, becoming the earliest English imitator of the violent, hard-boiled crime literature of Dashiell HAMMETT, Raoul WHITFIELD, Carroll John DALY, and other pioneers. Cheyney soaked up the ambience, the ruthless violence and nihilistic attitude, and especially the slangy, deadpan, wisecracking dialogue of the new hard-boiled fiction and spit it back out as his own. To many Americans, Cheyney's version of Mean Street USA was third-hand and his tough guy argot tone-deaf, but it was no worse than Daly at his worst. The English reading public—and soon the French as well—found Cheyney's ersatz America quite en-

tertaining and made him one of their most popular authors for more than a dozen years, until his early death in 1951.

He was born Reginald Southouse Cheyney in London's East End, the son of a fishmonger. A wounded veteran of World War I, Cheyney trained to be a lawyer but found the profession dull and dabbled in journalism and show business instead. For a time he ran a small detective agency, which gave him plenty of firsthand knowledge of the characters and doings in London's criminal underworld. Cheyney had been writing as a sideline since he was a kid, and in the 1920s he began selling stories to local papers and magazines. He specialized in mysteries and crime tales. His series character Alonzo MacTavish was a stylish rogue a little (sometimes a lot) like Leslie Charteris's Simon Templar, the Saint, but far more crooked.

In 1936 Cheyney wrote his first novel, *This Man Is Dangerous*. The hero was an American, a member of J. Edgar Hoover's FBI that Cheyney named Lemmy Caution. No bureaucrat or plodding investigator—indeed, having little in common with a real-life FBI agent—Lemmy assaulted the underworld with blazing fists and heaters. Cheyney used first-person narration and wrote in the present tense, a gimmick that he likely took from Damon Runyon, whose Broadway tales were also an obvious influence on the Englishman's style. Cheyney followed Caution's successful introduction with *Poison Ivy* and *Dames Don't Care* in 1937. The following year, along with another Caution novel, he introduced what would become his second series hero, Slim Callaghan. For *The Urgent Hangman*, Cheyney used an Englishman and an English setting for more of the same tough talk and wild action. Private eye Callaghan's adventures were probably no more authentic in detail—despite Cheyney's firsthand experience on the U.K. scene—but to American ears they were at least a little easier to take, and the tour of London lowlife was fresh ground for hard-boiled fiction. In the tradition of Raymond CHANDLER's Sam Spade and his brethren, Slim Callaghan is a mostly honest private detective, but capable of doing whatever it takes, including bending the law, to get the results he wants. Callaghan is also a ladies' man, a recurring aggravation to his besotted, curvy, wise-

cracking secretary, Effie Thompson. Like his American counterparts, Slim has an up-and-down relationship with the police, and is often at odds with Scotland Yard's Detective Inspector Gringall.

Cheyney turned out numerous series novels throughout the World War II years with great success, and even saw Lemmy Caution made the hero of a radio series. Even with paper shortages and restricted commerce imposed by wartime, Cheyney managed to sell more than 1 million copies a year in this period. As the paperback revolution began in the United States, his sales became quite large there as well—Cheyney's name was ubiquitous on the lurid covers that began filling the American newsstands.

In the mid-'40s he inaugurated his "dark" series, beginning with *The Dark Duet*, then *The Dark Street*, *Dark Hero*, *Dark Interlude*, and so on. These were espionage novels, with a grim tone and intricate plotting. They showed a marked improvement in Cheyney's style, more realistic, more carefully written. Without too much exaggeration, they could be compared with the works in this vein by Graham Greene and Eric AMBLER, novels that took the spy story out of the jingoistic, black-and-white domain of John Buchan and E. Phillips OPPENHEIM and prepared the way for the somber, ambiguous espionage of John Le Carré and other later writers. In the last years before his death, Cheyney returned to earlier form with the lively adventures of another two-fisted hero, Johnny Vallon.

Cheyney's works had long been popular in French translation and he was one of the first authors in the legendary paperback editions called *Série Noire*. In 1954, French producers brought Lemmy Caution to the screen in an adaptation of *This Man Is Dangerous*, directed by blacklisted Hollywood exile John Berry and starring an expatriate American song-and-dance man named Eddie Constantine, once part of singer Edith Piaf's nightclub troupe. Constantine as Caution was a huge success and went on to play the character (or identical variations) in numerous sequels. Constantine even took Lemmy Caution to the outer reaches of highbrow art cinema, playing the character one more time for Jean-Luc Godard's 1965 avant-garde science fiction thriller, *Alphaville*.

Works

Account Rendered (1944); *Adventures of Alonzo MacTavish* (1943); *Adventures of Julia, The* (1945); *Alonzo MacTavish Again* (1943); *Another Little Drink* (U.S. title: *A Trap for Bellamy*) (1940); *Calling Mr. Callaghan* (1953); *Can Ladies Kill?* (1938); *Cocktail for Cupid and Other Stories* (1947); *Curiosity of Etienne MacGregor, The* (1947); *Dames Don't Care* (1937); *Dance Without Music* (1945); *Dangerous Curves* (1939); *Dark Bahama* (1950); *Dark Duet* (U.S. title: *The Counter-Spy Murders*) (1943); *Dark Hero* (1946); *Dark Interlude* (1947); *Dark Street, The* (1944); *Dark Wanton* (1948); *Date After Dark and Other Stories* (1946); *Don't Get Me Wrong* (1939); *Escape for Sandra* (1945); *G Man at the Yard* (1946); *He Walked in Her Sleep and Other Stories* (1946); *I'll Say She Does* (1945); *Information Received and Other Stories* (1948); *It Couldn't Matter Less* (1941); *Knave Takes Queen* (1939); *Ladies Won't Wait* (1951); *Lady, Behave* (1950); *Lady in Green and Other Stories* (1947); *Love with a Gun and Other Stories* (1943); *Man with Two Wives and Other Stories, The* (1946); *Mister Caution—Mister Callaghan* (1941); *Murder of Alonzo, The* (1943); *Never a Dull Moment* (1942); *Night Club* (1945); *One of Those Things* (1949); *Poison Ivy* (1937); *Set Up for Murder* (1950); *Sinister Errand* (1945); *Sorry You've Been Troubled* (1942); *Spot of Murder and Other Stories, A* (1946); *They Never Say When* (1944); *This Man Is Dangerous* (1936); *Tough Spot for Cupid and Other Stories, A* (1945); *Try Anything Twice* (1948); *Uneasy Terms* (1946); *Unhappy Lady and Other Stories, The* (1948); *Unscrupulous Mr. Callaghan, The* (1943); *Urgent Hangman, The* (1938); *Velvet Johnnie and Other Stories* (1952); *Vengeance with a Twist and Other Stories* (1946); *You Can Always Duck* (1943); *You Can Call It a Day* (U.S. title: *The Man Nobody Saw*) (1949); *You Can't Hit a Woman and Other Stories* (1937); *You Can't Keep the Change* (1940); *You'd Be Surprised* (1940); *You Deal, My Lovely* (1941)

Chidsey, Donald Barr

(1902–1981)

Donald Barr Chidsey was a frequent contributor to the pulp magazines in the 1930s, even as he developed a more socially acceptable career as a historical novelist and biographer. Early on he dabbled in private eye fiction for such magazines as *Star De-*

tective, *Detective Fiction Weekly*, *Dime Detective*, and *Black Mask*, where he wrote tough stuff about homicide cops and busybody newshawks. For *DFW* and *Double Detective* he contributed a half-dozen stories about Sergeant Fletcher Steel, an unusual, puny policeman who was also a brilliant scientist and did most of his crime-solving in an experimental laboratory, a version of the “defective detective” subgenre that had a brief vogue in the late 1930s. He became best known for adventure stories, swift and flavorful historical fiction, much of it set at sea, where the author had spent some time himself. His biographies included the life stories of such personages as Bonnie Prince Charlie (1720–1788) and Sir Walter Raleigh (1554–1618). He was known for his popular touch in these, the ability to make the lives and problems of distant figures seem contemporary and relevant—perhaps the influence of his hard-boiled crime fiction—as evidenced in a book title like *Sir Humphrey Gilbert: Elizabeth's Racketeer* (1932).

A rugged, handsome fellow from Elizabeth, New Jersey, Chidsey enjoyed a peripatetic, adventurous youth, including several years aboard a series of tramp steamers that took him to every exotic port on the globe. He also did time as a press agent, bookkeeper, actor, bartender, and golf caddy. In the 1930s he lived in the South Seas, sailing about the islands on his own boat, and for a time he managed a small coconut plantation in Tahiti. During World War II Chidsey fought alongside the Free French and New Zealand forces as well as serving in the U.S. Army (stationed in North Africa). Chidsey imbued his fiction with his zest for life and adventure, and although his work was not quite on the level of a Rafael SABATINI or A. D. Howden SMITH, books like *This Bright Sword*, a tale of medieval England, and the pirate novel *Captain Crossbones* were fast-paced, colorful, and a great deal of fun. In the 1950s, with most of the earlier masters of the form gone, Chidsey became one of the last surviving specialists in the swashbuckling genre.

In later years he gave up fiction writing and concentrated on adult and juvenile histories and historical biographies, the work for which he was best known. In old age he lived quietly in Lyme, Connecticut.

Works**STORIES**

“Battleship on a Mountain” (Sept. 8, 1936); “Body on the Balcony, The” (Nov. 1, 1934); “Carrion Clue, The” (Mar. 15, 1935); “Corpse Clue, The” (Jan. 15, 1935); “Dead Heroes Don’t Count” (May 1951); “Dead Man’s Dinner” (Aug. 1, 1934); “Dumb Swede” (Sept. 3, 1932); “Enter the Tiger” (July 17, 1937); “Flaming Acres” (Aug. 19, 1939); “Flight to Singapore” (Aug. 3, 1940); “Glitter Dust” (Mar. 7, 1936); “Getaway to Oblivion” (Mar. 30, 1940); “Island of Run Away” (July 13, 1940); “Lady Killer” (July 1936); “Let Me Tell It” (Jan. 1934); “Man Who’ll Talk, A” (July 1933); “Man Who Turned Up Missing, The” (Oct. 1940); “Murder by Proxy” (Jan. 1, 1935); “One Way Ticket” (Nov. 7, 1936); “Scar Clue, The” (June 15, 1935); “Stage Fright” (Dec. 1941); “Things Happen Fast” (July 25, 1936)

BOOKS

Bonnie Prince Charlie (1928); *Buccaneer’s Blade* (1959); *Captain Adam* (1953); *Captain Bashful* (1955); *Captain Crossbones* (1958); *Each One Was Alone* (1938); *Edge of Piracy* (1964); *Fancy Man* (1967); *Flaming Island, The* (1959); *His Majesty’s Highwayman* (1958); *Lord of the Isles* (1954); *Marooned* (1961); *Nobody Heard the Shot* (1941); *Panama Passage* (1946); *Pipes Are Calling, The* (1959); *Pistols in the Morning* (1930); *Reluctant Cavalier* (1960); *Rod Rides High* (1950); *Singapore Passage* (1956); *Sir Humphrey Gilbert: Elizabeth’s Racketeer* (1932); *Sir Walter Raleigh: That Damned Upstart* (1931); *Stronghold* (1948); *This Bright Sword* (1957); *Weeping Is for Women* (1936); *Wickedest Pilgrim, The* (1961)

Chute, Verne

(1919–)

Chute ran a bookstore on Vermont Avenue in Los Angeles in the 1940s and contributed to assorted pulp magazines in this time. His first and most significant novel, *Flight of an Angel*, was published in hardcover by William Morrow in 1946. It belonged to a popular subgenre of noir literature (and film noir) in the ’40s, the amnesia story. Physical or psychological trauma affecting memory loss was a perfect gimmick for this newer, darker form of suspense story that so often centered on aspects of alienation, paranoia, existential angst. To the com-

mon noir suspense cry of “Why am I being hunted?” the amnesia theme added an even more pathetic, “And who the hell am I?”

Cornell WOOLRICH/William Irish’s *The Black Curtain* introduced the haunted amnesiac theme to noir literature (indeed, most of the foundations of noir could be said to have been formally introduced by the great Woolrich), and Chute’s *Flight of an Angel* replicates, though on a less despairing note, Woolrich’s haunting sense of aloneness in the world. Chute’s story begins evocatively on a crowded Los Angeles street, near the old pagoda temple of the Angels Flight cable car, with a man wandering, observing the strangeness of the everyday life around him—a man without an identity, without a past. Chapter by chapter he pieces together a curriculum vitae for himself involving—no surprise—a criminal conspiracy. Written as World War II was ending, *Flight* and its confused hero convey metaphorically a strong sense of what it must have been like for battle-weary veterans returned home to the people and places they once knew, to the old lives that now seemed to belong to someone else.

Chute’s *Wayward Angel*, which begins on the L.A. and San Francisco streets before heading off to Mexico, is a more conventional hard-boiled tale, a breezy mystery chase with a tough, two-fisted hero and a dangerous dame.

Works

Flight of an Angel (1946); *Wayward Angel* (1948)

Clancy, Tom

(1947–)

Applauded—or condemned, depending on your perspective—as the inventor of the “techno-thriller,” Tom Clancy found spectacular success combining the action-packed plots and black-and-white characters of classic pulp storytelling with an attention to military hardware and digital technology so voluptuously detailed it might almost be labeled “techno-porn.” An insurance salesman who played war games and fantasized about a life in the military, Clancy wrote a fanciful cold war thriller involving a confrontation between U.S. intelli-

gence agents, the Soviets, and a Russian nuclear submarine. Clancy's early literary skills were primitive, and *The Hunt for Red October* was rejected by numerous publishers before finding a harbor with a small publisher that specialized in military histories, the U.S. Naval Institute Press. It was the company's first attempt to publish a novel, but Clancy's technical and detailed approach to the naval aspects of his story made it seem like a natural extension of their usual history books. *Red October's* exciting story and promilitary politics brought it an immediate cult following among certain Washington professionals. It soon landed on the desk of President Ronald Reagan, who gave it a judicious thumbs-up, an endorsement that turned the book into a phenomenon.

Clancy followed *The Hunt for Red October* with *Red Storm Rising*, and this cold war thriller, using little-known technical and strategic information gleaned from a formerly high-placed naval analyst, was a hit from the start. In the mid-'80s with the end of the cold war and the fall of the Soviet Union as a deadly superpower, secret agent literature seemed to be at loose ends. But Clancy, just settling in to his permanent berth on the best-seller lists, simply turned elsewhere to motivate his stories of international crises, creating new conflicts with renegade Irish Republican Army agents in *Patriot Games* and a South American drug cartel in *Clear and Present Danger*.

Clancy's continuing hero is agent Jack Ryan, a brave, morally sure—even self-righteous—defender of truth, justice and the military-industrial way. Ryan is both a reasonably realistic Washington bureaucrat with family, suburban home, and computer station, and a Republican fantasy figure who upholds the establishment's crucial values and who ultimately, in *Executive Orders* (a book dedicated to Ronald Reagan), through a turn of events exhilarating to some and laughably preposterous to others, becomes the president of the United States.

Counterbalancing Ryan's heroics, Clancy also offered the more ambiguous, noirish figure of John Clark. Appearing in supporting roles in several novels, Clark finally took center stage in *Rainbow Six*, heading an elite, clandestine group of multinational antiterrorists. The book's big mission sets the mighty

Rainbow group against a bioterrorist villain determined to reduce the world to its preindustrial, natural state—Clancy's vision of the ultimate "tree hugger." Clancy's band of superheroes and his over-the-top style made it clearer than ever that the author was the latest successor not to Ian FLEMING or to the more contemporary Robert Ludlum and the other blockbuster thriller writers, but to the long-ago authors of the adventures of Doc Savage, G8, the Avenger, and other pulp magazine superheroes of the past written for "kids of all ages."

Clancy's political techno-thrillers appealed not only to millions of daydreaming would-be secretaries of defense and CIA directors, but also to a new nation of digital-world fans coming to adulthood on a diet of bellicose computer games and cyber lingo. With the help of movie and television adaptations, Clancy's golden combination of militarism, insider's knowledge of the power corridors, and cutting edge technical knowledge eventually became a "brand"—his imprimatur extended beyond pop literature to loom large in the computer gaming world as well. He has also applied his name as creator or "presenter" of a slew of books and media productions, all offering the readers some version of his warrior/nerd's high-tech, hardware-and-jargon-filled world.

Works

Bear and the Dragon, The (2000); *Cardinal of the Kremlin* (1988); *Clear and Present Danger* (1989); *Debt of Honor* (1994); *Executive Orders* (1996); *Hunt for Red October, The* (1984); *Into the Storm* (1997); *Patriot Games* (1987); *Rainbow Six* (1998); *Red Storm Rising* (1986); *SSN* (1996); *Sum of All Fears, The* (1991); *Without Remorse* (1993)

Coburn, Walt

(1889–1971)

Walt Coburn was one of the most popular of all western writers. In a 30-plus year career as a pulp magazine writer, beginning in 1919 just after his service in World War I, Coburn became a top draw at *Adventure* magazine—inarguably one of the greatest of the pulps—and a regular contributor to

such leading titles as *Argosy* and *Western Story* as well as countless lesser magazines devoted to frontier fiction that sprouted in the 1920s and 1930s. He published about 900 stories and novelettes in the pulps, and became so prominent in the genre that he would eventually have two pulps named after him (*Walt Coburn's Western Magazine* and *Walt Coburn's Action Novels*), their contents devoted almost entirely to Walt's own new and old stories.

In a field populated by many writers who knew no more about the West than they could learn in a Manhattan library or a Chicago movie theater, Coburn was in fact an honest-to-God cowboy. His father was a cattle rancher who had settled Last Chance Gulch, where Helena, Montana, now stands. Walt himself had worked on ranches all over the West, until the army took him to fight overseas. He knew every sort of western character type firsthand, including the odd train robber, and had a personal acquaintance with Mexican bandit/revolutionary Pancho Villa. Many of his pulp yarns were stories that had happened around him growing up, or tales he had heard from veteran cowboys in the bunkhouse. While other western writers created mythic heroes, Coburn's characters were more authentic-seeming figures, professionals and working men, ranchers, lawmen and roughnecks who drank a considerable amount of alcohol, a trait they apparently shared with their creator (in one *Dime Western* story, "Shoot or Git Shot!" [September 1948], a father proffers the salutary benefits of tequila to his seven-year-old son). Coburn himself always had a bottle of "hooch" within reach when he wrote, which was every morning, six days a week. During Prohibition, he used to hide a stock of tequila in the stove of his Arizona cottage. One time a pulp editor from New York came to visit, there was a chill, and Walt thoughtlessly fired up the stove. It exploded, nearly killing the writer and his tender-foot visitor.

With a few exceptions—including a handful of silent movie screenplays in the 1920s—Coburn stuck to the pulps until their demise in the '50s. He then switched to writing novels for paperback publication. He wrote two volumes of autobiography, one of which was published posthumously.

Coburn's prose style and plotting were sometimes crude, but his characters and the tangential details in his work, the sights and smells and sounds he put into his cowboy stories, struck the reader as the real thing, straight off the range. In a genre full of stereotypes, Coburn enlivened the western with quirky authenticity, the sort of detailed, sensual writing that came out of experience and memories and could not be easily duplicated by hacks who drew their facts from a volume of cowboy lore. Coburn's stuff lived and breathed the air of the true West.

Coburn died by his own hand in 1971.

Works

Barb Wire (1931); *Beyond the Wild Missouri* (1956); *Border Jumper* (1956); *Branded* (1959); *Buffalo Run* (1958); *Burnt Ranch* (1954); *Drift Fence* (1953); *El Hombre* (1967); *Fast Gun* (1959); *Fear Branded* (1957); *Feud Valley* (1960); *Invitation to a Hanging* (1963); *Kilbourne Brothers* (1965); *Law Rides the Range* (1935); *Lightning Brand, The* (1965); *Man from Montana* (1966); *Mavericks* (1929); *Night Branders, The* (1957); *One Step Ahead of the Posse* (1956); *Pardners of the Dim Trails* (1951); *Reckless* (1968); *Renegade, The* (1956); *Renegade Legions* (1965); *Ringtailed Rannyhans, The* (1927); *Sky-Pilot Cowboy* (1937); *Stirrup High* (1957); *Violent Maverick* (1956); *Way of a Texan, The* (1953); *Western Word Wrangler* (1973); *Wolf Hunters* (1965)

Collins, Jackie

(1941–)

One of the reigning brand names of popular fiction, with claimed sales of 200 million of her numerous and reliably similar novels, Jackie Collins had, by the early 1980s, assumed the "Queen of Trash Lit" throne left vacant by the death of Jacqueline SUSANN, author of *Valley of the Dolls*. Like Susann and to a lesser extent Harold ROBBINS, her professed inspirations, Collins specialized in showbiz and high-life milieus and a surfeit of lurid, melodramatic action, with flagrant use of incidents and characters taken from real life, or that version of real life known to readers of the *National Enquirer*.

The London-born daughter of a performers' agent, Jackie, with her older sister Joan, grew up

around the entertainment business, and both girls were encouraged toward acting careers. Joan became a film star in Britain and then in Hollywood, but Jackie remained the unknown Collins until a change of professions finally brought her into the limelight. Inspired in part by the success of Jackie Susann, Collins in the late '60s followed Susann onto the best-seller lists, first in the United Kingdom and then in the United States and the rest of the world. Collins's early, British-based novels—*The Stud*, *The Bitch*—revolved around a 1960s Swinging London of nonstop screwing, drug-taking, and disco dancing. Relocated to California in the '70s, she expanded her horizons to chronicle the hedonism and heartbreak of the American rich and famous in a series of heavily plotted, soap operatic, and generically named tomes: *Hollywood Wives*, *Hollywood Husbands*, and so on. Her most popular work, the product of a dedicated attention to creating strong female characters for her predominantly female readership, featured spunky, horny Lucky Santangelo, heroine of a developing saga begun with *Chances* and followed by *Lucky*, *Lady Boss*, *Vendetta*, and *Dangerous Kiss*.

In many ways a natural heir to the Susann throne, Collins shared with the American writer a thwarted desire for movie stardom, an imposing physical presence, and a remorseless skill at self-promotion. As a writer, however, Collins has never matched the idiosyncratic vigor of her mentors—the neuroticism and spite that fueled Susann's often feverish fantasies, or the genuinely nihilistic visions of Harold Robbins. Collins's work is less demanding—simplistic melodramas with generic titles (*American Star*, *Rock Star*, *Lady Boss*), comic-book character names (Venus Maria, Jack Python, Abe Panther), and prose of an uninflected simplicity. Her celebrated insider's view of showbiz seems on a par with the information provided by any supermarket tabloid. Still, millions swear to her books' high entertainment value, and after 30 years of unwavering success and a brand name recognition second to none, Collins's spot in the pulp fiction forefront is secure.

Works

American Star (1993); *Bitch, The* (1979); *Chances* (1981); *Dangerous Kiss* (1999); *Deadly Embrace* (2002); *Hollywood*

Husbands (1986); *Hollywood Kids* (1994); *Hollywood Wives* (1983); *Hollywood Wives: The Next Generation* (2001); *Lady Boss* (1989); *Lethal Seduction* (2000); *Lucky* (1985); *Murder* (1998); *Obsession* (1998); *Power* (1998); *Revenge* (1998); *Rock Star* (1988); *Sinners* (1984); *Stud, The* (1969); *Sunday Simmons and Charlie Brick* (1971), also published as *The Hollywood Zoo*; *Thrill* (1997); *Vendetta* (1995); *World Is Full of Married Men, The* (1968)

Constiner, Merle

(1902–1979)

The disreputable pages of the pulp magazines contained the bylines of some surprisingly erudite individuals. Behind the typewriter of an assortment of pulp detective stories and later of a line of western shoot-'em-up paperbacks was a Vanderbilt University scholar with a postgraduate degree in medieval history. While some of the highly educated pulpsters applied their expertise directly to their work—in historicals and science fiction—others tended to work their erudition into the margins. Merle Constiner, the Vanderbilt grad, seemed to prefer the latter, dropping bits and pieces of rare knowledge and language into his narratives and giving one of his tough series heroes—the private detective known as “The Dean”—the far-ranging, and rather unlikely, expertise of a renaissance man.

Constiner hailed from Monroe, Ohio, the town he returned to later in life, but he spent much of his life elsewhere in the Midwest and the South. His pulp career got started in the late 1930s and by the early 1940s he was a regular in the top detective magazines. He wrote two notable series in this era. The stories about Dean Wardlow Rock and Ben Mathews were printed in *Dime Detective* between August 1940 and December 1945. The Dean was an oddball private eye, both tough and brilliant. He could dazzle with his rich vocabulary and esoteric skills and he could blow a miscreant's head off with the giant carbine he wore in a holster under his arm.

Luther McGavock, star of 11 stories for *Black Mask*, is a tough, aging, unlikable private dick who has trouble staying anywhere for long until he winds up in Memphis, Tennessee, and establishes an arm's-length relationship with old man Ather-

ton Browne's detective agency. The writing was superb and offered a richly detailed portrait of the Deep South, as in this description of a "lethargic" county seat in "The Turkey Buzzard Blues":

It was suppertime and the sidewalks were abandoned. In the purple quiet of the spring evening, hounddogs, slumbering in shadowed entrance-ways, awoke to the sound of his footsteps and stretched—dipping their forelegs at him in formal canine bows. His nostrils caught the woodsmoke scent of kitchen ranges, the faint lemon fragrance of bursting magnolia blooms.

The McGavock stories offered plenty of less pleasant southern settings, too, and a vibrant cast of scary, evil southerners for the P.I. to battle. Constiner again examined the South in his only published novel (an adaptation of a pulp serial), *Hearse of a Different Color*, which also reflected his academic background, as the hero comes to a small Tennessee town to study Deep South linguistics and uncovers a murder plot.

When the pulps died out, Constiner wrote for the slick magazines and true adventure magazines and then turned his attentions to another American region, the West. Selling mostly to Ace Books, Constiner wrote westerns from the late 1950s until a few years before his death in 1979, with a few historical and adventure stories for children in between.

Works

STORIES

"Affair of the Bedridden Pickpocket, The" (1945); "Affair of the Four Skeletons" (1944); "Affair of the Pharmacist's Fudge, The" (1944); "Arm of Mother Manzoli, The" (1944); "Bury Me Not" (1948); "Dead on Arrival" (1947); "Hand Me Down My Thirty-Eight" (1946); "Hound with the Golden Eye, The" (1944); "Killer Stay Way from My Door" (1944); "Killer Take All" (1942); "Kill One, Skip One" (1943); "Kitchen of Mister Lefevre, The" (1945); "Let's Count Corpses" (1942); "Let the Dead Alone" (1942); "Mr. Bettelman's Blisters" (1942); "Nervous Doorbell, The" (1943); "One Corpse Too Many" (1941); "Parade of the Empty Shoes" (1943); "Puzzle of the Padlocked Furnace" (1944); "Puzzle of the

Terrified Dummy" (1941); "Riddle of the Monster Bat" (1943); "Riddle of the Phantom Mummy" (1942); "Riddle of the Shackled Butler" (1943); "Strangler's Kill" (1940); "They'll Kill Again" (1941); "Turkey Buzzard Blues, The" (1943); "Until the Undertaker Comes" (1945); "You're in My Way" (1940)

BOOKS

Action at Redstone Creek (1967); *Four from Gila Bend* (1974); *Fourth Gunman, The* (1958); *Guns at Q Cross* (1965); *Hearse of a Different Color* (1952); *Killer's Corral* (1968); *Last Stand at Anvil Pass* (1957); *Outrage at Bearskin Forks* (1966); *Rain of Fire* (1966); *Short-Trigger Man* (1964); *Steel-Jacket* (1972); *Top Gun from the Dakotas* (1966); *Two Pistols South of Deadwood* (1967); *Wolf on Horseback* (1965)

Corrigan, Mark (Norman Lee) (1905–1962)

"Mark Corrigan" was a pseudonym for Norman Lee, a prolific English writer. Lee began publishing in the 1930s but really got up to speed after World War II, producing nonfiction books, juvenile novels, mysteries (including the Sinister Widow stories under the name Raymond Armstrong), and finally the 30-volume series of Mark Corrigan international thrillers. Corrigan, following a pop fiction tradition that had come down from the Nick Carter dime novels, was both the credited author and the hero of these first-person narrations. Corrigan, the author writes, is an American, "near six feet as dammit, dark and handsome in a rugged way. . . . He was me." He likes cold beers, cool breezes, and cool blondes ("in that order"). He often operates as a private sleuth with his own agenda, but he has a professional relationship with the "U.S. Intelligence Service." He roams the globe, but is most often found in a corner of Australia, the country to which Englishman Lee apparently immigrated in his later years. While the evocations of some of the far-flung settings—Hawaii, Chicago, South America—smack of the travel folder, the Australian novels like *Sydney for Sin* (despite the title, based mostly in Melbourne) and *Big Boys Don't Cry* (wandering the outback desert en route to Kalgoorlie), are loaded with au-

thentic detail and interesting trivia. Each adventure brings “cavalier” Corrigan a new set of good-looking women to romance, but his adoring female sidekick/assistant Tucker McLean is usually at hand, patiently waiting to catch his fancy.

While Mark Corrigan is offered up as a typically tough-talking, skirt-chasing American character, the narrative voice is never other than breezily British in effect (like a role written for John Wayne or perhaps Richard Widmark somehow ending up a vehicle for Cary Grant). Like the creations of other Americanized Brits Peter CHEYNEY, Hank JANSON, and James Hadley CHASE, Corrigan’s ersatz Yanks were most easily accepted by non-U.S. readers. The stories were tough but not too tough, sexy but not too sexy, and despite the globe-trotting settings and the international organizations involved, they were narrow in scope. For a contemporary reader, perusing Corrigan’s amiable, antique-seeming books, it may be hard to believe that his series was contemporaneous with Ian FLEMING’s altogether more sophisticated James Bond novels—adventure fiction that finally found a compelling amalgam of the cold-blooded tough and the snootily elegant styles of hard-boiled American and elitist British pulp.

Works

All Brides Are Beautiful (1953); *Baby Face* (1952); *Big Boys Don’t Cry* (1956); *Big Squeeze, The* (1953); *Bullets and Brown Eyes* (1948); *Cavalier of the Night* (1956); *Cruel Lady, The* (1957); *Dangerous Limelight* (1947); *Danger’s Green Eyes* (1962); *Dumb as They Come* (1957); *Girl from Moscow, The* (1959); *Golden Angel, The* (1950); *Honolulu Snatch* (1958); *I Like Danger* (1954); *Lady from Tokyo* (1960); *Lady of China Street* (1952); *Love for Sale* (1954); *Lovely Lady* (1950); *Madame Sly* (1951); *Menace in Siam* (1958); *Midnight Cavalier* (1954); *Murder of a Marriage* (1960); *Naked Lady, The* (1954); *Riddle of Double Island* (1962); *Riddle of the Spanish Circus, The* (1964); *Shanghai Jezebel* (1951); *Singapore Downbeat* (1959); *Sinister Playhouse* (1949); *Sinister Widow, The* (1951); *Sinister Widow Again, The* (1952); *Sinister Widow Comes Back, The* (1957); *Sinister Widow Down Under, The* (1958); *Sinister Widow Returns, The* (1953); *Sinner Take All* (1949); *Sins of Hong Kong* (1960); *Sweet and Deadly* (1953); *Sydney for Sin* (1956); *They Couldn’t Go Wrong* (1951); *Wayward*

Blonde, The (1950); *Who Do Women?* (1963); *Widow and the Cavalier, The* (1956)

Corris, Peter

(1942–)

Peter Corris is the preeminent author of Australian hard-boiled detective novels. His stories of Sydney private eye Cliff Hardy are in a direct line of inheritance from the two-fisted, lone-wolf dicks of the American pulp magazines of the 1930s. Through Corris’s own sensibility and the careful attention to setting and character, however, his novels have something fresh and up-to-date to say about life and death, and about the cities, back streets, and citizens of his native land. In time-honored tradition, Cliff Hardy follows his own code of ethics, crisscrossing the line between helping to enforce the laws of the land and ignoring them when necessary. Like most popular series heroes, he has a set of familiar characteristics and endearing quirks, like his fetish for well-worn Ford Falcons.

Born in Stawell, Victoria, in 1942, Corris grew up and went to university in Melbourne. After earning a doctorate in history at Australian National University, he spent a number of years as a college instructor. In his thirties he grew bored with the academic life and found work as a journalist before writing his first Cliff Hardy novel in 1980. *The Dying Trade* was well received and led to the series, with a volume devoted to Hardy’s caseload appearing nearly every year. While Hardy remains his signature creation, Corris has developed several other mystery and action heroes, including Ray “Creepy” Crawley, an Australian federal agent; Richard Browning, another Sydney-based private eye, this one circa 1940; and agent Luke Dunlop, whose specialty is the safekeeping and relocation of government witnesses.

In addition to the novels, Corris writes short stories about his heroes, which have appeared in Australian *Playboy* and other top local publications, and which are also published in his several collections. One film has been made from the Cliff Hardy series, *The Empty Beach* (1985), starring Bryan Brown as the private eye. Though well-known in his own country, and the recipient of nu-

merous awards including the Ned Kelly Lifetime Achievement Award from the Australian Crime Writers Association, Corris has been published only intermittently in the United States and Britain. In recent years he has supplemented his fiction-writing income with work as a university professor in New South Wales. A long-time diabetic, Corris wrote a well-received memoir on the subject, *Sweet and Sour: A Diabetic Life*.

Works

Aftershock (1992); *Azarian Action, The* (1991); *Baltic Business, The* (1988); *Beverly Hills Browning* (1987); *Beware of the Dog* (1992); *Big Drop* (1985); *Black Prince, The* (1999); *Box Office Browning* (1987); *Browning Battles On* (1993); *Browning in Buckskin* (1991); *Browning P.I.* (1992); *Browning Sahib* (1994); *Browning Takes Off* (1989); *Browning Without a Cause* (1995); *Burn and Other Stories* (1993); *Cargo Club, The* (1990); *Casino* (1994); *Cross Off* (1993); *Deal Me Out* (1986); *Dying Trade, The* (1980); *Forget Me If You Can* (1997); *Get Even* (1994); *Greenwich Apartments, The* (1986); *Heroin Annie* (1984); *January Zone, The* (1987); *Japanese Job, The* (1992); *Kimberly Killing, The* (1990); *Make Me Rich* (1985); *Man in the Shadows* (1988); *Man in the Shadows and Other Stories* (1988); *Marvelous Boy, The* (1982); *Matrimonial Causes* (1993); *O'Fear* (1990); *Pokerface* (1987); *Reward, The* (1998); *Set Up* (1992); *Time Trap, The* (1994); *Washington Club, The* (1997); *Wet Graves* (1991); *White Meat* (1981)

Creasey, John

(1908–1973) *Also wrote as: Gordon Ashe, Margaret Cooke, M. E. Cooke, Henry St. John Cooper, Norman Deane, Robert Caine Frazer, Patrick Gill, Michael Halliday, Peter Manton, J. J. Marris, Anthony Morton, Ken Ranger, William K. Reilly, Tex Riley*

Whatever one thinks of the English writer John Creasey's work, the sheer amount of it leaves fans and detractors alike in awe and disbelief. He published nearly 600 full-length works in a 40-year writing career (the first appearance of his final books postdated the author's death by several years, as there were so many titles still awaiting publication), which roughly amounts to one novel

every four weeks for 40 years. This is an astounding output even compared to the million-words-plus-a-year writers in the heyday of the pulps—few of them sustained that amount of published work for more than a decade and most for much less. The total is so huge that Creasey's pseudonyms each accumulated a bibliography longer than the entire output of many other popular writers. His pen names ranged from the well-known J. J. Marris and Anthony Morton to romantic fiction specialist Margaret Cooke and Tex Riley, author of *Two-Gun Girl*, *Trigger Justice*, and other western shoot-'em-ups aimed at Tex's fellow Britons. Quantity in writing is usually achieved at the expense of quality, and few of Creasey's books (though who can claim to have read them all!) can be expected to measure up to the very best crime and genre fiction of his time. Yet for brisk, personable light fiction Creasey was the man, and if one had in fact enjoyed one of the books, his remarkable consistency was such that one was likely to enjoy most of the hundreds of others he produced.

Born in Surrey to a working-class family, Creasey had an assortment of low-level clerical jobs while training himself to write commercial fiction. He accumulated hundreds of rejection slips before he found his way into print. His first novel, the crime story *Seven Times Seven*, was published when he was 24. The following year, 1933, he published *Redhead*, a Department Z story, the first volume of the first of what would be many long-running Creasey series. Department Z was a secretive, heroic branch of the British intelligence service and its adventures continued for decades. Some of his other popular series books included the adventures of the Toff, a debonair, aristocratic adventurer and crime-solver, Creasey's following in the successful footsteps of Leslie Charteris and his character, the Saint. The pleasant adventures of the Toff, his titled aunt, his butler, and Inspector Gryce of Scotland Yard went on for four decades.

Lasting just as long were the somewhat similar, pleasant adventures (written as Anthony Morton) about the wealthy antiques dealer and amateur sleuth John Mannering, known as the Baron. As Gordon Ashe, Creasey wrote about Patrick Dawlish, another daring, yet more circumspect, adventurer, this one, the author admitted,

patterned after the well-known character of Bulldog Drummond. The analogy faded as, unlike most series characters, Dawlish matured and changed as the series progressed, from risk-taking intelligence operative to a more ruminative Scotland Yard commissioner in later years. Inspector Roger West, another long-running Creasey policeman, brought breeding and a thoughtful humanity to Scotland Yard investigations. Commander George Gideon of the Criminal Investigation Department was another sensitive and sensible law enforcer, observed from book to book as he judiciously balances the responsibilities of job and family head in what was probably Creasey's (writing as J. J. Marric) best sustained work, one of the classic series in the crime subgenre of police procedural.

Creasey wrote assorted other series, juvenile novels, romance fiction, and historicals. He wrote 29 westerns, nearly all in the 1930s and 1940s (under the pen names of the aforementioned Mr. Riley, also as William K. Reilly and Ken Ranger); the books were all set in the vicinity of London. Much later, Creasey traveled in the west, and for a time he made his home in Arizona. An indication of his iconic, or anyway ubiquitous, presence on the British crime scene, Creasey lent his name to a short fiction periodical, *John Creasey Mystery Magazine*, for ten years beginning in 1956.

Works

Accuse the Toff (1943); *Alibi* (1971); *Battle for Inspector West* (1948); *Beauty for Inspector West, A* (1954); *Black Spiders, The* (1957); *Blight, The* (1968); *Bundle for the Toff, A* (1968); *Call the Toff* (1953); *Carriers of Death* (1937); *Case for Inspector West, A* (1951); *Case of the Innocent Victims, The* (1966); *Case of the Mad Inventor* (1942); *Case of the Murdered Financier* (1937); *Dangerous Quest* (1944); *Dark Harvest* (1947); *Dark Peril* (1944); *Dawn of Darkness* (1949); *Day of Disaster* (1942); *Days of Dangers* (1937); *Dead or Alive* (1951); *Death by Night* (1940); *Death in Cold Print* (1961); *Death in the Rising Sun* (1945); *Death Miser, The* (1932); *Death of a Racehorse* (1959); *Death Round the Corner* (1935); *Death Stands By* (1938); *Department of Death, The* (1949); *Depths, The* (1963); *Doll for the Toff* (1963); *Don't Let Him Kill* (1960); *Double for the Toff* (1959); *Drought, The* (1959); *Enemy Within, The* (1950); *Executioners, The* (1967); *Extortioners, The* (1974); *Famine, The* (1967);

Feathers for the Toff (1945); *Find Inspector West* (1957); *First Came a Murderer* (1934); *Flood, The* (1956); *Follow the Toff* (1961); *Fool the Toff* (1950); *Foothills of Fear, The* (1961); *Four Motives for Murder* (1938); *Go Away Death* (1942); *Great Air Swindle* (1939); *Gun for Inspector West, A* (1953); *Hammer the Toff* (1947); *Hang the Little Man* (1963); *Here Comes the Toff* (1940); *Holiday for Inspector West* (1946); *Hounds of Vengeance* (1945); *House of the Bears, The* (1947); *Hunt the Toff* (1952); *Inferno, The* (1965); *Inspector West Alone* (1950); *Inspector West at Bay* (1952); *Inspector West at Home* (1944); *Inspector West Cries Wolf* (1950); *Inspector West Kicks Off* (1949); *Inspector West Leaves Town* (1943); *Inspector West Makes Haste* (1955); *Inspector West Takes Charge* (1942); *Introducing the Toff* (1938); *Island of Peril* (1940); *Kill the Toff* (1950); *Kind of Prisoner, A* (1954); *Knife for the Toff, A* (1951); *Lame Dog Murderer, The* (1952); *League of Dark Men, The* (1947); *Leave It to the Toff* (1963); *Legion of the Lost, The* (1943); *Look Three Ways at Murder* (1964); *Makeup for the Toff* (1956); *Man from Fleet Street, The* (1940); *Man Who Shook the World, The* (1950); *Mark of the Crescent, The* (1935); *Masters of Bow Street, The* (1974); *Menace* (1938); *Men, Maids and Murder* (1933); *Mists of Fear, The* (1955); *Model for the Toff* (1957); *Mountain of the Blind* (1960); *Murder London–Australia* (1965); *Murder London–Miami* (1969); *Murder London–New York* (1958); *Murder London–South Africa* (1966); *Murder Must Wait* (1939); *Murder on the Line* (1960); *Murder Out of the Past* (1953); *Murder with Mushrooms* (1950); *Nest of Traitors, A* (1970); *No Darker Crime* (1943); *No Need to Die* (1956); *Oasis, The* (1969); *Panic* (1939); *Parcels for Inspector West* (1956); *Peril Ahead* (1946); *Plague of Silence* (1958); *Policeman's Dread* (1962); *Prepare for Action* (1942); *Prince for Inspector West, A* (1956); *Private Carter's Crime* (1943); *Prophet of Fire* (1951); *Puzzle for Inspector West* (1951); *Quarrel with Murder* (1951); *Redhead* (1934); *Rocket for the Toff* (1960); *Sabotage* (1941); *Salute the Toff* (1941); *Scene of the Crime, The* (1961); *Send Inspector West* (1953); *Seven Times Seven* (1932); *Shadow of Doom* (1946); *Six for the Toff, A* (1955); *Sleep, The* (1964); *Smog* (1970); *Sons of Satan* (1948); *Splinter of Glass, A* (1972); *Stars for the Toff* (1968); *Strike for Death* (1958); *Terror, The* (1962); *Terror Trap, The* (1936); *Theft of the Magna Carta, The* (1973); *Thunder in Europe* (1936); *Thunder-Maker, The* (1976); *Toff Among the Millions, The* (1943); *Toff and Old Harry, The* (1948); *Toff and the Deep Blue Sea, The* (1955); *Toff and the Fallen Angels* (1970); *Toff and the*

Golden Boy, The (1969); *Toff and the Great Allusion, The* (1944); *Toff and the Kidnapped Child, The* (1960); *Toff and the Lady, The* (1946); *Toff and the Runaway Bride, The* (1959); *Toff and the Sleepy Cowboy, The* (1974); *Toff and the Spider, The* (1965); *Toff and the Stolen Tresses, The* (1958); *Toff and the Teds, The* (1961); *Toff and the Terrified Tax Man, The* (1973); *Toff and the Trip-trip-triplets, The* (1972); *Toff at Butlins, The* (1954); *Toff at the Fair, The* (1954); *Toff Breaks In, The* (1940); *Toff Down Under, The* (1953); *Toff Goes Gay, The* (1951); *Toff Goes On, The* (1939); *Toff Goes to Market, The* (1942); *Toff in New York, The* (1956); *Toff in Town, The* (1948); *Toff in Wax, The* (1966); *Toff Is Back, The* (1942); *Toff on Board, The* (1949); *Toff on Fire, The* (1957); *Toff on Ice, The* (1947); *Toff on the Farm, The* (1958); *Toff on the Trail, The* (1947); *Toff Proceeds, The* (1941); *Toff Takes Shares, The* (1948); *Touch of Death, The* (1954); *Two for Inspector West* (1955); *Unbegotten, The* (1971); *Valley of Fear, The* (1943); *Voiceless Ones, The* (1973); *Voice for the Toff* (1971); *Wings of Peace, The* (1948)

As Gordon Ashe:

Big Call, The (1964); *Blast of Trumpets, A* (1975); *Clutch of Coppers, A* (1967); *Come Home to Death* (1958); *Crime Haters, The* (1961); *Dark Circle, The* (1950); *Day of Fear* (1956); *Death from Below* (1963); *Death in a Hurry* (1952); *Death in Diamonds* (1951); *Death in Flames* (1943); *Death in High Places* (1942); *Death on the Move* (1945); *Double for Death* (1954); *Elope to Death* (1959); *Engagement with Death* (1948); *Give Me Murder* (1947); *Here Is Danger* (1946); *Invitation to Adventure* (1945); *Kidnapped Child, The* (1955); *Kill or Be Killed* (1949); *Life for a Death, A* (1973); *Man Who Stayed Alive, The* (1955); *Missing or Dead* (1952); *Murder Most Foul* (1942); *Murder Too Late* (1947); *Promise of Diamonds* (1965); *Puzzle in Pearls, A* (1949); *Scream of Murder, A* (1969); *Sleepy Death* (1953); *Speaker, The* (1939); *Taste of Treasure, A* (1966); *Who Was the Jester?* (1940)

As Margaret Cooke:

False Love or True (1937); *Fate's Playthings* (1938); *For Love's Sake* (1934); *Love Calls Twice* (1938); *Love Comes Back* (1939); *Love's Journey* (1940); *Troubled Journey* (1937); *Whose Lover?* (1938)

As M. E. Cooke:

Big Radium Mystery, The (1936); *Black Heart, The* (1935); *Crime Gang, The* (1935); *Death Drive, The* (1935); *Fire*

of Death (1934); *Moat Farm Mystery, The* (1936); *Raven, The* (1937); *Stolen Formula Mystery, The* (1935); *Successful Alibi, The* (1936); *Verrall Street Affair, The* (1940)

As Henry St. John Cooper:

Chains of Love (1937); *Greater Desire, The* (1938); *Lost Lover, The* (1940); *Love's Pilgrimage* (1937)

As Norman Deane:

Dangerous Journey (1939); *Death in the Spanish Sun* (1954); *Gateway to Escape* (1944); *I Am the Withered Man* (1941); *Intent to Murder* (1948); *Murder Ahead* (1953); *No Hurry to Kill* (1950); *Return to Adventure* (1943); *Unknown Mission* (1940); *Where Is the Withered Man?* (1942); *Why Murder?* (1948)

As Robert Caine Frazer:

Hollywood Hoax (1961); *Mark Kirby and the Secret Syndicate* (1960); *Mark Kirby Solves a Murder* (1959); *Mark Kirby Takes a Risk* (1962)

As Patrick Gill:

Battle for the Cup (1939); *Fighting Footballers, The* (1937); *Laughing Lightweight, The* (1937); *Mystery of the Centre-Forward* (1939); *Secret Super-Charger, The* (1940)

As Michael Halliday:

As Empty as Hate (1972); *As Lonely as the Damned* (1971); *As Merry as Hell* (1973); *Cat and Mouse* (1955); *Crime with Many Voices* (1945); *Cruel as a Cat* (1966); *Cunning as a Fox* (1965); *Dine with Murder* (1950); *Dying Witnesses* (1949); *Edge of Terror* (1961); *Foul Play Suspected* (1942); *Four Find Danger* (1937); *Go Ahead with Murder* (1960); *Guilt or Innocence* (1964); *Heir to Murder* (1940); *Man I Killed, The* (1961); *Murder Assured* (1958); *Murder at End House* (1955); *Murder in the Stars* (1953); *Murder Takes Murder* (1946); *Mystery Motive* (1947); *Out of the Shadows* (1954); *Quiet Fear, The* (1963); *Sly as a Serpent* (1967); *Thicker Than Water* (1959); *Two Meet Trouble* (1938); *Who Died at the Grange?* (1942); *Who Killed Rebecca?* (1949); *Wicked as the Devil* (1966)

As Peter Manton:

Crooked Killer, The (1954); *Death Looks On* (1939); *Murder in the Highlands* (1939); *Murder Manor* (1937); *No Escape from Murder* (1953); *Policeman's Triumph* (1948);

Stand by for Danger (1937); *Thief in the Night* (1950); *Three Days of Terror* (1938)

As J. J. Marric:

Case for the Baron, A (1945); *Gideon's Art* (1971); *Gideon's Badge* (1966); *Gideon's Day* (1955); *Gideon's Drive* (1976); *Gideon's Fire* (1961); *Gideon's Fog* (1975); *Gideon's Lot* (1964); *Gideon's March* (1962); *Gideon's Men* (1972); *Gideon's Month* (1958); *Gideon's Night* (1957); *Gideon's Power* (1969); *Gideon's Press* (1973); *Gideon's Ride* (1963); *Gideon's Risk* (1960); *Gideon's River* (1968); *Gideon's Sport* (1970); *Gideon's Staff* (1959); *Gideon's Vote* (1964); *Gideon's Week* (1956); *Gideon's Wrath* (1967)

As Anthony Morton:

Affair for the Baron (1967); *Alias the Baron* (1939); *Attack the Baron* (1951); *Baron Again, The* (1938); *Baron and the Arrogant Artist, The* (1972); *Baron and the Beggar, The* (1947); *Baron and the Chinese Puzzle, The* (1965); *Baron and the Missing Old Masters, The* (1968); *Baron at Bay, The* (1938); *Baron at Large, The* (1939); *Baron Comes Back, The* (1943); *Baron Goes East, The* (1953); *Baron Goes Fast, The* (1954); *Baron in France, The* (1953); *Baron Returns, The* (1937); *Baron, Kingmaker, The* (1937); *Black for the Baron* (1959); *Blame the Baron* (1948); *Books for the Baron* (1949); *Call for the Baron* (1940); *Cry for the Baron* (1950); *Danger for the Baron* (1953); *Help from the Baron* (1955); *Hide the Baron* (1956); *Last Laugh for the Baron* (1970); *Love for the Baron* (1979); *Meet the Baron* (1937); *Nest Egg for the Baron* (1954); *Red Eye for the Baron* (1958); *Reward for the Baron* (1945); *Salute for the Baron* (1959); *Shadow the Baron* (1951); *Sport for the Baron* (1966); *Sword for the Baron* (1963); *Trap the Baron* (1950); *Versus the Baron* (1940); *Warn the Baron* (1952)

As Ken Ranger:

One Shot Marriott (1938); *Roaring Guns* (1939)

As William K. Reilly:

Gun Feud (1940); *Guns over Blue Lake* (1942); *Outlaw's Vengeance* (1941); *Range Vengeance* (1953); *Range War* (1939); *Rivers of Dry Gulch* (1943); *Secrets of the Range, The* (1946); *Stolen Range* (1940); *Two Gun Texan* (1939)

As Tex Riley:

Death Canyon (1941); *Gunshot Mesa* (1939); *Gunsmoke Range* (1938); *Hidden Range* (1946); *Lynch Hollow*

(1949); *Masked Riders* (1940); *Outlaw Hollow* (1944); *Shootin Sheriff, The* (1940); *Two Gun Girl* (1938)

Cushman, Dan

(1909–2001)

While many of the best writers of westerns have come no closer to the actual West than a Los Angeles swimming pool or a Manhattan apartment house, Dan Cushman was born and bred in the Big Sky country of Montana. As a boy he lived adjacent to an Indian reservation and had members of the colorful and unpredictable French Cree tribe as his boyhood pals. Cushman wrote conventional pulp westerns to the market dictates but his most successful and acclaimed work, *Stay Away, Joe*, was an unusually unglamorized western, a lyrical, comic tale of modern Indians that has been compared to John Steinbeck's *Tortilla Flat* in its portrait of an ethnic community and its down-at-heels rascals. *Stay Away, Joe*, said to be a favorite among the Indians themselves, was a Book-of-the-Month-Club selection, was made into a movie vehicle for Elvis Presley (as Joe), and remains in print 50 years later.

Cushman worked as a reporter for a time but graduated from the University of Montana with the intention of making a career in geology and mining. He pursued that work for several years, drifting from one Montana mining crew to another until he was in his early thirties and began writing for the pulps. In the 1940s he was a regular contributor to *Argosy*, *Adventure*, *Short Stories*, and other pulps, for which he wrote mostly he-man adventure fiction. Although Cushman had not worked overseas himself, he had gotten to know many a rugged, globe-trotting geologist during his years with the mining companies. He took some of their yarns and descriptions of tropic ports, jungle outposts, and backwater brothels and turned them into hard-boiled action stories. When the pulps died away and the original-paperback era began. Cushman only lengthened his word count and continued writing the same kind of stories about two-fisted, sweat-soaked American adventurers in exotic locales full of danger, treasure, drugs, and native maidens in silky cheongsams—paperbacks with titles like

Tongking!, *Port Orient*, *Jewel of the Java Sea*, and *Naked Ebony* (“In This Part of Africa,” growled the cover of the Gold Medal edition, with its cover illustration of a naked black woman in a headdress, bringing a disheveled white man a beer, “You Called No Man a Friend, No Woman Your Own and Trusted Only Your Gun . . .”).

In later years Cushman wrote histories of the west and even a popular “cow country” cookbook, as well as self-publishing reprint editions of his most popular older works. He died in 2001.

Works

Adventure in Laos (1963); *Badlands Justice* (1951); *Brothers in Kickapoo* (1962), also published as *Boomtown*; *Con*

Man, The (1960); *Fabulous Finn, The* (1954); *Fastest Gun, The* (1955); *Forbidden Land, The* (1958); *Four for Texas* (1963); *Jewel of the Java Sea* (1951); *Jungle She* (1953); *Long Riders, The* (1967); *Montana, Here I Be* (1950); *Naked Ebony* (1951); *North Fork to Hell* (1964); *Old Copper Collar, The* (1957); *Opium Flower* (1963); *Port Orient* (1955); *Ripper from Rawhide, The* (1952); *Rusty Irons* (1984); *Savage Interlude* (1952); *Silver Mountain, The* (1957); *Stay Away, Joe* (1952); *Tall Wyoming* (1957); *Timberjack* (1953); *Tongking!* (1954)

D

Daly, Carroll John (1889–1958)

Along with Dashiell HAMMETT, Daly is one of the inventors of the hard-boiled detective story. The two writers were first published within months of each other in the pages of the same magazine, *Black Mask*, then a three-year-old pulp “louse” in the words of the magazine’s cofounder, H. L. Mencken. Hammett was a fascinating and colorful character, a self-taught intellectual and former Pinkerton private eye. Daly, on the other hand, was not the sort anyone would have expected to launch a literary or any other sort of revolution. He had been usher, projectionist, and owner of a movie theater in Atlantic City, New Jersey, before he took up writing, and for most of his life he lived quietly on a quiet block in White Plains, New York. He was afraid of cold weather and dentists. His violent, tough-talking detective stories were a fantasy outlet for the mild-mannered man.

When Daly got into print in December 1922, beating Hammett by three months, the detective story was still the domain of aristocratic twits and brainy, eccentric puzzle-solvers. The writing was Victorian, the murders emotionally sterile. Yet the times were calling for something different, something stronger. America in the 1920s was a tough, wised-up place, with its veterans of the World War I trenches, its flappers and gangsters and speakeasies. Cynicism was in the air, crime in the headlines. Someone was bound to take mystery fiction out of the vicarage and the country home and

drop it down on the turbulent mean streets, to give murder—in Raymond CHANDLER’s words—“back to the kind of people that commit it for reasons, not just to provide the corpse, and with the means at hand, not hand-wrought dueling pistols, curare or tropical fish.”

Daly’s debut in *Black Mask*, “The False Burton Combs,” featured a tough-talking gentleman adventurer. The anonymous, first-person narrator is colloquial, wisecracking, violent. The second Daly tale, “Three-Gun Terry,” published in *Black Mask* in May 1923, was in a similar vein, with the hero Terry Mack calling himself a “private investigator,” completing the prototype. This is officially the first private eye story in the new hard-boiled style that would alter the future of mystery fiction. The ferocious, trigger-happy Terry Mack is familiar with both sides of the law. “I play the game on the level, in my own way,” says Mack. “I’m in the center of a triangle, between the crook and the police and the victim.” This would be exactly the position occupied by thousands of tough detectives to follow. As pulp historian William Nolan would write, “This pioneer private eye tale is remarkable in that almost every cliché that was to plague the genre from the 1920s into the 1980s is evident in ‘Three Gun Terry.’”

Black Mask’s next issue was its notorious Ku Klux Klan issue, and Daly was represented with another action-packed tale called “Knights of the Open Palm” (it was, at least, one of the anti-Klan stories in the issue). This time the hero was called Race Williams. The name would stick, and Race

would go on to be the star of some 70 pulp stories and eight novels. He was an immediate hit with readers and became the single most popular private eye in the history of the pulps.

Daly is often dismissed as a primitive talent, and many of his hyperbolic narratives sound shrill and phony. To properly appreciate Daly's impact, one must compare him not to Hammett or Chandler but instead to the typical mystery fiction writers who preceded him. Here is dialogue from a pre-Daly story, "The Clue from the Tempest":

"If there was a scintilla of evidence to verify this extraordinary hunch of mine—well, I shall be at one end of a thread which has begun to disentangle itself from the whole maze."

And now here is Race Williams speaking:

"You've had one look at my gun," I told them as they sneaked out. "The next time you have cause to see it you'll see it smoking. Now—beat it!"

Race Williams was at times closer to an avenging vigilante than an investigator. "The law," Daly once wrote, "is too cumbersome, too full of loopholes to be of much use." With his philosophy of "shoot first and gather clues later," detective Race Williams may have had little in common with Sherlock Holmes, but he was a blood relative of James Fenimore Cooper's Natty Bumppo, Wyatt Earp, Deadeye Dick, and other rugged, individualist Americans of fact and fiction. This was a crucial innovation of the new hard-boiled style, an emphasis on action and style over mystery. Cases were solved in a torrent of flying fists and blasting .45s, not by studied ratiocination. As Williams once said, "There might be a hundred clues around and I'd miss them. I've got to have a target to shoot at."

Daly, in any case, was not a writer who would have been comfortable with elaborate plot puzzles and the logical explications of the classical detective story. His storytelling was crude, repetitive, illogical, and prone to exaggeration. His blunt, colloquial style was not to be confused with real-

ism or with art. Daly's editors at *Black Mask* had little affection for him, but his work sold magazines. His name on the cover meant a guaranteed increase in sales, as much as 25 percent. Daly once recalled that his initial entry into the magazine only came about because the chief editor was on vacation. After the stories were published, that editor, George Sutton, summoned Daly to his office for some reluctant praise. "It's like this, Daly, I am editor of this magazine to see it make money. To see the circulation go up. I don't like these stories, but the readers do. I have never received so many letters about a single character before. Write them. I won't like them. But I'll buy them and print them."

Daly's work began appearing in book form beginning in 1926. The first Race Williams book, *The Snarl of the Beast*, was published the following year. The story deals with Williams's pursuit of "The Beast," a supercriminal whose dreaded exploits have left the big-city police department at wit's end. The antic, action-packed adventure is Daly at his best—or worst, depending on your perspective. In either case, the book is clear evidence that while Daly and Dashiell Hammett might historically share credit for the birth of a style and genre, their approach and results were very different. *The Snarl of the Beast* had nearly as much in common with the adventures of the old dime novelists as it did with the new hard-boiled form.

Daly never altered his style much, and by the 1940s his gunslinging Roaring Twenties detective had finally gone out of favor. What had once seemed hip and startling now seemed corny. Daly's emulators had refined the style through the years and kept it up to date, but Daly had not. He continued writing detective stories, but mostly for second- and third-rate pulp titles. Ironically, as Daly was becoming a forgotten name, a writer who had been a rabid admirer of Race Williams, Mickey SPILLANE, introduced his own blunt, two-fisted P.I., Mike Hammer, and his own frenetic blood-and-thunder stories made him the most popular author in the world. The Spillane stuff was different, of course—tougher and sexier and more modern—and Spillane had a lyrical gift under all the raw energy, but the direct connection was there. Early on, Spillane actually wrote Daly a gracious letter ad-

mitting the great influence the older writer had on his work. The admission may have left Daly with mixed feelings. "I'm broke," he is said to have told a friend, "and this guy gets rich writing about my detective."

Works

STORIES

"Action, Action!" (1924); "Alias Buttercup" (1925); "Answered in Blood" (1934); "Anyone's Corpse" (1937); "Blind Alleys" (1927); "Blood on the Curtain" (1933); "Book of the Dead, The" (1938); "Bridal Bullet, The" (1935); "Brute, The" (1924); "Clawed Killer, The" (1934); "Conceited Maybe" (1925); "Cops Came at Seven, The" (1953); "Corpse and Company" (1936); "Corpse for a Corpse" (1938); "Corpse in the Hand, A" (1939); "Dead Hands Reaching" (1935); "Dead Men Don't Kill" (1937); "Death Drops, The" (1933); "Death Drops In" (1934); "Death for Two" (1931); "Devil Cat" (1924); "Dolly" (1922); "Egyptian Lure, The" (1928); "Excuse to Kill" (1934); "Eyes Have It, The" (1934); "Face Behind the Mask, The" (1925); "False Burton Combs, The" (1922); "False Clara Burkhart, The" (1926); "Final Shot, The" (1930); "Five Minutes for Murder" (1941); "Flame and Race Williams, The" (1931); "Flaming Death" (1934); "Framed" (1930); "Gas" (1953); "Gun Law" (1929); "Half a Corpse" (1949); "Half-Breed" (1926); "Head over Homicide" (1955); "Hell with the Lid Lifted" (1939); "House of Crime, The" (1928); "I Am the Law" (1938); "If Death Is Respectable" (1933); "I'll Tell the World" (1925); "It's All in the Game" (1923); "Kiss-the-Canvas Crowley" (1923); "Knights of the Open Palm" (1923); "Make Your Own Corpse" (1934); "Men in Black" (1938); "Merger with Death" (1932); "Monogram in Lead" (1937); "Morgue's Our Home, The" (1936); "Murder Book" (1934); "Murder by Mail" (1931); "Murder in the Open" (1933); "Murder Made Easy" (1939); "Murder Theme" (1944); "Murder Yet to Come" (1954); "No Sap for Murder" (1940); "One Million Dollar Corpse, The" (1937); "One Night of Frenzy" (1924); "Out of the Night" (1926); "Quick and the Dead, The" (1938); "Race Williams Cooks a Goose" (1949); "Race Williams' Double Date" (1948); "Red Friday" (1934); "Red Peril, The" (1924); "Roarin' Jack" (1922); "Satan Returns" (1934); "Satan Sees Red" (1932); "Say It with Lead" (1925); "Shooting Out of Turn" (1930); "Sign of the Rat, The" (1933); "Sil-

ver Eagle" (1929); "Six Have Died" (1934); "Some Die Hard" (1935); "South Sea Steel" (1926); "Strange Case of Alta May" (1950); "Strange Case of Iva Grey" (1940); "Super Devil" (1926); "Tainted Power" (1930); "Them That Lives by Their Guns" (1924); "Three Gun Terry" (1923); "Three Thousand to the Good" (1923); "Twenty Grand" (1927); "Undercover" (1925); "White Headed Corpse, The" (1939); "Wrong Street" (1938)

BOOKS

Amateur Murderer, The (1933); *Hidden Hand, The* (1929); *Man in the Shadows, The* (1928); *Murder from the East* (1935); *Murder Won't Wait* (1933); *Snarl of the Beast, The* (1927); *Tag Murders, The* (1930); *Tainted Power* (1931); *Third Murdered, The* (1931); *White Circle, The* (1926)

Davis, Norbert (1909–1949)

Another of the unsung heroes of the golden age of the pulps, Bert Davis was a fixture in the best of the detective magazines and in such top titles as *Argosy* throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Davis could write westerns, war stories, and foreign adventures as well as gangster, mystery, and private eye fiction. But unlike so many of the pulp hacks who turned out fiction with all the individuality of assembly line workers, Davis at his best could imbue his work with real style and personality. Davis's best was undoubtedly his private eye work, short form and long, which was distinguished from the work of his peers by Davis's laugh-out-loud comic scenes and characters. Davis took the wisecracking side of the hard-boiled detective story and upped the ante, without tumbling into the ridiculous domain of Robert Leslie BELLEM. Bert Davis's Max Latin and Bail Bond Dodd stories for *Dime Detective*, and the quirky Doan and Carstairs novels, are some of the most purely entertaining work to come out of an extraordinarily rich era in popular crime fiction.

Norbert was born in Morrison, Illinois, and with his family eventually moved to California, where he would attend Stanford University as a law student. When the Great Depression hit, money grew scarce, and Davis took various odd

jobs—mowing lawns, shoveling sand—to stay in school. “I decided that a life of honest toil was not for me,” he would recall. Literary efforts for English classes had left his instructors “unimpressed,” but the teacher of a class in public speaking thought that Davis’s speeches, “said in my mumbling and bumbling manner,” ought to be put on paper. Davis would soon make his first sale to a magazine. Around this time he became obsessed with *Black Mask*, the pulp with the tough, innovative style of crime fiction. He would say that *Black Mask* became his “Bible”: he was determined to write for it, and did. The magazine’s hard-to-please editor Joseph T. Shaw bought Davis’s first submission, “Reform Racket,” about an ex-gunman named Dan Stiles, and published it in the June 1932 issue. A second story for *Black Mask* appeared in March 1933: “Kansas City Flash,” was set in the movie world and featured an ex-stuntman turned studio fixer.

Davis continued selling to the pulps while pursuing his law degree, but by the time of graduation he had become so successful as a short story writer that he did not even bother to take the bar exam. Davis moved to Hollywood and became friendly with several of the other pulp writers in the Los Angeles area. Norbert Davis is the big (6’ 5”), grinning fellow on the right, below a dour Dashiell HAMMETT, in the famous photograph of the “First West Coast *Black Mask* Get-Together,” a gathering of 11 *Black Mask* contributors on January 11, 1936. Davis and some of the other pulpsters then formed a writers’ group called the Fictioneers, which met regularly at a watering hole on Western Avenue. When Davis moved to Santa Monica, he lived for a time three houses away from Raymond CHANDLER (who wrote admiringly of Davis’s fiction).

Davis wrote regularly but not frequently for Shaw and his successor at *Black Mask*. Shaw liked nearly all the stories in his magazine to be lean and mean, and no doubt resisted anything that showed Davis’s penchant for humor and whimsical situations. Not that Norbert Davis had any trouble writing violent, cold-blooded fiction, but at other magazines the writer was allowed more leeway to express his lighthearted style. Davis’s two most highly regarded pulp series were published in *Dime*

Detective in the early ’40s. The Bail Bond Dodd series centered on a bail bondsman continually dragged into the dangerous misadventures of his clients. The series was tough but breezy and provided a vivid tour of a relentlessly seedy side of Los Angeles. Even better were the five Max Latin novellas concerning a sleek, hard-boiled private dick whose office was a valued back booth at a noisy, unglamorous restaurant that served the finest food in Los Angeles (Latin is a secret owner of the place). Clients hire the P.I. amidst the delivery of fancy dishes and the curses of arrogant waiters. Like the best Hollywood comedy thrillers of this period, the Latin stories were filled with clever hard-boiled dialogue, comical scene-stealing character parts, and fast action. Why Davis was not snapped up by the movie studios like dozens of other—and less talented—pulp writers is anyone’s guess. His only connection to the cinema was a single story sale, turned into a B western in 1941 called *Hands Across the Rockies*.

In 1943, a little later than most of his colleagues who had begun in the pulps at the same time, Davis saw the publication of his first hardcover book, *The Mouse in the Mountain*. It was hard-boiled detective fiction, but with Davis’s talent for comedy in evidence throughout. Indeed, many readers consider *Mouse* and the following two novels, *Sally’s in the Alley* and *Oh, Murderer Mine*, among the most amusing mysteries ever written. The three works followed the adventures of an unusual crime-solving duo, Doan, a “chubby, pink,” alcoholic private eye, and Carstairs, a fawn-colored Great Dane “about as big as a medium sized Shetland pony, only Shetland ponies at least make a try at looking amiable . . . and Carstairs never did. He looked mean. Probably because he was.”

Doan and Carstairs had actually been introduced years before in a two-part serial for *Argosy*, “Holocaust House,” and they made one subsequent pulp appearance in *Flynn’s Detective Fiction* in 1944. The series was terrific but sales apparently were not (the third novel was published only in paperback, by a fringe line, Handi-Books, which suggests that it was rejected by the hardcover houses). A fourth novel, *Murder Picks the Jury*, unrelated to the series, appeared in 1947, a collaboration by Davis and his friend from the *Black Mask* days,

W. T. Ballard, published under the pen name of Harrison Hunt. By that time Davis had shifted his efforts to the high-paying slick magazines like the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's*, where his stories appeared for the next few years. In the late '40s his life underwent some major shifts. Davis had married another magazine writer, Nancy Davis, and began collaborating on stories with her, mostly romances. An easterner, she may have been behind their decision to leave California and settle in the small town of Salisbury, Connecticut. It has been said that Davis had become despondent over his career—difficulties with the slick-magazine market, the lack of hardcover success or movie sales, the death of an agent, perhaps the dying of the pulps at this time—but this is speculation. All that is known for sure is that in the summer of 1949, he made a visit to a seaside resort on Cape Cod, and on the morning of July 28th, someone, presumably Norbert Davis himself, took a garden hose and attached it to his automobile exhaust, then ran the hose into a room of the house where he was staying. The writer died from carbon monoxide poisoning. He was 40 years old.

Works

STORIES

"A Is for Annabelle" (1944); "Beat Me Daddy" (1942); "Beauty in the Morgue" (1937); "Black Death" (1935); "Bullets Don't Bother Me" (1942); "Captious Sex, The" (1949), (with Nancy Davis); "Charity Begins at Homicide" (1943); "Cry Murder" (1944); "Death Sings a Torch Song" (1937); "Devil Down the Chimney" (1937); "Devil's Scalpel, The" (1935); "Diamond Slippers" (1936); "Don't Cry for Me" (1942); "Don't Give Your Right Name" (1941); "Drop of Doom" (1939); "5 to 1 Odds on Murder" (1937); "Get Out and Get Under" (1944); "Gin Monkey, The" (1935); "Girl with the Webbed Hand, The" (1935); "Give the Devil His Due" (1942); "Have One on the House" (1942); "Hit and Run" (1935); "Ideal for Murder" (1939); "Kansas City Flash" (1933); "Lethal Logic, The" (1939); "Medicine for Murder" (1937); "Missing Legs, The" (1936); "Murder Buried Deep" (1938); "Murder Down Deep" (1940); "Murder Harvest" (1936); "Murder in the Red" (1940); "Murder in Two Parts" (1937); "Name Your Poison" (1943); "One Man Died" (1936); "Price of a Dime, The" (1934); "Red Goose" (1934); "Reform

Racket" (1932); "Something for the Sweeper" (1937); "String Him Up" (1938); "Take It from Me" (1943); "This Will Kill You" (1940); "Too Many Have Died" (1943); "Trip to Vienna" (1935); "Vote for Murder, A" (1939); "Walk Across My Grave" (1942); "Watch Me Kill You" (1941); "Who Said I Was Dead?" (1942); "You Can Die Any Day" (1942); "You'll Die Laughing" (1940)

BOOKS

Mouse in the Mountain, The (1943); *Oh, Murder Mine* (1946); *Sally's in the Alley* (1943)

As Harrison Hunt (with W. T. Ballard):

Murder Picks the Jury (1947)

Deming, Richard

(1915–1983) *Also wrote as: Max Franklin*

Deming, along with John D. MacDonald, Tedd THOMEY, and a few others, was part of the post-war—and final—generation of pulp magazine writers. He shifted over to writing for the new paperback houses with barely a change in content or style when the pulp magazine market collapsed in the early '50s. Born in Des Moines, Iowa, he collected degrees from Washington University in St. Louis and the State University of Iowa, only to be drafted into the peacetime army nine months before Pearl Harbor. He returned to civilian life nearly five years later, and a few weeks after that he sold a short story to *Popular Detective* magazine. The story, titled "The Juarez Knife," featured a fierce, tough-talking private eye named Manville "Manny" Moon, who was distinguished from his numerous fierce, tough-talking private eye brethren by his headquarters in a Mexican restaurant and his artificial leg, replacing the one that was blown off in action in World War II. Moon didn't let his handicap slow him down much: he could run with speed when necessary, drove a custom-made auto, was a crack shot and had a black belt in judo. His fists were the lethal weapons of a former Golden Gloves champion. Moon stories appeared in assorted detective pulps following his debut, including *Black Mask* and *Dime Detective*.

Deming's success in the pulps increased until, in 1950, he had collected enough standing

assignments to quit his day job. Almost immediately afterward, however, those same pulps all collapsed with the suddenness of a dynamite implosion. Deming spent the next year scrambling for work. In 1952 a hardcover publisher, Rinehart, published his first novel, *The Gallows in My Garden*, another case for Manny Moon. Three more Moon books followed (*Tweak the Devil's Nose*, *Whistle Past the Graveyard*, and *Juvenile Delinquent*). In the same period hard-boiled periodicals had a brief revival with the arrival of *Manhunt* and its followers—monthly digests offering a sexy, more violent version of *Black Mask* for the Mickey SPILLANE era, and Deming became a regular contributor to these.

Deming finished up the decade with some tough, stand-alone suspense novels, and a couple of paperback assignments in which he wrote original stories about the characters in Jack Webb's television hit, *Dragnet*.

Deming tried another series hero for three novels in the '60s, vice cop Matt Rudd, then descended into a career mostly writing unpromising-sounding nonfiction (*Heroes of the International Red Cross*) and pseudonymous paperback novelizations of crime movies and television shows such as *Starsky and Hutch*, *Charlie's Angels*, and *Vega\$*, books whose titles alone gave sufficient evidence of their ephemeral status (for example, *The Mod Squad: The Sock It To 'Em Murders*).

Works

Anything But Saintly (1963); *Body for Sale* (1962); *Death of a Pusher* (1964); *Dragnet: The Case of the Courteous Killer* (1958); *Edge of the Law* (1960); *Fall Girl* (1959); *Gallows in My Garden, The* (1952); *Juvenile Delinquent* (1958); *Kiss and Kill* (1960); *Mod Squad: A Groovy Way to Die, The* (1968); *Mod Squad: Assignment, the Hideout, The* (1970); *Mod Squad: Greek God Affair, The* (1968); *Mod Squad: Spy In, The* (1969); *Mod Squad: The Sock It To 'Em Murders* (1969); *She'll Hate Me Tomorrow* (1963); *This Is My Night* (1961); *Tweak the Devil's Nose* (1953); *Vice Cop* (1961); *What's the Matter with Helen?* (1971); *Whistle Past the Graveyard* (1954)

As Max Franklin:

99 44/100% Dead (1974); *Charlie's Angels* (1977); *Charlie's Angels: Angels on a String* (1977); *Good Guys Wear*

Black (1978); *Starsky and Hutch* (1975); *Starsky and Hutch: Kill Huggy Bear* (1976); *Starsky and Hutch: Murder on Playboy Island* (1978)

Dent, Lester

(1904–1959)

The legendary pulp hero Doc Savage and the chronicler of his awesome adventures were a perfect symbiosis of creator and creation. Many a writer found wish fulfillment in their larger-than-life fictional protagonists, but many who knew Lester Dent thought he really did seem quite a bit like the amazing Doc. Physically, both were prepossessing figures. Dent was a huge man, six foot two and more than 200 pounds, and a flamboyant dresser who often cultivated a narrow mustache or a full beard. Like Savage, Dent possessed vast and arcane knowledge and was a master of assorted technical skills. He was a pilot, electrician, radio operator, plumber, and architect. A self-taught architect and draftsman, he designed his own house from scratch. And like Doc Savage, Lester Dent loved exploring the deserts, sailing tropic waters, and diving for sunken treasure (for three years he sailed the Caribbean on his yacht *Albatross*, diving for treasure by day, his wife would recall, and sitting on the deck writing Doc Savage stories all night). Dent's productivity as a writer alone qualified him for superman status: he could write around the clock, putting himself as much as a year ahead of schedule when he wanted time off, and often working on three different stories at once, moving from typewriter to typewriter to keep from getting bored.

The momentous pairing of Dent and Doc Savage came on the wings of pulp publisher Street & Smith's enormous success with *The Shadow*, the first of the superhero pulps. Soon they were looking for a follow-up. Their first choice was a less than creative one, reviving the old dime novel hero Nick Carter. Their second idea, however, was considerably more imaginative and more successful. Launched in March 1933, *Doc Savage Magazine* would last for 17 years—181 issues—and come to be regarded as one of the supreme highlights of the pulps, and arguably one of the great achievements in American popular fiction.

Street & Smith executive Henry Ralston's initial idea was to do a high-adventure equivalent of the Shadow mysteries, with a more all-American continuing character, and a strong dose of the "science fiction" that had excited interest among some young readers. He talked it over with editor John Nanovic, who put their ideas into a detailed outline and character genesis for the proposed pulp. It would concern Clark "Doc" Savage Jr., a brawny "superman," a master of many fields—surgeon, mineralogist, engineer, inventor, linguist. His skin color was a glowing bronze, "bespeaking of long years spent beneath tropic suns and northern skies." His hair was a matching hue, and so too were his eyes, resembling gold flake. He would be known as the Man of Bronze.

Headquartered in a Manhattan skyscraper, Doc was the leader of an almost equally colorful and talented group of five other adventurers: Renny, another brawny giant and a world-renowned engineer; Long Tom, a skinny electronic genius; Johnny, scrawny, studious, a geologist and remarkable physicist; Monk, a chemist of genius with the body of a gorilla; and Ham, a sardonic, nattily dressed, Harvard-educated lawyer who wielded a sword cane with a drug-laced tip. Financed by gold reserves from a hidden Central American mine, Doc and his gang were assigned an exciting task: "To go here and there, from one end of the world to the other, looking for excitement and adventure; striving to help those who need help; to punish those who deserve it. . . . People, tribes and nations would gain their help when sore pressed. Industry would be served by them. Art and science would profit by their daring . . ."

Of course, it was a long way between such a stirring declaration of intent and the actual execution of Street & Smith's conception. For that they needed a writer who could bring the intriguing ingredients to life and sustain them at novel length. They hired Lester Dent, a 28-year-old Missourian just beginning to find his way in the pulp jungle, a former small-town telegrapher without any major credits to his name but with plenty of energy and imagination.

Born in La Plata, Missouri, Dent had learned the telegrapher's trade at Chillicothe Business College and went on to jobs with Western Union, the

Empire Oil and Gas Company in Ponca City, Oklahoma, and the Associated Press office in Tulsa. Dent would cynically claim that it was not any burning creative urge but simply greed that got him going as a pulp fiction writer. When he met a reporter in the halls of the *Tulsa World* who bragged of receiving a check for \$300 for a pulp story he had written, Dent was soon poring over a typewriter himself. Working the graveyard shift, from midnight to eight in the morning, Dent had plenty of free time to write. At four and five A.M. he would put the finishing touches on a story and send it to various pulp magazines in New York. Thirteen were rejected or received no answer at all. The 14th story was his breakthrough. *Top-Notch* magazine had enclosed a check for Dent's tale "Robot Cay" (printed as "Pirate Cay" in the September 1929 issue). The story begins:

A man clawed wildly at festering, heat seared tropical vegetation, an almost impregnable barrier of interlocking creepers and twisted mangroves. . . . His frightened eyes, full of hope, crept continually upward, where the scorched heavens vibrated with a singsong drone like the buzz of a gigantic hornet. A parakeet, peacefully baking in the hot sun, fled with raucous squawks. The flutter of green and yellow started a bird panic that sent a cloud of feathered color above the tree tops. . . . It was a race, a race for life and death. And the huge pursuer, sweat soaked, panting, his hairy torso bare above the waist, was gaining, slowly, inexorably . . .

It was cliché-ridden, unreal, and overwritten, but showed enough energy and color for three stories. Dent cashed his check and went on writing. Over the next year he sold another two stories to *Top-Notch*, two to *Air Stories*, and one apiece to *Popular Magazine* and *Action Stories*. Dent sent a short story to one of the pulp titles put out by Dell Publishing. Soon, as the legend has it, Dent received a telegram from Richard Martinsen at Dell. It read, "If you make less than \$100 a week on your present job advise you to quit. Come to New York and be taken under our wing with a \$500-a-

month drawing account.” Dent didn’t have to be asked twice. He told his wife they were moving to Manhattan. They got to town on the first day of January 1931. The Dell editor kept his word and put Dent to work on two magazines, *Scotland Yard* and *Sky Raiders*. Dent didn’t disappoint the publisher: He churned out virtually the entire contents of both magazines. But, as it turned out, neither pulp showed sufficient strength, in those frantic days at the height of the depression, to warrant keeping them in business. Dent’s gravy train came to an early end, and by that first summer he was back on the street with all the other struggling pulpsters.

For nearly six months he went without a sale, but things improved by the end of the year. He started selling westerns and crime stories, and editors began to ask for more. Dent was something of an amateur inventor and knew a lot about science and engineering, tidbits of which made their way into his fiction. He wrote one story called “The Sinister Ray,” published in the March 1932 issue of *Detective-Dragnet Magazine*, about a brilliant “scientific detective” named Lynn Lash. It was likely this story that brought Dent to the attention of Henry Ralston at Street & Smith when he began looking for a writer to take on the new Doc Savage character. Indeed, Lash and his colorful assistants may well have been the inspiration for Ralston’s and Nanovic’s conception of Doc and his gang. At any rate, Ralston and Nanovic wanted the Doc stories to include plenty of strange science and nifty inventions along with the action and violence. Dent went to visit them at the Street & Smith building and presented some ideas about the new series. He accepted the assignment to write the new pulp’s monthly book-length story. He would be paid \$500 for each. Street & Smith retained copyright of the characters and the stories, and they would be published under a house byline—Kenneth Robeson (“Kenneth Roberts” on the very first, then altered to avert confusion with a well-known historical novelist of that name). It took Dent 15 days to complete the first, 55,000-word Doc Savage novel: *The Man of Bronze*.

The newly launched pulp was a smashing success. The varied, colorful cast, the fraternal inter-

play of Doc’s team, the brawny and brilliant bronze man himself, the inventive action and propulsive prose were an irresistible mixture (particularly in the years before superhero comic books, on whose development Doc Savage would have an undeniable influence). Dent quickly turned out a second, equally exciting Savage adventure, and a third, and so on, writing—with the exception of a handful of stories farmed out to ghostwriters—each lead story for the magazine’s entire phenomenal run, ending with the final issue in the summer of 1949.

Dent was one of the true masters of pulp fiction, and his dazzling imagination and readability—his literary charisma—made nearly every issue of Doc a reliable delight. Dent filled *Doc Savage’s* pages with an endless supply of great villains (for example, the Mystic Mullah, the Sargasso Ogre, the dreadful John Sunlight, the tittering Tibetan Mo-Gwei, sadistic Count Ramadanoff); great gadgets (a 600-shot-per-minute handgun, oxygen pills for breathing underwater, a rocket-propelled dirigible, hollow false teeth containing explosive chemicals and tiny tools, a banjo rifle, bullets fired by plucking a string, a platinum suit for deflecting certain death rays); great threats (genetically mutating monsters, exploding terror falcons, flesh-eating ants, mind-freezing radiation); and even great buildings (Doc’s icelike Arctic refuge, the Fortress of Solitude, guarded by a tribe of Eskimos; his privately owned “college” where evildoers are sent for brainwashing). The stories transcended easy categorization, roaming freely from science fiction inventions and experiments to supernatural horror to whiz-bang action to lost-world adventure.

Dent claimed to be a firm believer in preordained fiction formulas and “master plots” (as found in the bible of the hacks, *Plotto*), and referred to the bulk of his output as “salable crap.” But if the Doc Savage novels were hackwork, then they were of an exalted sort. Dent was a recklessly generous storyteller, giving the publisher and the reader more than their money’s worth. He provided each issue with enough imaginative material to supply a year’s worth of the average competing hero pulp. One typically over-the-top narrative, September 1933’s *The Lost Oasis*, for instance,

involved a hijacked zeppelin, a gorgeous English aviatrix, trained vampire bats in New York harbor, a pair of Middle Eastern bad guys, a desert prison camp, Doc and gang in an autogiro dogfight, jewel-bearing vultures, car chases, man-eating plants, a slave revolt, and a lost African diamond mine. With Dent behind the typewriter, *Doc Savage Magazine* became a crazily exhilarating reading experience, a monthly ten-cent hallucinogen for 14-year-old boys of all ages.

In addition to his 55,000-word Doc novels each month, and his various nonliterary endeavors (treasure hunting, house-building, and so on), Dent continued writing for other pulp magazines, westerns, mysteries, serialized novels for *Argosy*, and two excellent (and much anthologized) hard-boiled detective stories for the great *Black Mask* magazine, edited by Joseph Shaw. "Sail" and "Angelfish" dealt with rugged, black-clad Oscar Sail, who lives on the water in Florida (decades before John D. MacDonald's Travis McGee), aboard an equally black (even the sails) 45-foot schooner. The two stories were perfect examples of the classic hard-boiled *Black Mask* school of crime fiction, as terse and powerfully understated as the Savage stories were throw-in-the-kitchen-sink expansive. Dent himself thought the *Black Mask* stories may have been the best things he ever wrote, and he cursed the editor's subsequent firing from the magazine. With Shaw's coaching and encouragement, Dent felt, he might have become a really first-rate writer, another Raymond CHANDLER.

Dent returned to realistic crime fiction in the mid-1940s with a series of novels published under his own name, two of them (*Death at the Take-Off* and *Lady to Kill*) about the same character, Chance Malloy, the adventurous owner of an airline company. Ever adaptable to the market, in 1952 Dent sold *Cry at Dusk* direct to the Fawcett softcover line Gold Medal Books, and showed he could write a tough, sordid paperback original in the vein of such Gold Medal regulars as David GOODIS and Gil Brewer. Dent contracted to do another novel around this time but ended up returning his advance. With a host of new interests (an experimental cow-milking operation, a fertilizer factory), he explained to his agent, he just didn't know

when he could get around to the book. Clearly, having gotten away from the nearly two decades of writing to a tight monthly schedule, Dent did not want to hear about another deadline.

Works

STORIES

"Angelfish" (1936); "Behind the Ears" (1935); "Black Loot" (1932); "Corpse's Code, A" (1933); "Dancing Dog, The" (1939); "Death Blast, The" (1933); "Death in Boxes" (1937); "Death Wore Skis" (1941); "Death Zone" (1930); "Devil's Derelict, The" (1930); "Diamond Death" (1931); "Doom Ship" (1931); "Flaming Mask, The" (1933); "Genius Jones" (1937); "Gun Quest, The" (1932); "Hades" (1936); "Hairless Wonders, The" (1939); "Hair on His Chest" (1931); "Hang String, The" (1933); "Hell Hop" (1931); "Hell's Seven Keys" (1932); "Hocus Pocus" (1937); "Invisible Horde, The" (1932); "Little Mud Men, The" (1939); "Mud Money" (1934); "Mummy Murders, The" (1932); "Murder in a Pipe" (1933); "Out China Way" (1931); "Pirate Cay" (1929); "Queer Bees, The" (1939); "Range Bats" (1932); "Red Owl, The" (1934); "River Crossing" (1948); "Sail" (1936); "Savage Challenge" (1958); "Scared Swamp, The" (1939); "Sinister Ray, The" (1932); "Smith Is Dead" (1947); "Stamp Murders, The" (1933); "Tank of Terror, The" (1933); "Teeth of Revenge" (1931); "Terror, Inc." (1932); "Thirteen Million Dollar Robbery, The" (1930); "Trickery Trail" (1933); "Trigger Trap" (1932); "Vulture Coast" (1930); "White Hot Corpses" (1934); "Wildcat" (1931); "Zeppelin Bait" (1932)

BOOKS

Cry at Dusk (1952); *Death at the Take-off* (1946); *Lady Afraid* (1948); *Lady in Peril* (1959); *Lady So Silent* (1951); *Lady to Kill* (1946)

DOC SAVAGE NOVELS

As Kenneth Robeson:

According to Plan of a One-Eyed Mystic (1944); *All-White Elf, The* (1941); *Angry Canary, The* (1948); *Annihilist, The* (1934); *Awful Egg, The* (1940); *Birds of Death* (1941); *Black Black Witch, The* (1943); *Boss of Terror, The* (1940); *Brand of the Werewolf* (1934); *Cargo Unknown* (1945); *Colors for Murder* (1946); *Czar of Fear, The* (1933); *Dagger in the Sky, The* (1939); *Danger Lies*

East (1947); *Death Had Yellow Eyes* (1944); *Death in Silver* (1934); *Death Is a Round Black Spot* (1946); *Derelict of Skull Shoal, The* (1944); *Derrick Devil, The* (1938); *Devil Genghis, The* (1938); *Devil Is Jones, The* (1946); *Devil on the Moon* (1938); *Devil's Black Rock, The* (1942); *Evil Gnome, The* (1940); *Fear Cay* (1934); *Feathered Octopus, The* (1938); *Fiery Menace, The* (1942); *Five Fathoms Dead* (1946); *Flaming Falcons, The* (1939); *Fortress of Solitude* (1938); *Freckled Shark, The* (1939); *Giggling Ghosts, The* (1938); *Goblins, The* (1943); *Gold Ogre, The* (1939); *Golden Man, The* (1941); *Green Eagle, The* (1941); *Green Master, The* (1949); *Hell Below* (1943); *I Died Yesterday* (1948); *Invisible Box Murders, The* (1941); *Jiu San* (1944); *King Joe Cay* (1945); *King of Terror, The* (1943); *Land of Terror, The* (1933); *Laugh of Death, The* (1942); *Let's Kill Ames* (1947); *Lost Giant, The* (1944); *Lost Oasis, The* (1933); *Mad Mesa* (1939); *Majii, The* (1935); *Man of Bronze, The* (1933); *Man Who Fell Up, The* (1942); *Man Who Shook the Earth, The* (1934); *Man Who Was Scared, The* (1944); *Measures for a Coffin* (1946); *Men of Fear* (1942); *Men Vanished, The* (1940); *Mental Monster, The* (1943); *Metal Master, The* (1936); *Meteor Menace* (1934); *Midas Man, The* (1936); *Monkey Suit, The* (1947); *Monsters, The* (1934); *Mystery Island* (1941); *Mystery on Happy Bones* (1943); *Mystery on the Snow, The* (1934); *Mystery Under the Sea* (1936); *Mystic Mul-lah, The* (1935); *No Light to Die By* (1947); *Once Over Lightly* (1947); *Other World, The* (1940); *Peril in the North* (1941); *Phantom City, The* (1933); *Pharaoh's Ghost, The* (1944); *Pink Lady, The* (1941); *Pirate Isle* (1942); *Pirate of the Pacific* (1933); *Pirate's Ghost, The* (1938); *Poison Island* (1939); *Polar Treasure, The* (1933); *Pure Evil, The* (1948); *Quest of Qui, The* (1935); *Quest of the Spider* (1933); *Red Skull, The* (1933); *Red Snow* (1935); *Red Spider, The* (1979); *Repel* (1938); *Resurrection Day* (1936); *Return from Cormorant* (1949); *Roar Devil, The* (1935); *Rock Sinister* (1945); *Running Skeletons, The* (1943); *Sargasso Ogre, The* (1933); *Satan Black* (1944); *Screaming Man, The* (1945); *Sea Angel, The* (1938); *Sea Magician, The* (1934); *Secret in the Sky, The* (1935); *Secret of the Su, The* (1943); *Se-Pa-Poo* (1946); *Shape of Terror, The* (1944); *South Pole Terror, The* (1936); *Speaking Stone, The* (1942); *Spook Hole* (1935); *Spook Legion, The* (1935); *Spook of Grandpa Eben, The* (1943); *Squeaking Goblin, The* (1934); *Stone Man, The* (1939); *Strange Fish* (1945); *Submarine Mys-tery, The* (1938); *Swooning Lady, The* (1948); *Talking*

Devil, The (1943); *Ten Ton Snakes, The* (1945); *Terrible Stork, The* (1945); *Terror and the Lonely Widow* (1946); *Terror Takes Seven* (1945); *Terror Wears No Shoes* (1948); *They Died Twice* (1942); *Thing That Pursued, The* (1945); *Thousand Headed Man, The* (1934); *Three Devils, The* (1944); *Three Times a Corpse* (1946); *Three Wild Men, The* (1942); *Time Terror, The* (1943); *Too-Wise Owl, The* (1942); *Trouble on Parade* (1945); *Up from the Earth's Center* (1949); *Vanisher, The* (1936); *Vi-olent Night* (1945); *Waves of Death* (1943); *Wee Ones, The* (1945); *Weird Valley* (1944); *Whisker of Hercules, The* (1944); *Yellow Cloud, The* (1939)

Ghostwritten by Harold Davis:

Crimson Serpent, The (1939); *Devils of the Deep* (1940); *Dust of Death, The* (1935); *Golden Peril, The* (1938); *Green Death, The* (1938); *King Maker, The* (1934); *Land of Fear, The* (1938); *Living Fire Menace, The* (1938); *Mental Wizard, The* (1938); *Merchants of Disaster* (1939); *Mountain Monster, The* (1938); *Munitions Master, The* (1938); *Purple Dragon, The* (1940); *Seven Agate Devils, The* (1936); *Terror in the Navy, The* (1938)

Ghostwritten by Ryerson Johnson:

Fantastic Island (1935); *Land of Always Night* (1935); *Motion Menace, The* (1938)

Ghostwritten by William Bogart:

Angry Ghost, The (1940); *Awful Dynasty, The* (1940); *Bequest of Evil* (1941); *Death in Little Houses* (1946); *Fire and Ice* (1946); *Flying Goblin, The* (1940); *Hex* (1939); *Magic Forest, The* (1942); *Tunnel Terror* (1940); *World's Fair Goblin* (1939)

Disher, Garry (1949–)

Garry Disher's claim to hard-boiled pulp fame is as the author of the Wyatt novels, a brutally tough, formally restrained series about a professional hold-up man. The Wyatt novels, begun in the early 1990s, are an Australian emulation of Richard Stark's Parker novels of the '60s. From the nature and style of the protagonist, to the middle-level heists that generally comprise the plotlines, the smooth, intricate unraveling of said

plots, the terse, compellingly understated prose, the inevitable falling out from the inevitable lack of honor among thieves, the organized crime group known to both series as the Outfit, and more, the Wyatt books read like Stark reborn with an Aussie accent. *Deathdeal* (1993), for example, reprises a legendary Starkian gambit, the opening paragraph in violent motion:

There were two of them and they came in hard and fast. They knew where the bed was and flanked it as Wyatt rolled onto his shoulder and grabbed at the backpack on the dusty carpet. He had his hand on the .38 in the side pocket and was swinging it up, finger tightening, when the cosh smacked across the back of his wrist. It was lead bound in cowhide and his arm went slack and useless. Then he felt it across his skull and he forgot about his hand and who the men were and how they'd known where to find him and everything else about it.

Luckily, for Stark/Parker fans, the Disher/Wyatt books are a *good* emulation, even a great one. Unlike the sometimes primitive British Commonwealth writers of earlier times who persisted in parroting Yank tough-guy fiction on the Americans' own ground, Disher sticks to a setting he knows and (to American readers) entirely authentic-seeming local color, character types, and dialogue. Disher is in fact one of Australia's best-regarded literary figures, an acclaimed novelist, short story writer and children's book author, who gives to the Wyatts a rigorously sharp style and an ice-cold surface under which slip intriguing ideas about human nature, Australian life, and corporate culture.

Like the first volumes in the Parker series, the early Wyatts form a loosely connected saga. The complications of each botched or barely survived heist leave Wyatt having to dodge the pursuers from one volume's caper—cops, squealers, Outfit hit men—right into the next. Enemies and unfinished business are liable to show up at any moment, complicating Wyatt's already tension-filled work and ratcheting up the suspense as each book moves toward a fast, blood-soaked climax and last-minute escape.

Disher began life in the back-country of Burra, Australia, then attended high school in the big city of Adelaide, where he eventually attended the university. He had nursed private dreams of writing since childhood but only began to find his way around a pen and pad during a two-year "walkabout" in Europe. In Italy, he told the journalist Murray Waldren, "inspired by newspaper stories of a particularly lurid murder case, I wrote the beginnings of some very bad crime stories." He returned to academic study in Australia and earned a master's degree, writing his thesis on the history of Outback fiction in the 1930s. As one of the creative stars of his university, Disher won a scholarship for a year's stay at Stanford University in California, where he took part in an advanced writing lab taught by novelist Robert Stone.

Returning once more to Australia, Disher tried to succeed as a full-time writer. His work found publication and growing acclaim, but the remuneration remained modest. Even the Wyatt series, with its growing worldwide cult of readers, did not do much to lift Disher—nearing age 50—above struggling writer status. Like Stark before him, Disher suddenly abandoned his series about the tough, cool career criminal. "Despite the supportive reviews here and overseas, sales in Australia were pretty modest," he told a journalist. "Plus I needed a break from him—there was a danger the series might become formulaic, and I felt I had pushed him far enough."

Not long after, Richard Stark himself returned after a hiatus of more than 20 years, perhaps influencing Disher's decision not to resume his own similar series. In 1999 Disher released *Dragon Man*, a crime novel with a new protagonist, Challis, who is a regional homicide inspector and moody loner who lives in the Mornington Peninsula farmland that is also home to his creator. A near complete turnaround from the cold-blooded, violence-streaked Wyatt novels, the Challis mystery follows the pattern of the more moody and ratiocinative mysteries of the English mystery novelist Colin Dexter and his ilk, but Disher's tough, distinctive voice still comes through loud and clear.

Works

Crosskill (1994); *Deathdeal* (1993); *Dragon Man* (1999); *Kickback* (1991); *Payback* (1992); *Port Vila Blues* (1995)

E

Edson, J. T. (John Thomas Edson) (1928–)

Until one remembers that Billy the Kid was from Brooklyn and Sergio Leone from Rome, and that *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) was filmed in the wilds of New Jersey, it might come as a surprise to realize that one of the all-time most popular writers of westerns was born in Nottinghamshire, England, and that quite a few of J. T. (John Thomas) Edson's many cowboy stories were written during the years he ran a fish-and-chips shop in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. In his productivity and devotion to the classic pulp genres like the western and the jungle adventure, Edson was a throwback to the pulp writers of yore, still producing his traditional fare on the eve of the 21st century. Edson seems particularly comparable to a distant figure like Edgar Rice BURROUGHS, and not merely because Edson wrote some semi-official sequels to Burroughs's famous Tarzan series. The two writers shared an early history of uncreative labors prior to their writing careers (Edson was a postman, a stone quarry hauler, and a dog trainer), a prolific storytelling ability (Edson published nearly a book a month many years), a simple but compelling prose style, a longstanding public appeal that transcended fad and fashion, and a far higher standing with ordinary readers than with critics.

Edson's *Bunduki* books, apparently sanctioned by the Burroughs estate, dealt with the ostensible adopted son of Tarzan and continued the lordly jungle adventures in an exciting manner that would

have made the American master proud. As the series developed (with four titles in all: *Bunduki*, *Bunduki and Dawn*, *Sacrifice of the Quaggi Gods*, and *Fearless Master of the Jungle*), Edson referenced other gods from the pulp adventure pantheon, Lester DENT's Doc Savage and H. Rider HAGGARD's Allen Quatermain, producing a more straightforward version of the sort of reflexive tribute to the past done by Philip José Farmer. Edson wrote other assorted genre works through the years, including one hard-boiled mystery, *Blonde Genius* (written in collaboration with Peter Clawson).

But far and away Edson's preferred form of fiction, and the genre for which he created more than 120 novels, is the western. Edson began writing during his years as a dog trainer in the Royal Army Veterinary Corps from 1948 to 1959 (his second tour of duty after several years in the Rifle Brigade). His assignments took him to Asia, Africa, and various military outposts in Europe, but the setting that captured the much-traveled Edson's attention when he began banging out his first fiction (on a typewriter bought after a big bingo win) was the American frontier. His first published novel, *Trail Boss*, was submitted as an entry to a contest held by the British publisher Brown & Watson, and it won. Edson quickly followed the prizewinner with other western tales and all were quickly published (in the United Kingdom only for a time, but eventually in the United States with Berkley and other houses).

Establishing long-term relationships with Brown & Watson and later with Corgi, another British publisher, Edson wrote novels that appeared

at an average rate of one every six to eight weeks for the next 20 years. Most of the books belonged to one or another continuing series, with certain cross-pollinations among certain of the series as well. The most popular of these amalgamations was *The Floating Outfit*, with a cast of stylized gun-slingers—the Ysabel Kid, Mark Counter, Lon Dalton—who brought to mind a more violent version of the B-movie western series characters of the 1930s. In addition, Edson would include some of the actual legends of the era, such as Calamity Jane, letting the mythic figures of reality intermingle with those of his own creation. Researching place and time, Edson tried his best to make the novels true to their historical setting, and his experiences in the army ensured the authenticity of his writing on armaments and animals. But the source of Edson's popularity through the years was the ability to spin a great yarn and hold readers entranced to the last page.

Works

Apache Rampage (1963); *Arizona Ranger* (1962); *Back to the Bloody Border* (1970); *Bad Bunch, The* (1968); *Bad Hombre* (1971); *Banduki* (1975); *Banduki and Dawn* (1976); *Beguinaage* (1978); *Beguinaage Is Dead* (1978); *Big Hunt, The* (1967); *Blonde Genius* (with Peter Clawson), (1973); *Bloody Border, The* (1969); *Buffalo Are Coming* (1985); *Bull Whip Breed, The* (1965); *Calamity Spells Trouble* (1968); *Calamity, Mark and Belle* (1986); *Cap Fog Meet Mr. J. G. Reeder* (1977); *Code of Dusty Fog* (1989); *Cold Deck, Hot Lead* (1969); *Colt and the Sabre, The* (1967); *Comanche* (1967); *Cow Thieves, The* (1965); *Cuchilo* (1969); *Cut One, They All Bleed* (1983); *Deputies, The* (1988); *Devil Gun* (1966); *Drifter, The* (1963); *Fast Gun, The* (1967); *Fastest Gun in Texas* (1963); *Fearless Master of the Universe* (1980); *Floating Outfit, The* (1967); *Fortune Hunters, The* (1965); *44 Calibre Man* (1969); *From Hide and Horn* (1969); *Gentle Giant, The* (1979); *Go Back to Hell* (1972); *Goodnight Dream* (1969); *Guns in the Night* (1966); *Gunsmoke Thunder* (1963); *Gun Wizard* (1963); *Half Breed, The* (1963); *Hard Riders* (1962); *Hell in the Palo Duro* (1972); *Hide and Horn Saloon* (1984); *Hide and Tallow Man* (1974); *Hooded Riders, The* (1968); *Horse Called Magallon* (1971); *J. T.'s Hundredth* (1979); *J. T.'s Ladies* (1980); *J. T.'s Ladies Ride Again* (1989); *Justice of Company Z, The* (1981); *Kill Dusty Fog* (1970); *Lawmen of Rockabye County* (1989); *Law of the Gun, The* (1966); *Making of a Lawman, The* (1968); *Man from Texas, The*

(1965); *Mark Counter's Kin* (1990); *Matter of Honor* (1991); *McGraw's Inheritance* (1968); *No Finger on the Trigger* (1987); *Old Moccasins on the Trail* (1981); *Ole Devil and the Caplocks* (1976); *Ole Devil and the Mule Train* (1976); *Ole Devil at San Jacinto* (1977); *Ole Devil's Hands and Feet* (1984); *Owlhoot, The* (1970); *Peacemakers, The* (1965); *Point of Contact* (1970); *Professional Killers, The* (1968); *Quarter Second Draw, The* (1969); *Quest for Bowie's Blade* (1974); *Quiet Town* (1962); *Rangeland Hercules* (1968); *Rapido Clint* (1980); *Rapido Clint Strikes Back* (1990); *Rebel Spy, The* (1968); *Rebel Vengeance* (1987); *Remittance Kid, The* (1978); *Renegade* (1978); *Return of Rapido Clint and Mr. J. G. Reeder* (1984); *Return to Backsight* (1966); *Rio Guns* (1962); *Rio Hondo Kid* (1963); *Rio Hondo War, The* (1964); *Run for the Border* (1971); *Rushers, The* (1964); *Sacrifice of the Quagga Gods* (1976); *Set Afoot* (1977); *Set Texas Back on Her Feet* (1973); *Sagebrush Sleuth* (1962); *Sheriff of Rockabye County* (1988); *Sidewinder* (1967); *Sixteen Dollar Shooter* (1974); *Slaughterer's Way* (1965); *Slip Gun* (1971); *Small Texan, The* (1969); *South Will Rise Again, The* (1972); *Terror Valley* (1967); *Texan, The* (1962); *To Arms, To Arms in Dixie* (1972); *Town Called Yellowdog* (1966); *Town Tamers, The* (1969); *Trail Boss* (1961); *Trigger Fast* (1964); *Trouble Busters, The* (1965); *Troubled Range* (1965); *Trouble Trail* (1965); *Two Miles to the Border* (1972); *Under the Stars and Bars* (1970); *Viridian's Trail* (1978); *Waco's Debt* (1962); *Wagons to Backsight* (1964); *Wanted: Belle Starr* (1986); *Whip and the War Lance* (1979); *White Indian* (1981); *White Stallion, Red Mare* (1970); *Wildcats, The* (1965); *You're Texas Ranger, Alvin Fog* (1979); *You're in Command Now, Mr. Fog* (1973); *Young Ole Devil* (1975); *Ysabel Kid, The* (1962)

Ellson, Hal (1910–1994)

A sensational and influential novel when it was published in paperback, Hal Ellson's *Duke* followed Irving SHULMAN's *The Amboy Dukes* as a progenitor of a new literary genre: juvenile delinquency fiction. *Duke* was about a black Harlem gang leader who, according to the back cover of the best-selling Popular Library edition of 1949, "ran his gang of teen age hoodlums with fists, feet and a gun. His operations included rape, murder, pimping and smuggling dope. He made his own law. And his code was the savage code of the slum-jun-

gle that was the only home he knew. . . . If you are squeamish, or if you prefer to ignore a dangerous social condition which even now is almost out of control, this novel is not for you."

The paperback included an innovative glossary of street gang terminology, so that nondelinquent readers could be hep to the meanings of "weed," "bomber," "H," "Juice man," and a few dozen other terms not then recognized by Webster's. Unlike the rather conventional third-person narration in Shulman's novel, Ellson told *Duke* in the idiomatic, semiliterate voice of his main character, giving the book a blunt immediacy:

When we got back to the neighborhood everybody is high as hell. There's big news. Soon as we drew up to the curb boys who didn't come with us crowded around. The Skibos came through, they said. They raided and stomped hell out of a couple of our boys and ran.

That got me wild. I told my cats to get their artillery. . . . I went for my pistol . . . when I got back to the corner my boys are waiting for me. There was a real mob.

"The mighty Counts is ready," Chink said. "Do we rumble tonight or don't we?"

"Yeah, man!" I said. "Tonight we rumble!"

Ellson followed *Duke* with *Tomboy*, about a young Manhattan girl gang member. Many 1950s juvenile delinquent paperbacks contained prefaces or afterwords from psychiatrists or civic leaders trying to put the youthful bad behavior into clinical context. Bantam's *Tomboy* contained a pompous introduction by Dr. Fredric Wertham, the era's notorious self-appointed decency vigilante and scourge of comic books. There was also a curiously scolding blurb from the *Christian Science Monitor*: "Some readers may feel that the author could have presented his case more persuasively by replacing some of the sensationalism with constructive scenes, but Mr. Ellson seems deliberately to have avoided this method." *And amen to that, daddy-o*, Ellson's satisfied readers might have responded.

After *Tomboy* came *The Golden Spike*, a devastating portrait of a young heroin addict, and then 12 more novels of New York lowlife and delin-

quency, raw-nerved street sagas that made Ellson the incontrovertible king of juvenile delinquent fiction. With good cause, his books were noted for their authenticity. Throughout his novel-writing career, Ellson was employed as a recreational therapist at a Manhattan city hospital, working with violent or otherwise troubled youths off the meanest streets of New York.

"It was a time when the New York neighborhoods were filled with these teenage gangs," Ellson recalled for this author. "Terrific hostility between them, lots of violence, killings. I saw all kinds of mixed up and crazy things at that job, and I took my notebook everywhere I went. I made lots of notes and a lot of the stuff in my books was just writing down what these young people said." He wrote the novels in longhand while traveling to and from work on the subway. He wrote 1,200 words a day, 600 on the way to the job and 600 on the way home.

Ellson said many of the kids looked at him as a father confessor and would tell him everything. They knew he could be trusted not to repeat anything to the cops. "After *Duke* came out they'd be lined up waiting to talk to me, kids accused of a couple of murders, saying 'Want to hear a good story?' I got all kinds of shocking stuff from these kids. I had earned their respect, they believed in me, and I never gave them away. If they were in serious trouble I would try to steer them to a psychiatrist I trusted, but I never gave them away."

Works

Blood on the Ivy (1971); *Duke* (1949); *Games* (1967); *Golden Spike, The* (1952); *I'll Fix You* (1956); *Jailbait Street* (1959); *Killer's Kiss, A* (1959); *Knife, The* (1961); *Nest of Fear* (1961); *Nightmare Street* (1965); *Rock* (1953); *Stairway to Nowhere* (1959); *Tell Them Nothing* (1956); *That Glover Woman* (1967); *This Is It* (1956); *Tomboy* (1950)

Empey, Arthur Guy (1883–1963)

Arthur Guy Empey is remembered today, if at all, by the small number of pulp magazine aficionados who associate his name with one of the shortest-lived "hero pulps" of the 1930s. For a time, how-

ever, in the period of America's involvement in World War I and for some years after, Empey was something of a household name, a celebrity who socialized with the Hollywood elite and was famous enough to appear as "himself," a star and guest star in silent movies. A drifter with a taste for adventure and combat, Empey, a native of Ogden, Utah, had served in the U.S. Army and the New Jersey National Guard before enlisting in the British army, supposedly incensed after the German sinking of the passenger ship *Lusitania*. (The United States had not yet entered the war.) He saw brutal action in France and suffered a severe wounding during a trench raid by the enemy. While recuperating in an English hospital he began a book based on his experiences as a Yank in the British service. The book was published as *Over the Top*, and had the good luck to come out in 1917 just as the United States was entering the war and many Americans were eager to find out what their boys might experience "over there." The book was a great best-seller. Empey enlisted in the American service at this time, but the army used him mainly for propaganda purposes, sending him to war bond rallies with other celebrities. Although the war ended less than two years later, Empey managed to crank out at least two more volumes on the subject, as well as several war-related songs and sheet music (for example, "Your Lips Are No Man's Land but Mine") before the Armistice was signed. A colorful and charismatic figure, Empey made good use of his fame and his new friendships with the likes of the actors Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford and carved a place for himself in Hollywood, where he helped with the production of a film version of his book.

In the '20s, Empey established a small production company of his own, and wrote, directed, and sometimes appeared in movies, such as the 1928 production *Into No Man's Land*, a rewrite of P. C. WREN's *Beau Geste* set in World War I. He continued to write books and stories, and when pulp magazines began to appear, devoted to tales of the recent European conflict, he became a contributor. With a piece of fiction in the December 1926 issue of *War Stories* magazine, Empey began his chronicle of the character he named Terence X. O'Leary, a swaggering, complaining, not terribly competent

Irish infantryman who manages to find amusement and disgrace in the midst of a dreadful war. The series eventually transferred from *War Stories* to *Battle Stories* and then back again, and as it continued, O'Leary developed a chameleonlike identity, shifting from drunken layabout to fierce fighting man and Medal of Honor winner. These shifts reached an astounding apex when O'Leary became, briefly, the star of his own pulp, *Terence X. O'Leary's War Birds*, with the old trench rat now "the world's greatest hero" and a wild competitor for readers of *The Shadow*, *Doc Savage*, and *G-8*.

The old, relatively realistic World War I stories had come to seem dated, and the hero pulps were the hot new thing. Empey's publisher, Dell, decided to take one of its failing air war titles—*War Birds*—and old reliable O'Leary, and, with Empey's enthusiastic help, combine them into something fresh. *O'Leary Fights the Golden Ray* ("COMPLETE \$2.00 NOVEL") appeared on newsstands with a March 1935 cover date and a bizarre tale of the larger-than-life U.S. Air Force pilot hero out to beat the evil megalomaniacs High Priest Unuk and his right-hand maniac Alok, of the obscure South Pacific island empire of Lataki. Unuk and company have enslaved most of the world's top scientists and put them to work inventing an assortment of futuristic, apocalyptic weaponry with which the islanders hope to destroy America and then the rest of the world. O'Leary and his comrades mix it up with the folks from Lataki in this and the novel-length adventure that followed, eventually vanquishing their foes after numerous ray gun battles and rocket-belt chases. The third issue of the magazine, its featured novel titled *The Purple Warriors of Neptunia*, found O'Leary battling a new but similarly-minded set of bad guys named Umgoop and Satania, rulers of an underwater kingdom. O'Leary won again, but the magazine in which all this took place was a loser. Either people remembered the O'Leary character from more realistic adventures and did not get the switch, or Empey's crazed narratives were just too much, but sales were low. The magazine lasted for just three issues. Copies of any of the three are rare collectibles in almost any condition. Either because he still had some old unpublished stories to sell or because he simply did not like to think up a new

name for a character, Empey continued to publish some traditional O'Leary stories for a few years after the hero pulp disaster, then finally let O'Leary, like so many old soldiers, fade away.

In Los Angeles in the 1930s, Empey, a determined super-patriot, helped to form a blackshirts-type private army with its own cavalry unit, the Hollywood Hussars, and dreams of becoming a military political power in the volatile depression years. Gary Cooper was said to have been a member of the group.

Empey's daughter, Diane Marguerite Empey, born in 1932, acquired a curious sort of fame for herself under her married name of Diane Webber. Possessed of a sunny smile and a lush figure, she was a popular nude model of the 1950s, a *Playboy* centerfold, a dedicated spokesperson for nudism (she was dubbed "The Queen of the Nudists"), and the star of Russ Meyer's "adults only" classic film, *The Immoral Mr. Teas*.

Works

STORIES

"Curse of the Iron Cross, The," *Battle Stories* (Jan. 1932); "Fightin' Irish Son-of-a-Gun, The" (July 1932);

"Hinky Dinky Parlez Vous," *Battle Stories* (Mar. 1928); "O'Leary Carries On," *War Stories* (Nov. 1931); "O'Leary Dyno-Blaster, The," *Terence X. O'Leary's War Birds* (Apr. 1935); "O'Leary Fights the Golden Ray," *Terence X. O'Leary's War Birds* (Mar. 1935); "O'Leary Flies a Ghost," *War Birds* (Aug. 1933); "O'Leary Proves His Courage," *War Stories* (Feb. 1927); "O'Leary Tames the Bouche," *Battle Stories* (Oct. 1935); "O'Leary's Rough Riders," *Battle Stories* (Apr. 1932); "O'Leary, Secret Service," *War Stories* (June 1932); "O'Leary, Wagon Soldier," *War Stories* (Apr. 1932); "Purple Warriors of Neptunia," *Terence X. O'Leary's War Birds* (May 1935); "Sgt. O'Leary's Tank Busters," *Battle Stories* (Dec. 1933); "Terence X. O'Leary of the Rainbow Division," *Battle Stories* (Sept.-Dec. 1930); "Y.M.C.A. Goes Over the Top, The" (June 1932)

BOOKS

First Call (1918); *Over the Top* (1917); *Tales from a Dugout* (1918)

F

Fairfax-Blakeborough, Jack (1881–1975)

Fitted chronologically between Nat Gould and Dick FRANCIS, Fairfax-Blakeborough is the third great name in the annals of British horse-racing fiction. Like Francis, Fairfax-Blakeborough was a horseman before he turned to writing, though unlike Francis his career as a jockey was brief and undistinguished. Combining his love for the turf with an embryonic writing talent (it was in the blood—Jack’s father had written stories and plays about horse racing), he found work as a sports reporter on a local newspaper. His detailed knowledge and colorful prose brought him success as a journalist and he was soon the best-known racing reporter in Britain. In addition to his newspaper features and weekly columns, he wrote several volumes of nonfiction about the turf personalities of the day.

As a fixture at every racetrack, Fairfax-Blakeborough knew both the glamorous inner circles of the wealthy sportsmen and thoroughbred owners, and the seedy underworld of the racetrack’s bookies, fixers, and crooked riders. Many of the rich inside details he knew about the turf world could not easily be exposed in his newspaper features and weekly columns, but did provide ample lurid and intriguing material for fiction. In the 1930s, Fairfax-Blakeborough published stories and novels with a racing background, exposing readers to the tawdry and criminal goings-on beneath the festive surface of the racetrack. Writing with a great

raconteur’s ease, Fairfax-Blakeborough gave readers a vivid behind-the-scenes tour of his colorful world, with sharply observed settings, great dialogue, and a cast of amusing lowlifes and outrageous bounders such as the delightful Colonel Jasper Bellew, an upper-crust scoundrel always looking to increase the odds in his favor.

Fairfax-Blakeborough’s great fictional creation, the protagonist of most of his novels, was the over-the-hill jockey Nat Wedgewood, a veteran rider who repeatedly finds himself caught up in illegal or unethical conspiracies, usually involving a plot to influence the outcome of a big race. Although the author went far to create a reluctant hero, readers seemed to exhibit no such ambivalence toward the rumpled, irritable, sometimes hapless, corruptible jockey, making Nat’s adventures some of the most popular light reading of the 1930s.

Works

Beating the Nobblers (1933); *Disappearance of Cropton, The* (1933); *Gypsy’s Luck* (1932); *Last Gamble, A* (1936); *Non-Trier Wins, A* (1933); *Queen of the Gangsters* (1936), also known as *Nat Wedgewood, Jockey*; *Rank Outsider, A* (1933); *Turf Mystery, A* (1934); *Warned Off* (1934); *Who Maimed Spurto* (1933)

Faulkner, John (1901–1963)

A sibling of the Nobel Prize-winning novelist William Faulkner (1897–1962), John Faulkner

spent his first 40 years avoiding comparisons with his legendary older brother. In his twenties and thirties he worked as a commercial airline pilot, a government engineer, and a farmer. Approaching middle age, however, he finally succumbed to the allure of publication. In 1941 Harcourt brought out John's first novel, *Men Working*, followed in the next year by *Dollar Cotton*, both set in the Mississippi hinterlands already identified as William Faulkner country. The books were well received in some quarters, but John was not labeled a second Faulkner genius. He returned to writing after war service, but without much success.

In 1951 John Faulkner's new book, *Cabin Road*, appeared as a paperback original from Gold Medal Books. Although Gold Medal's innovative line was already publishing veteran genre authors, there was a considerable stigma attached to any book that made its first appearance in a paperback edition. Either Faulkner or the Gold Medal copy editors decided to address the issue on the opening page, giving a surprisingly frank explanation for why the work of "William's younger brother" was published as a "two-bit original": "They [his regular publishers] said it had no point to it and said that it was too much like 'Tobacco Road' to ever be taken seriously . . ."

The comparison to the novel *Tobacco Road* (1932) by Erskine Caldwell (1903–1987) was no doubt sufficient reason for Gold Medal to grab the book. Caldwell's books, most notably *God's Little Acre*, (1933) had become an industry phenomenon in their softcover reprint editions. Caldwell was long established as a kind of second-tier Faulkner (William, that is) chronicling the rural South, particularly the antics of the earthy, lusty, uneducated, poverty-stricken denizens of the backwoods. In softcover Caldwell became born again as a "hot" writer, in more ways than one. His detailed descriptions of the provocative and sexual activities of his passionate peasants were largely responsible for giving the books a very successful second life as postwar paperbacks—*God's Little Acre* alone sold some 6 million copies for Signet Books. *Cabin Road*, John Faulkner's ribald comic novel about the venal, amoral characters of a patch of isolated Mississippi, was indeed reminiscent of Caldwell, and Gold Medal must have

seized on the possibility of repeating *God's Little Acre's* success.

The book did succeed, though not at the Caldwell level, and Faulkner was encouraged to write a sequel, then three more after that: *Uncle Good's Girls* (1952), *Sin Shouter of Cabin Road* (1954), *Ain't Gonna Rain No More* (1957), and *Uncle Good's Weekend Party* (1959). The later books, as some of the titles indicate, concentrated on the most memorable characters introduced in *Cabin Road*. A certain awful hillbilly patriarch named Good Darby, known "affectionately" as Uncle Good, presides over a snug mountainside cabin and makes a comfortable living pimping his luscious and willing daughters Jewel Mae and Orta June for 50 cents each (the price of two Gold Medal paperbacks), "flat rate . . . winter or summer . . . strick cash."

Sexy rural southern and swamp-set paperbacks became a glut on the market by the mid-1950s, but Faulkner retained his position as the most distinguished of the Caldwell imitators.

Faulkner also wrote a memoir about his more famous relative, *My Brother Bill: An Affectionate Remembrance*, published in 1963, the year of John Faulkner's death.

Works

Ain't Gonna Rain No More (1957); *Cabin Road* (1951); *Chooky* (1948); *Dollar Cotton* (1942); *Men Working* (1941); *Sin Shouter of Cabin Road* (1954); *Uncle Good's Girls* (1952); *Uncle Good's Weekend Party* (1959)

Fickling, G. G. (Forest and Gloria Fickling) (unknown)

If by some transmogrification Mickey SPILLANE's tough private eye had suddenly changed bodies with one of his bosomy, bikini-clad bimbos, the result might have been someone like Honey West, a well-paid and well-built private eye who used her brains and her body to solve cases in a series of paperback adventures. Actually, Honey was a considerably more blithe creation than Spillane's humorless, self-righteous Mike Hammer—a tongue-in-cheek switch on the usual testosterone-fueled private eyes that dominated the paperback racks of the late '50s and early '60s.

The series' byline was the shared pseudonym of a married couple, Forest and Gloria Fickling. He was a journalist and sports broadcaster, she was a magazine editor specializing in fashion. The couple's writer friend, Richard S. Prather, author of the comical Shell Scott series, encouraged them to try and do a story about a sexy female private eye. They came up with Honey, a young California blonde with—the reader was never allowed to forget—measurements of 38-22-36, who takes over her father's detective agency after he is brutally murdered on the job. However difficult and dangerous the case, the suspense and action scenes often pruriently center on Honey's loss of her clothing or her imminent ravishment, and in a tradition going back at least as far as the "spicy" pulps of the 1930s, West's lush contours are repeatedly and lingeringly described. Still, for all the leering objectification aimed her way, Honey was a tough cookie in a man's world and continually outsmarted those who would underestimate her, even including West's on-and-off love interest, Long Beach police lieutenant Mark Storm.

The Ficklins wrote another, more conventional series about a male PI., Eric March, and they later cross-pollinated, putting March into a late Honey case, *Stiff as a Broad* (1971). *Honey West* became a television series on the ABC network, with the platinum-haired Anne Francis in the title role; the series was short-lived but well remembered. Ms. Francis as Honey anticipated the glamorous profeminist appeal of Honor Blackman and Diana Rigg in a later TV series, *The Avengers*.

Honey West was not the first tough female private eye—there had been a number of them in the detective pulps in the '30s and '40s—but she was the most prominent of her time and remained so until the early '80s and the arrival of crime writers like Marcia Muller, Sue Grafton, and Sara Paretsky and their more realistic approach to female detective stories.

Works

Blood and Honey (1961); *Bombshell* (1964); *Case of the Radioactive Redhead* (1963); *Dig a Dead Doll* (1960); *Girl on the Loose* (1958); *Girl on the Prowl* (1959); *Gun for Honey, A* (1958); *Honey in the Flesh* (1959); *Honey on Her Tail* (1971); *Kiss for a Killer* (1960); *Mother Daughter*

and Lover (1964); *Stiff as a Broad* (1971); *This Girl for Hire* (1957)

Finney, Jack (Walter Braden Finney) (1911–1995)

Jack Finney was a wonderful and inventive storyteller who, on occasion, was capable of creating work that resonated with readers in a deep and lasting way. Born in Milwaukee as Walter Braden Finney, he wrote crime fiction and science fiction—his lifelong specialties—for pulp and slick magazines. A number of his early SF/fantasy stories were collected in an early volume, *The Third Level* (1956). His most famous story, the novella *The Body Snatchers*, was first published in *Collier's* magazine, then printed as a Dell First Edition paperback in 1954. The story of a mysterious invasion by aliens who use vegetable parasites to assume the bodies of human beings and turn them into a subservient, sheeplike force was sleek, brilliant entertainment and multifarious in its metaphoric possibilities. Was it an indictment of McCarthy-era paranoia? An endorsement of cold war anti-communist hysteria? A nightmare vision of 1950s suburban conformism? As any and all, it worked beautifully. The story became the classic SF/horror film, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), directed by Don Siegel and scripted by Daniel Mainwaring.

Finney's other entertaining tales include *Five Against the House*, a cool caper novel in which some jaded youths rob a casino; *House of Numbers*, an evil-twin-brother melodrama; and *Assault on a Queen*, another high-concept caper, in this case involving the robbery of the *Queen Mary* luxury liner by modern pirates aboard a vintage submarine. In 1970 Finney found a rabid cult following with his romantic, nostalgic novel of time travel to late-19th-century New York, *Time and Again*. The writer's evocative style and detailed, intimate recreation of the period made this an all-time favorite for countless readers. A long clamored-for sequel, *From Time to Time*, used the same technique and protagonist, this time placing him in the year 1912. The book was judged good, but not nearly as good as the original.

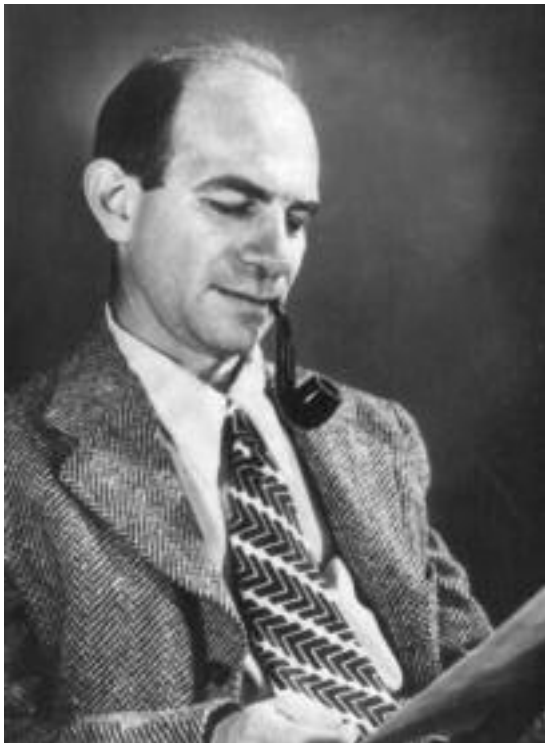
Works

Assault on a Queen (1959); *Body Snatchers* (1954); *Five Against the House* (1954); *Forgotten News: The Crime of the Century and Other Lost Stories* (1983); *From Time to Time* (1995); *House of Numbers, The* (1957); *I Love Galesburg in the Springtime* (1963); *Time and Again* (1970); *Woodrow Wilson Dime, The* (1968)

Fischer, Bruno

(1908–1995) *Also wrote as: Russell Gray, Harrison Storm*

Bruno Fischer was the author of 25 novels and more than 300 short stories, a contributor to *Black Mask* and *Manhunt* magazines, and the uncrowned king of the notorious “weird menace” pulps. The first fiction he wrote was for the literary magazines—“which paid nothing,” he recalled for this



Bruno Fischer, the uncrowned king of the notorious “weird menace” pulps (HS Media)

author. Fischer got married and worked at newspapers for a living when he began selling to the pulps. “I was the editor of the *Socialist Call*, the official weekly of the Socialist Party. I was getting \$25 a week—when I got it,” he said. A friend talked to him about the pulp stories the friend had recently sold. Fischer bought some of the magazines and decided pulp was for him. Among the hundreds of pulp titles available, Fischer was taken by the line of modern, “realistic” horror/terror titles, the so-called shudder pulps: *A Dime Mystery*, *Terror Tales*, *Sinister Stories*, and others—unashamedly depraved exercises in melodrama. Each story was an overheated brew of vicious, often deformed villains, voluptuous, abused heroines, and vile torture devices. Fischer said he thought the emphasis on description and atmosphere worked to his strengths as a writer. He sat down and wrote a story about a woman trapped in an elevator with a cat she believes is a witch. Within two weeks Fischer received a check for \$60—real money in those dark depression days. Fischer excitedly sat down and wrote a 10,000-word story. A check for \$125 followed.

For his first pulp story, “The Cat Woman” (published in *Dime Mystery*, November 1936), Fischer took the pseudonym “Russell Gray,” a name he had used during his newspaper days when writing two pieces for the same edition. Other stories appeared under the pen name “Harrison Storm.” Although some members of Fischer’s family were shocked by his lurid stories, his father carried copies of Fischer’s weird-menace pulps in his back pocket, ready to show them off to friends. Fischer was also a significant contributor to another pulp subgenre, the so-called defective detective story. Growing out of the “weirds” in *Popular’s Strange Detective Stories* and *Dime Mystery*, the “defectives” featured protagonists, the hero crime-solvers themselves, who were handicapped by bizarre or deadly diseases and medical problems. Fischer, under his Russell Gray pseudonym, contributed tales of the deformed, crablike private eyes Calvin Kane and Ben Bryn.

Fischer was a reliable pulp writer who could turn out stories based on a title idea supplied by an editor or built around a cover illustration that had been commissioned before anyone had written

anything to go with it. With a hectic work schedule, and with the notion that everything he was writing was ephemeral, Fischer learned to write it right the first time and not go back for much editing. While the pay averaged a penny a word or less, a steady producer like Fischer could make enough to live on in those years before World War II. He took his family to a small pleasant coastal town in Florida and worked from there for some years. The market for the terror/weird menace stories eventually dried up, the perverse magazines run out of business by censors. Fischer had done what many pulp pros advised against and tied too much on a single market. Now he had to work his way into the good graces of other pulp editors and learn how to craft a different sort of story. He began to crack the detective pulps at this time and soon became as prolific at writing crime and private eye stories as he was at the terror genre. His name appeared on the covers of all the leading detective magazines in the 1940s, of which there were many.

He published his first novel, *So Much Blood*, in 1939. The book earned him \$500. Considering Fischer's lurid excesses in the weird-menace days, his crime fiction was remarkable for its low-key tone and frequent use of everyday settings and characters. When violence came it was not gaudy but mundane. The murderers used the weapons at hand—scissors, a straight razor, a cookie jar—and the blood flowed across an everyday kitchen floor. The kind of mystery stories Fischer wrote, he said, “weren't really mystery stories, they were stories. They could have been printed in any magazine.”

Living in the New York commuter town of Croton-on-Hudson, Fischer remained a productive author for his hardcover publisher, and in the early 1950s he became one of the earliest of the first generation of paperback-original writers, as the paperbacks took over the market from the dying pulps. Softcover reprints of such Fischer titles as *More Deaths Than One* and *The Bleeding Scissors* did well, and in 1950 Fischer agreed to write an original for one of the growing new paperback publishers. He wrote the 65,000-word novel in 18 days. It was called *The Lustful Ape*, and he signed it with the pen name from his weird-menace days, Russell Gray.

That same year, Fischer began a more creditable relationship with another new publisher of softcover originals, Gold Medal Books. John D. MacDonald recommended him to the Gold Medal editor. He wrote *House of Flesh* for Gold Medal. The lurid cover, with a beautiful woman and some snapping hounds, looked not so different from the old weird-menace covers. *House of Flesh* eventually sold 2 million copies.

Fischer wrote a book or two a year through the 1950s and continued writing short fiction as well. He wrote as well for the new magazines that had replaced the old crime and detective pulps—magazines like *Manhunt*, which paid much better than the pulps ever did. Then, in 1960, Fischer's experienced some form of writer's block. Deciding he was done writing for the foreseeable future, he took a friend's offer and became a paperback editor at Collier books. He stayed at the job for a decade.

Fischer wrote only one other novel, *The Evil Days*, published in 1974. He spent his later years between a summer home in an old socialist cooperative community in New York's Putnam County and in the Mexican town of San Miguel de Allende, where he sometimes gave lectures to the expatriate retirees about his adventures as a mystery writer. In his last years he lost his vision, but Fischer would still get the old itch from time to time and would let his fingers roam over the keys of his battered typewriter.

Works

STORIES

“A Friend of Goebbels” (1943); “Anything But the Truth” (1944); “Ask a Body” (1945); “Call the Cops” (1943); “Case of the Handless Corpse” (1944); “Case of the Sleeping Doll” (1946); “City Under Fire” (1941); “Coney Island Incident” (1953); “Daughter of Murder” (1942); “Dead Don't Die, The” (1949); “Dead Hand Horrors” (1939); “Dead Hang High, The” (1942); “Death Hitch-Hikes South” (1942); “Death Lives on the Lake” (1943); “Death on the Beach” (1944); “Death Paints a Picture” (1945); “Death's Black Bag” (1943); “Death's Bright Red Lips” (1946); “Death's Secret Agent” (1944); “Don't Bury Him Deep” (1946); “Enemy, The” (1946); “Flesh for the Monster” (1939); “Girl Miss Murder, This” (1943); “Happy Death Day to You” (1942); “Homicide

Can't Happen Here" (1942); "Homicide Jest" (1942); "Hour of the Rat, The" (1948); "I Thought I'd Die" (1948); "Killer in the Crowd, A" (1947); "Killer Waits, The" (1943); "Killing the Goose" (1945); "Kiss the Dead Girl" (1952); "Lady in Distress" (1949); "Locket for a Lady" (1943); "Me, My Coffin, and My Killer" (1943); "Middleman for Murder" (1947); "Mind Your Own Murder" (1945); "Murder Begins at Midnight" (1943); "Murder Has Seven Guests" (1942); "Murder Mask" (1943); "My Problem Is Murder" (1944); "Night Is for Dying, The" (1943); "Pickup on Nightmare Road" (1948); "Scream Theme" (1945); "Seven Doorways to Death" (1943); "Silent as a Shiv" (1948); "Smile, Corpse, Smile" (1948); "Stop Him" (1953); "They Came with Guns" (1957); "They Can't Kill Us" (1941); "They Knew Dolly" (1942); "Trap, The" (1948); "Twelfth Bottle, The" (1944); "Waldo Jones and the Killers" (1942); "Wrap Up the Corpse" (1945); "X Marks the Redhead" (1944)

As Russell Gray:

"Beauty Butcher, The" (1937); "Beware the Blind Killer" (1941); "Beware You Loved Ones" (1938); "Blood Farm, The" (1940); "Body I Stole, The" (1940); "Burn Lovely Lady" (1938); "Cat Woman, The" (1936); "Commerce in Horror" (1939); "Corpse Wields the Lash, A" (1937); "Dance in Death's Cabaret" (1939); "Darlings of the Black Master" (1937); "Death Came Calling" (1937); "Death Dolls, The" (1940); "Death Sends His Mannikins" (1937); "Devil Is Our Landlord, The" (1938); "Flames for the Wicked" (1940); "Girls Enslaved in Glass" (1939); "Girls for the Pain Dance" (1937); "Girls Who Lust for Death" (1940); "Home of the Deadless Ones" (1941); "Hostess in Hell" (1939); "House of the Man Butcher" (1940); "House That Horror Built, The" (1937); "I Loved the Devil's Daughter" (1938); "Inn of Shipwrecked Corpses" (1941); "Maid and the Mummy, The" (1937); "Man Who Loved a Zombie, The" (1939); "Mates for the Bat Man" (1939); "Mistress of the Dark Pool" (1940); "Models for the Pain Sculpture" (1940); "Monster of the Purple Mist" (1938); "Mummy Men, The" (1940); "Murder Truck, The" (1940); "My Touch Brings Death" (1940); "Plague of the Black Passion" (1938); "Prey for the Creeping Dead, The" (1939); "School Mistress of the Mad" (1939); "She-Devil of the Sea" (1938); "Singing Corpses, The" (1937); "Slaves for the Wine Goddess" (1939); "Song of Evil Love" (1940); "Thing that Darkness Spawned, The" (1938); "Venus of Laughing Death" (1937); "We Who Are Lost" (1941)

As Harrison Storm:

"Bodies for Satan's Broiler" (1940); "Book of Torment" (1940); "Dead Man's Story, The" (1938); "House That Horror Built, The" (1937); "Monster's Wedding Night" (1939); "Our Lovely Destroyer" (1940); "School for Satan's Showgirls" (1939); "Valley of the Red Death" (1938); "White Flesh Must Rot" (1940)

BOOKS

Angels Fell, The (1950), also published as *The Flesh Was Cold*; *Bleeding Scissors, The* (1948); *Dead Men Grin, The* (1945); *Evil Days, The* (1974); *Fast Buck, The* (1952); *Fools Walk In* (1951); *Go Between, The* (1960); *Hornet's Nest, The* (1944); *House of Flesh* (1950); *Kill to Fit* (1946); *Knee Deep in Death* (1956); *Lady Kills, The* (1951); *More Deaths Than One* (1947); *Murder in the Raw* (1957); *Paper Circle, The/Stripped for Murder* (1951); *Pigskin Bag, The* (1946); *Quoth the Raven* (1944); *Restland Hands, The* (1949); *Run for Your Life* (1953); *Second-Hand Nude* (1959); *Silent Dust, The* (1950); *So Much Blood* (1939); *So Wicked My Love* (1954); *Spider Lily, The* (1946)

As Russell Gray:

Lustful Ape, The (1950)

Fisher, Steve

(1912–1980) *Also wrote as: Stephen Gould, Grant Lane*

As Steve Fisher himself would tell it, he was a 16-year-old son of "comparatively wealthy" parents attending a military academy in California when a thwarted love affair with a beautiful Spanish girl (and the spray of shotgun lead from her irate protectors) drove him to run away and join the navy. Four years as a "bluejacket" gave him a lifetime of colorful experiences, described for the record as including "brawls in Panama, hot nights in Honolulu, slant-eyed Venuses in Shanghai, and flippant blondes in 'Frisco." He wrote his first story aboard a submarine. He first published his fiction in the navy periodicals *Our Navy*, *U.S. Navy*, and others, and achieved a degree of fame as the favorite homegrown writer of his fellow sailors. He claimed to have written more than 200 stories for the military magazines before ever turning to the outside markets.

Quitting the service to try writing for a living, he came to New York City at 21 with a duffel bag, a banged-up typewriter, and five dollars. He had a hard time of it at first with the Great Depression at its height. He lived in rooming houses and cheap hotels, dining on crackers and ketchup. More than once, he would recall, he was evicted from his room for nonpayment, one time tossed on the street in the middle of a snowstorm. At one point he used rejected manuscripts as capital, showing them to a sympathetic lunch wagon operator and vowing that one day he would be a successful writer—this got him several weeks of free chili before the lunch wagon man gave up on him. Eventually, Fisher began to find work with the pulp magazine editors, following in the footsteps of another struggling would-be pulpster, Frank GRUBER, who had broken through and held the door open for his friend Steve. Fisher wrote for assorted love, adventure, detective, and action pulps.

In 1935 he sold a novel, *Spend the Night*, a sexy love story, to Phoenix Press, a cheap lending-library outfit. Macauley, a New York publisher equally lacking in prestige, brought out three more of Fisher's novels in the next two years. *Satan's Angel* was another risqué modern tale, this one about a Broadway playgirl named Cherry Lane, whose "strange, exotic" passions play havoc with other people's lives as she roams from Park Avenue penthouses to Greenwich Village's "bohemian dives." *Forever Glory* used his navy background ("Fisher knows his way around Pearl Harbor") for a romantic novel about a "crack naval aviator and handsome playboy" and his courtship and marriage to a "San Francisco dock dollie." The book, claimed Macaulay's copywriters, "tests to the breaking point all the cords of a young man's intense emotion" and included "scenes of tenderness and distress, of elation and the dementia of despair, of weakness and the upsurge of nobility." *Forever Glory* detailed—fancifully—the life of the peacetime U.S. Navy in Hawaii. However, Fisher was still figuring out how to write, and *Forever Glory* clearly would never have found a publisher if not for the existence of second-rate outfits like Macaulay. Following is a mind-numbing passage from page 158; no explanation of the context is necessary, or possible:

How he had labored under a strain of accepting the morons' paradise of heaven while with Elaine, he knew to be, because he was so madly in love with her that he had been unable to awaken the full reasoning of his mind to tell him differently. When he forsaked his belief, he had wanted her more than it, and so he had allowed himself to be temporized; and in thinking that way he had come to believe in her bible, and in her way of thinking.

In time, Fisher improved and began producing readable fiction, some of it with real merit. From the summer of 1937 he began selling regularly to the prestigious *Black Mask*, after the departure of editor Joseph Shaw. Fisher's debut, "Murder At Eight," a story with a Hollywood setting, appeared in the August 1937 issue. "No Gentleman Strangles His Wife" was a private eye story set in Hawaii, and "Death of a Dummy" featured a ventriloquist and his wooden friend. Fisher attracted considerable attention for another *Black Mask* story, published in the May 1938 issue. "Wait for Me," about a White Russian whore and the American sailor who loves her, had a tragic and haunting ending; it was a memorable example of the "tough but tender," more emotional style introduced to *Black Mask* by Joseph Shaw's successor, the editor Fanny Ellsworth.

Fisher wrote two mystery novels about Homicide Johnny, a tough New York detective, then the startling *Destroyer*, a war story about the U.S. Navy battling the Axis forces. *Destroyer* predated American involvement in World War II—it was speculative fiction that imagined the United States declaring war on Germany, Italy, and Japan, then engaging in a tremendous sea battle outside the Panama Canal.

Fisher's breakout book was a crime thriller titled *I Wake Up Screaming*, published in 1941. The story of a cynical promoter made a suspect in the murder of a beautiful starlet, *I Wake Up Screaming* was a compelling, hard-boiled story that followed somewhat in the moody-suspense tradition of Cornell WOOLRICH. In a kind of backhanded tribute to Woolrich—a pulp-writer acquaintance of Fisher's—the character of the evil, stalking police

detective is named “Cornell” and looks very much like the reclusive noir master.

I Wake Up Screaming became a successful motion picture and one of the first in the cycle of '40s film noir. Fisher was by then already relocated to Hollywood and working for the big studios as a screenwriter. His scripts varied between war and military subjects (*Destination Tokyo*, *To the Shores of Tripoli*) and crime dramas (including *Johnny Angel*, *Lady in the Lake*—from the Raymond CHANDLER novel—and *Song of the Thin Man*). Fisher worked on two scripts for Humphrey Bogart—*Dead Reckoning* and *Tokyo Joe*—and became friends with the actor. Fisher claimed that Bogart based the character of the screenwriter and some of the dialogue in the 1950 film *In a Lonely Place* on Fisher and one of his love affairs.

Fisher remained a movie writer, steadily employed until the late '60s, though his final assignments were mostly cheap westerns. He continued to write novels, with varying degrees of success. *Winter Kill* was a rather dull murder mystery, but interesting to pulp fiction fans for its setting in a seedy Manhattan office where a variety of offbeat entrepreneurs, including a bottom-rung literary agent, share desk space—clearly based on pulp agent Ed Bodin and the office at 151 Fifth Avenue that he shared with a button broker, a dressmaker, a magazine publisher, a collection agent, and a private detective (William BOGART's *Hell on Fridays* was likely based on this same pulpsters' hangout). The entire story had been laid out as a play by Frank GRUBER, but when Fisher had some spare time and could not come up with a good plot, Gruber gave him the plot in return for 10 percent of any movie sale (Fisher subsequently sold the book to Warner Bros. for \$25,000).

Works

Big Dream, The (1970); *Destination Tokyo* (1943); *Destroyer* (1941); *Forever Glory* (1936); *Giveaway* (1954); *Hell-Black Night, The* (1970); *Image of Hell* (1961); *I Wake Up Screaming* (1941); *Murder of the Pigboat Skipper* (1937); *Night Before Murder, The* (1939); *No House Limit* (1958); *Satan's Angel* (1935); *Saxon's Ghost* (1969); *Sheltering Night, The* (1952); *Take All You Can Get* (1955); *Winter Kill* (1946)

As Grant Lane:

Spend the Night (1935)

As Stephen Gould:

Homicide Johnny (1940); *Murder of the Admiral* (1936)

Fleming, Ian

(1908–1964)

When *Casino Royale* was published in 1954, the modern-dress spy story had been a negligible subgenre with only a few widely known efforts, assorted novels by E. Phillips OPPENHEIM, along with Somerset Maugham's *Ashenden* (1928), Joseph Conrad's *Secret Agent* (1908), John Buchan's *The Thirty-nine Steps* (1915)—the last three filmed by Alfred Hitchcock). That situation changed considerably following the arrival of Ian Fleming and his “licensed-to-kill” creation, James Bond. Indeed, at the peak of his renown in the mid-to-late 1960s, secret agent 007's phenomenal impact on the popular culture would match that of any single fictional creation in the 20th century.

Born in England, Fleming was well-educated (Eton, Sandhurst) and upper middle class. A linguist who was well-traveled from an early age, the young Fleming dabbled in journalism and espionage, often both at the same time, as a London *Times* correspondent and Foreign Office spy in Moscow in the years before World War II. He rose to a high-ranking position in naval intelligence during the war, then in peacetime returned to newspaper work, assuming a picturesque beat as foreign correspondent and feature writer that took him to all the world's “thrilling cities” (the title he gave a volume of collected travel writing). At a beach house in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, seated before a portable typewriter, with the sounds of the Caribbean surf and tropical breezes in the air, Fleming wrote the first of a series of novels about a fearless, handsome, lethal, and promiscuous super-spy, a protagonist created out of various amounts of autobiography and delirious wish fulfillment.

Casino Royale was a sleazily glamorous, entertaining, but relatively small-scale beginning. Evoking the Old World luxury domes of E. Phillips Oppenheim's tuxedoed spy thrillers, it was set in

the French gaming place of the title. Its highlight was a suspenseful high-stakes card game between Bond and the inaugural Bond villain, LeChiffre. But the elements of future Bond stories were all there: the name brands, the beautiful, willing women, the scenes of cold-blooded violence and sadosexual torture. The books that followed—*Live and Let Die*, *Moonraker*, *Diamonds Are Forever*, *From Russia, with Love*, and more—became more elaborate in scope, with diverse locales (Bond, it might be said, was the first “jet set” hero), an increasingly grand canvas, spectacular action scenes, and larger-than-life characters. The plots included hijacked nuclear weapons, Harlem gangsters, an assault on Fort Knox, a lesbian aviator named Pussy Galore, a barracuda-infested swimming pool, and a bizarre fraternity of supervillains and international crime syndicates—Auric Goldfinger, Dr. No, Ernst Stavro Blofeld, SPECTRE.

Critics never gave Fleming much credit as a writer. Many sneered at what they saw as, at best, a gaudy veneer of sophistication, the crass consumerism of brand names as if Agent 007 were a celebrity endorsing various products, and a prose style they considered worthy of a penny dreadful. In fact, Fleming’s writing had the smoothness and speed of one of Bond’s well-tooled automobiles. The style was elegant, icily sensuous, and rife with a deadpan cynical wit (“Bond went to his suitcase again and took out a thick book—*The Bible Designed to be Read as Literature*—opened it and extracted his Walther PPK in the Berns Martin holster”). In any case, Fleming’s real impact as a creative artist came not from his prose style but instead from his visionary comingling of modern and classic ingredients to create an influential new form of adventure fiction. The James Bond novels were precisely placed in the modern world: they used torn-from-the-headlines cold war details, contained a jet age mobility, and referred to contemporary consumerist society (the fastest cars, most luxurious hotels, finest tailors, and sharpest shaving blades). Fleming, furthermore, was the first to adapt the ferocious violence and explicit sexuality of Mickey SPILLANE and other postwar hard-boiled American writers to a more sophisticated milieu. Fleming then audaciously grafted these

up-to-date elements to a mostly forgotten world of prewar British pulp, the arrogant clubland aristocrats of Sapper and Sydney Horler, the moonlit Monte Carlo intrigues of E. Phillips Oppenheim, the fiendish, megalomaniacal villains of Sax ROHMER. It made for a peculiarly rich brew and a satisfying reading experience. The James Bond novels felt as fresh as the latest CIA coup d’état while providing the same delirious thrills as a vintage tale of Dr. Fu Manchu. In addition—compare the 14-volume Bond canon to the same-old-song of most other series about a continuing character—Fleming often experimented with the form of his novels, writing one in which the hero is not present for many pages (*From Russia*) and one in which the story is told almost exclusively from the point of view of a female character (*The Spy Who Loved Me*). Far from remaining a static, invincible superhero throughout, Fleming’s Bond fell in love, wed, became a widower, lost his mind, and otherwise was revealed as human and vulnerable.

The books did only reasonably well on both sides of the Atlantic until the new American President, John F. Kennedy (a James Bondish world leader if ever there was one), gave a passing endorsement to the series. Fleming’s work instantly moved onto and up the best-seller lists, and a motion picture version of *Doctor No* was put into production with a little-known Scottish actor named Sean Connery as 007. It was soon followed by adaptations of *From Russia, with Love* and *Goldfinger*. James Bond mania gripped much of the world throughout the 1960s, with countless emulations, variations, and spoofs in books, films, television programs, and comic strips.

Worldwide excitement for Ian Fleming’s creation had just begun to peak in 1964 when the author died suddenly at age 56. His last full-length James Bond adventure, *The Man with the Golden Gun*, a return to the down-to-earth action of his first novel and set in Fleming’s beloved Jamaica, was published posthumously the following year.

Works

Casino Royale (1954); *Diamonds Are Forever* (1956); *Doctor No* (1958); *For Your Eyes Only* (1960); *From Russia, with Love* (1957); *Goldfinger* (1959); *Live and Let Die*

(1954); *Man with the Golden Gun, The* (1965); *Moonraker* (1955); *Octopussy/The Living Daylights* (1966); *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1963); *Spy Who Loved Me, The* (1962) *Thunderball* (1961); *You Only Live Twice* (1964)

Flynn, Errol (1909–1959)

The cinema's greatest swashbuckler, star of *Captain Blood*, *The Sea Hawk*, and *They Died with Their Boots On*, Errol Flynn was a colorful man off screen as well. His early life could have supplied a Warner Bros. screenwriter with a dozen action-packed plots: he spent time as a roving adventurer in Australia, New Guinea, and the South Seas before heaving-ho for London and Hollywood and a career before the camera. In addition to his skill and charisma as a performer, Flynn also was a writer. In the first years of his stardom he published a memoir of a momentous voyage he took with some friends, sailing a boat along the Australian coast. In later years he would write an assortment of magazine pieces about various other experiences, including some time spent with Fidel Castro's revolutionary forces in Cuba.

Flynn published one novel, *Showdown*, an extremely entertaining adventure story about a rugged Australian boat captain taking a group of Hollywood movie people (including a beautiful actress) up New Guinea's dangerous Sepik River—land of cannibals, deadly animals, and the unknown. Many of the details and incidents were based on Flynn's experiences in his earlier days, during a similar river voyage through the barely charted jungle island. But Flynn had been in pictures too long not to give his adventure story a bit of glamor, including an irresistible female, described with an expected lasciviousness (though Shamus, the hero, presents a certain prudery the author was never accused of):

The honey hair spiraled off with the morning breeze unchecked. The lithe tenderness of her form, the long smooth legs and knees, admirably pure of shape, presented an unforgettable picture. But at this moment its

design and true beauty was lost on him, for the brazen immodesty of her costume made him gasp; a scant pair of very flimsy shorts, and an even flimsier pink bandana handkerchief of extreme décolletage—very obviously it was limited to that. . . . Holding on to the side of the longboat he said in a strained voice, "Would you be kind enough to go and put some clothes on please?"

Showdown ranks high among the small body of pop fiction by Hollywood superstars, and for Flynn fans it is a unique treat. Flynn's most famous published work is his 1958 autobiography, *My Wicked, Wicked Ways*, a best-seller in its day and a groundbreaker for all the shocking, kiss-and-tell showbiz memoirs to come. Unashamedly presenting himself as a rogue and hedonist, Flynn recounts his countless amorous conquests with the gusto of a pulp Casanova. Alas, hedonism had taken its toll on Flynn by the time of the book's creation—he did not, in fact, have much longer to live—and he could no longer sustain the effort to write at length by himself. Much of the book was dictated and edited by an assigned ghostwriter, a smart and sympathetic collaborator named Earl Conrad.

Works

Beam Ends (1938); *My Wicked, Wicked Ways* (1958); *Showdown* (1946)

Flynn, T. T. (Thomas Theodore Flynn) (1902–)

Thomas Theodore Flynn was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana, wanted to be a writer all his life, and left home early to wander the country and gather the exciting experiences he hoped would inspire his writing. "I have done a little bit of everything," he wrote of himself in the pages of *Detective Fiction Weekly*, one of his regular pulp markets for many years, "including hitting the grit, or hoboing . . . ship yard, steel mills, house to house selling, traveling salesman, carpenter, clerk, followed the sea on deck and the engine and fire room, worked in a railroad shop and as a locomotive

inspector . . . I believe a fiction writer deals with life as a whole and he or she should know it from all angles."

Flynn was selling to the pulps by his mid-twenties. He was a regular contributor to *Detective Fiction Weekly* in the early 1930s, and in 1931 he was invited to contribute to the debut of Popular Publications' new private eye magazine, *Dime Detective*. His story "The Pullman Murder" appeared in that premiere issue in November 1931. Flynn continued to write regularly for the magazine for the next 20 years. He wrote about various protagonists in the early years, but from July 1938 almost all of his stories were about an amateur crime solver known as Mister Maddox, a sometime book-maker and habitué of the nation's racetracks.

Flynn moved to the Southwest in later years and began to specialize in western fiction. He wrote western stories and serials for top-paying slick magazines such as the *Saturday Evening Post*, and then a series of western novels published by Dell in the 1950s. One of his paperbacks, *The Man from Laramie*, set in New Mexico, was turned into a magnificent motion picture (1955) directed by Anthony Mann and starring James Stewart.

Works

STORIES

"Accusing Corpse, The" (May 15, 1934); "Black Doctor, The" (Dec. 1932); "Blood on the Bluegrass" (Oct. 1940); "Blood on the Book" (Jan. 1940); "Bookie and the Blonde, The" (July 1940); "Bride of the Beast, The" (Feb. 1936); "Burning Ice" (Oct. 1937); "Date at the Morgue, A" (Feb. 1937); "Dead Man's Debt" (Feb. 1938); "Dead Man's Dough" (Aug. 1944); "Death Rides the Favorite" (Oct. 1938); "Devil and the Horse Man, The" (Dec. 1941); "Devil's Derby, The" (Apr. 1939); "Dragons of Chang Chien" (Apr. 15, 1935); "Evil Brand, The" (Nov. 15, 1934); "Five Fatal Hours" (Apr. 1, 1935); "Four Nights to Doom" (Oct. 15, 1934); "Fourteenth Mummy, The" (June 1932); "Golden Cipher, The" (Sept. 15, 1934); "Happy Murder to You" (Apr. 1942); "Horse of Another Killer" (Apr. 1943); "Jade Joss, The" (Nov. 15, 1933); "Kentucky Kickback" (Apr. 1940); "Live and Let Die" (Mar. 1947); "Monster of Hangman's Key" (Aug. 1933); "Mr. Maddox and the Gray Ghost" (July 1938); "Mr. Maddox Bites the Dog" (July 1943); "Mr.

Maddox Tips a Homicide" (Aug. 1949); "Mr. Maddox's Haunted Horse" (Mar. 1950); "Mr. Maddox's Phony Finish" (Dec. 1948); "Murder in a Dead Heat" (Jan. 1943); "Murder in the Saddle" (Nov. 1945); "Murder Moon" (July 1936); "Post Mortem at Pimlico" (Aug. 1941); "Red Dollars" (Dec. 1, 1933); "Red Wizard, The" (Dec. 15, 1934); "Revel of Death, The" (Dec. 1); "Saratoga Slay-Ride" (Sept. 1939); "The Pullman Murder" (Nov. 1931); "Tijuana Kill Trap" (Aug. 1942); "Trot Out Your Murder" (Apr. 1941); "Win, Place and Dough" (Aug. 1944)

BOOKS

Angry Man, The (1956); *It's Murder* (1950); *Man from Laramie, The* (1954); *Man from Nowhere, The* (1958); *Murder Caravan* (1950); *Riding High* (1961); *Two Faces West* (1954)

Francis, Dick (Richard Stanley Francis) (1920–)

Richard Stanley "Dick" Francis, born in southern Wales, was a second-generation jockey and rode for a living by the age of 13. After a heroic stint as an air force pilot during World War II, Francis returned to the track and soon became one of the most successful riders in the world. In the 1950s he was chosen to be the official rider for the royal family. A couple of horse falls and resulting serious injuries forced Francis to retire from racing in his mid-thirties. In 1957 he published a successful memoir, *The Sport of Queens*, and this led to journalistic assignments and a position as racing correspondent for a London newspaper. He became a novelist in 1962, using his racing experience as the background for a thriller, *Dead Cert*. The book was a surprise hit, acclaimed as one of the best crime novels of the year, and Francis found himself with a new vocation.

His second novel appeared two years later and was equally successful. Establishing a systematic annual schedule of plotting, researching, and writing, Francis proceeded to publish a new work almost every year without fail for the next 36 years. The jockey-turned-best-selling-crime-novelist declared that writing was even harder than riding a speeding horse, although it was unlikely to lead to a broken collarbone, busted nose,

or fractured jaw, some of the injuries he experienced during his racing days. His first books concentrated on the turf background with which the author was familiar, but in many of the subsequent novels the racing connection became tangential. Francis has shown little interest in continuing characters, giving return appearances to just two of his many heroes, the jockey Kit Fielding (in *Break In* and *Bolt*, published in 1985 and 1986 respectively), and Sid Halley, another jockey, this one (like Dick Francis, forced to seek a new line of work after being badly injured in a race) now working as a private eye. Halley has been featured only three times in 30 years, in *Odds Against* (1965), *Whip Hand* (1979), and *Come to Grief* (1995).

Francis writes a clean, sharp prose that puts his stories across with speed and clarity. A generally conservative crime writer, he has written some startling scenes of violence and torture, perhaps because Francis, to a degree known to few other writers, can draw on vivid knowledge when capturing the experience of injury and pain.

Late in life, Sir Richard (knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1984) was plagued by a widely reported rumor that his wife of more than 50 years, Mary Francis, was the actual author of the Dick Francis thrillers. Denials were made all around, although Francis conceded that his wife had always helped him with his research and other matters in preparation for his books. The actual degree of Mrs. Francis's collaboration remains, at this writing, a family secret.

Works

Banker (1982); *Blood Sport* (1967); *Bolt* (1986); *Bonecrack* (1971); *Break In* (1985); *Comback* (1991); *Come to Grief* (1995); *Danger, The* (1983); *Dead Cert* (1962); *Driving Force* (1992); *Edge, The* (1988); *Enquiry* (1969); *Field of Thirteen* (1998); *Flying Finish* (1966); *Forfeit* (1968); *For Kicks* (1965); *High Stakes* (1975); *Hot Money* (1987); *In the Frame* (1976); *Knockdown* (1974); *Longshot* (1990); *Nerve* (1964); *Odds Against* (1965); *Proof* (1984); *Rat Race* (1970); *Reflex* (1980); *Risk* (1977); *Second Wind* (1999); *Slayride* (1973); *Smoke-screen* (1972); *Straight* (1989); *10 Lb. Penalty* (1997); *To the Hilt* (1996); *Trial Run* (1978); *Twice Shy* (1981); *Whip Hand* (1979); *Wild Horses* (1994)

Fuller, Sam

(1912–1997)

Best known as the writer-director of 23 eccentric and explosive motion pictures (including *The Steel Helmet*, *Pickup on South Street*, *Run of the Arrow*, and *Shock Corridor*), Sam Fuller's combustible creative output also included novels and short fiction published throughout his career. At age 17 Fuller was New York City's youngest crime reporter, working for the notorious *New York Graphic*. "It was the time of the bootleggers, gangsters, all that crap," Fuller recalled for this author. "I covered everything. Murders, executions, leapers, race riots. Grisly things."

Leaving Manhattan during the Great Depression, the young journalist wandered across the country, taking jobs at any paper that would have him. To supplement a meager income he sold pulp stories, mainly to the crime and detective pulps, some tales inspired by his own reporting on the underworld beat. By the mid-'30s he was writing full-length works for the cheap lending-library and mail-order exploitation houses like Phoenix and Godwin. Book editors would call up, said Fuller, "wire any newspaperman and ask for fifty- or seventy-five thousand words. They would pay a few hundred dollars. If you didn't have a title they'd give you one, and let's have the whole thing in three weeks." His first book, *Burn, Baby, Burn!* was startling in content, dealing with the execution of a pregnant woman. His next, *Test Tube Baby*, was based on an interview Fuller had done with Dr. Alexis Karral and centered on the then-outrageous concept of artificial insemination and the "ectogenetic child." *Make Up and Kiss* continued the muckraking theme on a less explosive level, an exposé of the cosmetics industry.

After some years in Hollywood as a screenwriter, Fuller wrote his most successful and widely acclaimed novel, *The Dark Page*, published in 1944, by which time he was in Europe, an infantryman fighting World War II. *The Dark Page* is a first-rate and flavorful mystery thriller set in the world Fuller knew so well, tabloid Park Row journalism and the lowlife byways of New York City, with a dazzlingly seedy cast of characters including killers, thieves, drunken reporters, Bowery bums,

bigamists, and morgue workers. The novel was bought for the movies (eventually made as *Scandal Sheet*, starring Broderick Crawford and John Derek), and increased Fuller's value as a screenwriter, eventually allowing him to direct his first film in 1949, *I Shot Jesse James*.

Most of Fuller's subsequent published fiction was connected to his movie work, primarily the novelizations of screenplays, including screenplays of projects that were never to be filmed (*Crown of India*; *Quint's World*). The single exception was *144 Piccadilly*, an odd and partly autobiographical story about an American film director in 1960s London who becomes involved with a band of homeless young hippies and bohemian activists. The best and most important of these later publications was undoubtedly *The Big Red One*, a "paperback original" tied to the release of the 1980 film of the same name. Fuller had waited to make the film project—an idiosyncratic account of his experi-

ences in World War II—for decades, but the released production was savagely edited down to a small portion of his original. The paperback novel, however, retained the epic scope of Fuller's original cut of the film, and thus inadvertently became the best evidence of what Fuller's four- or six-hour version of the film must have been like. The novel stands on its own merits as one of the great firsthand accounts of infantry combat in the literature of World War II, a sustained tour de force that fully captures the spectacle and glory and madness of that conflict.

Works

Big Red One, The (1980); *Burn, Baby, Burn!* (1935); *Crown of India* (1966); *Dark Page, The* (1944); *Dead Pigeon on Beethoven Street* (1974); *Make Up and Kiss* (1938); *Naked Kiss, The* (1964); *144 Piccadilly* (1971); *Quint's World* (1988; first published in French as *La Grande Mêlée* in 1984); *Test Tube Baby* (1936)

G

Gaddis, Peggy (Erolie Pearl Gaddis Dern)
(1985–1966) *Also wrote as: Perry Lindsay,
Joan Sherman*

Peggy Gaddis, the primary literary identity of Erolie Pearl Gaddis Dern, was a name so commonly seen, for so long, on the covers of so many unassuming, unheralded books with such interchangeable titles from the 1930s to the 1960s that it would be easier to believe it was a “house name” assigned to a variety of hack authors through the years than that it belonged to one actual person churning out those hundreds of works all by herself.

A native of Gaddistown, Georgia, Erolie Pearl grew up with dreams of being a writer. She attended tiny Reinhardt College and worked for periodicals in Atlanta and then in New York, where she edited movie fan magazines and love pulps. In 1931 she married John Sherman Dern, a member of a traveling minstrel troupe. Her first book-length works, published under the name Peggy Gaddis, were erotica and racy love stories for Godwin, a cheap lending-library press that specialized in such material and also published some of Jack WOODFORD's work. Godwin brought out no less than six of Gaddis's novels in her debut year of 1935: *Eve in the Garden*, *Unfaithful?*, *Shameless*, *Wedding Night*, *One More Woman*, and *Respectable?* The following year Godwin published another six by Gaddis (including *Courtesan*, *Harlot's Return*, and *Yaller Gal*) and two by Gaddis writing as Joan Sherman (*Wife or Mistress* and *The Earth His Mistress*). Later in the decade the author began to re-

serve her Gaddis byline primarily for innocent love stories with elfin titles like *Magic of the Mistletoe* (1936), *Tomorrow's Roses* (1938), and *Love Is Always New* (1938), the majority of these published by Arcadia House, another low-rung publisher supplying the five-and-dime stores with lending libraries. She also used the name later for her many nurse novels, a subgenre with which Gaddis's name became almost synonymous. She continued to write the racy stuff, but most of it was published under such pseudonyms as Perry Lindsay, author of such Phoenix Press classics as *Passion in the Pantry* (1941), *Impatient Lovers* (1943), and *Overnight Cabins* (1947); James Clayford, whose daring fiction included *The Private Life of a Street Girl* (1950) and *Divorce Bait* (1950); and Gail Jordan, author of *The Love Slave* (1943), *Lost Virgin* (1945), and *Sin Cinderella* (1948).

A listing of Peggy Dern's titles tells a kind of social history, the lengthy series of books about the lives of young female health care workers (*City Nurse* [1956], *Nurse in the Tropics* [1957], *Nurse and the Pirate* [1961], *A Nurse Called Happy* [1963], *A Nurse for Apple Valley* [1964], *Betsy Moran, R.N.* [1964], *Heiress Nurse* [1968]) an indicator of the importance of this career path to women in those years of limited opportunity. Even more revealing, perhaps, is a Gaddis title from 1959: *Kerry Middleton, Career Girl*, this vague description enough to indicate Ms. Middleton's independent spirit. Typically, these novels featured sweet yet plucky young women eager and able to make their way in the world, though never averse

to finding the man of their dreams and settling down to a traditional life as wife and mother.

As expected of anyone who could write hundreds of books, Dern was a dedicated professional who hit the typewriter six days a week and produced a strict minimum of 3,000 words per day, a schedule that could produce a finished novel every three weeks. It was a job like any other, and hard work, Gaddis would say, but it was a job she loved and would not give up if she had “inherited a million.” Of writing, she told an inquiring publication, “It’s a sort of drug for me, for which I hope no one ever finds a cure.”

Works

As Good as Married (1945); *Bayou Nurse* (1964); *Beauty to Burn* (1937); *Beloved Intruder* (1958); *Blonde Honey* (1950); *Blondes Shouldn’t Marry* (1947); *Brass Bound Hussy* (1951); *Brave Heritage* (1942); *Bride on the Loose* (1951); *Burning Desire* (1941); *Cadet Nurse* (1945); *Carolina Love Song* (1966); *City Nurse* (1956); *Clinic Nurse* (1963); *Coast Guard Girl* (1941); *Come into my Heart* (1950); *Cottage Colony* (1936); *Country Girl* (1951); *Country Nurse* (1956); *Courtesan* (1936); *Dark Passion* (1944); *Dr. Jerry* (1944); *Enchanted Summer* (1960); *Eve in the Garden* (1935); *Everglades Nurse* (1964); *Farm Wife* (1953); *Feather Brain* (1940); *Female* (1953); *First Love* (1944); *Flight from Love* (1950); *Flight from Yesterday* (1943); *Flight Nurse* (1946); *Frost in April* (1945); *Future Nurse* (1961); *Georgia Tramp* (1951); *Girl Alone* (1952); *Girl Next Door, The* (1949); *Girl Outside, The* (1960); *Grass Roots Nurse* (1958); *Guest in Paradise* (1954); *Harlot’s Return* (1936); *Heart’s Haven* (1945); *Heart’s Retreat* (1937); *Hill Top Nurse* (1964); *Homemade Heaven* (1942); *Homesick Heart, The* (1955); *Hotel Girl* (1951); *Hurricane Nurse* (1961); *Impatient Lovers* (1943); *Intruder in Eden* (1960); *Island Girl* (1952); *Island Nurse* (1960); *Kerry Middleton, Career Girl* (1959); *Kisses Are Petty Cash* (1952); *Kiss Love Goodbye* (1942); *Lady Doctor* (1956); *Leona Foreman, R.N.* (1962); *Love at Second Sight* (1940); *Love in the Dark* (1950); *Love in the Springtime* (1936); *Love Is Always New* (1938); *Love Is Enough* (1959); *Lovely but Damned* (1950); *Lovers Again* (1952); *Magic of the Mistletoe* (1936); *Maid for Love* (1950); *Man Hungry Widow* (1953); *Midnight in Arcady* (1940); *Moon of Enchantment* (1959); *Mortgage on the Moon* (1940); *Mountain Interlude* (1948); *Night*

Nurse (1955); *Nurse and the Pirate* (1961); *Nurse and the Star* (1963); *Nurse Angela* (1964); *Nurse at Sundown* (1958); *Nurse at the Cedars* (1962); *Nurse Christine* (1962); *Nurse Ellen* (1966); *Nurse Gerry Hilary* (1958); *Nurse in Flight* (1965); *Nurse in the Tropics* (1957); *Nurse Melinda* (1960); *Nurse Polly’s Mistake* (1960); *Occasionally Yours* (1951); *Office Mistress* (1952); *Once a Sinner* (1949); *One More Woman* (1935); *Orchids for Mother* (1947); *Overnight Cabins* (1936); *Peddler of Dreams* (1940); *Perry Kimbro, R.N.* (1950); *Piney Woods Nurse* (1961); *Rapture for Two* (1950); *Respectable?* (1935); *Return to Love* (1937); *Roses in December* (1955); *Scandalous Nurse* (1954); *Settlement Nurse* (1959); *Shameless* (1935); *Shanty Girl* (1953); *Sin Cinderella* (1948); *Song in Her Heart* (1943); *Spring Harvest* (1941); *Substitute Nurse* (1962); *Suddenly It’s Love* (1949); *Tent Show* (1945); *Their Hearts to Keep* (1939); *Thirty Days in Eden* (1938); *This Too Is Love* (1959); *Tomorrow’s Roses* (1938); *Too Many Husbands* (1951); *Two Women* (1936); *Unashamed* (1945); *Unfaithful?* (1935); *Unknown Lover* (1952); *Wedding Night* (1935); *Wild Orchids* (1961); *Woman Alone* (1951); *Yaller Gal* (1936); *Young and Dangerous* (1943)

As Joan Sherman:

Wife or Mistress (1936)

As Perry Lindsay:

Passion in the Pantry (1941)

As Georgia Craig:

Nurse Comes Home, A (1963); *Deadline for Love* (1944); *Emergency Nurse* (1963); *Four in Paradise* (1946); *Junior Prom Girl* (1962); *Love Is Here to Stay* (1966); *Sandy* (1958); *There’s Always Hope* (1959)

As Gail Jordan:

Blonde and Beautiful (1948); *Gambling on Love* (1947); *Godiva Girl* (1948); *Innocent Wanton* (1950); *Lost Virgin* (1945); *Love on the Run* (1944); *Love Slave* (1943); *Private Office* (1940); *Weekend Husband* (1943)

As Peggy Dern:

Betsy Moran, R.N. (1964); *Dr. Hugh’s Two Nurses* (1960); *Leona Gregory, R.N.* (1961); *Nurse Angela* (1965); *Nurse’s Dilemma* (1966); *Palm Beach Girl* (1961); *Persistent Suitor* (1961)

Gardner, Erle Stanley

(1889–1970) *Also wrote as: A. A. Fair*

Gardner, creator of Perry Mason, fiction's most famous criminal attorney, was for many years one of the most popular writers in the world—possibly the most popular—and arguably the most successful writer to graduate from the pulp magazines, to which he contributed prodigiously in the 1920s and 1930s. Gardner's output was tremendous through his entire writing career, during which period he also kept up careers as a lawyer, businessman, producer, and social activist and legal crusader (founder of the legendary Court of Last Resort, intended to reopen the cases of railroaded or otherwise falsely convicted prisoners).

Gardner was born in Massachusetts, the son of a mining engineer who brought the family to the rugged West when Erle was a boy. After several roustabout years he settled in California, became a largely self-taught lawyer and began his law practice in 1911. As a young attorney, Gardner earned a strong local reputation as a progressive force known for vigorously defending the rights of the immigrant Mexicans and ethnic minorities in Ventura County. He wrote crime stories in what little spare time he had, in the beginning without success. Gardner had no great literary gifts to draw upon, but his energy and determination were boundless. After many rejection slips and painful rewriting and rethinking of his stories, he sold a story to *Black Mask* magazine, then only at the very start of a remarkable run as the most important and influential of all crime publications. Gardner's first *Black Mask* sale, "Accommodatin' a Lady" (September 1924) was a first-person narrative about breezy Bob Larkin, who eschewed guns when dealing with the bad guys and used more unexpected weaponry to defend himself, like a well-placed billiard cue. Gardner would publish more than 102 stories in *Black Mask* over the next 20 years, more than any other writer. He introduced a number of different series characters in the magazine, but his most popular was Ed Jenkins, also known as the Phantom Crook, a San Francisco-based adventurer who was featured in 73 stories, many of them making colorful use of Chinatown and its residents.

While *Black Mask*, especially under longtime editor Joseph Shaw, demanded a fairly realistic style of crime fiction, in other pulps Gardner was able to create many gimmicky and tongue-in-cheek stories and series heroes, including a "human fly" detective named Speed Dash who could scale the sides of buildings when necessary, and mysterious and disguised crime-solvers like the Patent Leather Kid and the Man in the Silver Mask.

Gardner had already turned out what an average writer might call a lifetime's worth of work by the time he wrote his first novel, published by William Morrow in March 1933. *The Case of the Velvet Claws* featured a tough attorney named Perry Mason, and the narrative was spare, cynical, and hard-boiled in the *Black Mask* tradition (although Joe Shaw turned down the novel for serialization in *Black Mask*, leading to Gardner's lasting resentment of the editor). Another Mason novel followed in the same year, and Mason mysteries continued to appear at the rate of two to four titles a year until several years after Gardner's death in 1970 (due to the publisher's backlog), making Mason and his secretary Della Street, associate investigator Paul Drake, and nemesis/prosecutor Ham Burger some of the best-known characters in popular fiction. The hard-boiled lines of the first novels softened considerably as Gardner's market expanded and the books were serialized in the slick, high-paying general interest magazines. In general, Gardner honed his writing style almost to nonexistence, nothing more than a functional telling of the complicated plots, with much of the narrative carried in dialogue. In fact, after his first few years of success Gardner became known for dictating his books to a battery of secretaries.

In addition to the Perry Mason novels, Gardner wrote about a district attorney named Doug Selby and, under the pen name of A. A. Fair, published a long series of lighthearted mysteries featuring the detective team of Bertha Cool and Donald Lam. In the 1930s, Warner Bros. filmed several of the Perry Mason novels, the best of them starring Warren William as Mason in his sleazy, tough-talking phase. In the 1950s Mason came to television in a series starring Raymond Burr, one of the most successful programs in television history.

Works

Adventures of Paul Pry, The (1989); *Amazing Adventures of Lester Leith, The* (1981); *Case of the Amorous Aunt, The* (1963); *Case of the Angry Mourner, The* (1951); *Case of the Backward Mule, The* (1946); *Case of the Baited Hook, The* (1940); *Case of the Beautiful Beggar, The* (1965); *Case of the Bigamous Spouse, The* (1961); *Case of the Black Eyed Blonde, The* (1944); *Case of the Blonde Bonanza, The* (1962); *Case of the Buried Clock, The* (1943); *Case of the Calendar Girl, The* (1958); *Case of the Careless Cupid, The* (1968); *Case of the Careless Kitten, The* (1942); *Case of the Caretaker's Cat, The* (1935); *Case of the Cautious Coquette, The* (1949); *Case of the Counterfeit Eye, The* (1935); *Case of the Crimson Kiss, The* (1971); *Case of the Crooked Candle, The* (1944); *Case of the Crying Swallow, The* (1971); *Case of the Curious Bride, The* (1934); *Case of the Dangerous Dowager, The* (1937); *Case of the Daring Decoy, The* (1957); *Case of the Daring Divorcee, The* (1964); *Case of the Deadly Toy, The* (1959); *Case of the Demure Defendant, The* (1956); *Case of the Drowning Duck, The* (1942); *Case of the Drowsy Mosquito, The* (1943); *Case of the Dubious Bridegroom, The* (1949); *Case of the Duplicate Daughter, The* (1960); *Case of the Empty Tin, The* (1941); *Case of the Fabulous Fake, The* (1969); *Case of the Fan Dancer's Horse, The* (1947); *Case of the Fenced-In Woman, The* (1972); *Case of the Fiery Fingers, The* (1951); *Case of the Footloose Doll, The* (1958); *Case of the Fugitive Nurse, The* (1954); *Case of the Gilded Lily, The* (1956); *Case of the Glamorous Ghost, The* (1955); *Case of the Golddigger's Purse* (1945); *Case of the Green Eyed Sister, The* (1953); *Case of the Grinning Gorilla, The* (1952); *Case of the Half-Wakened Wife, The* (1945); *Case of the Haunted Husband, The* (1941); *Case of the Hesitant Hostess, The* (1953); *Case of the Horrified Heirs, The* (1964); *Case of the Howling Dog, The* (1934); *Case of the Ice Cold Hands, The* (1962); *Case of the Irate Witness, The* (1972); *Case of the Lamé Canary, The* (1937); *Case of the Lazy Lover, The* (1947); *Case of the Lonely Heiress, The* (1948); *Case of the Long-legged Models, The* (1958); *Case of the Lucky Legs, The* (1934); *Case of the Lucky Loser, The* (1957); *Case of the Mischievous Doll, The* (1963); *Case of the Moth Eaten Mink, The* (1952); *Case of the Musical Cow, The* (1950); *Case of the Mythical Monkeys, The* (1959); *Case of the Negligent Nymph, The* (1950); *Case of the Nervous Accomplice, The* (1955); *Case of the One Eyed Witness, The* (1950); *Case of the Perjured Parrot, The* (1939); *Case of the Phantom Fortune, The* (1964); *Case of the Postponed Murder, The* (1973); *Case of the Queenly Contestant, The* (1976); *Case*

of the Reluctant Model, The (1962); *Case of the Restless Redhead, The* (1954); *Case of the Rolling Bones, The* (1939); *Case of the Runaway Corpse, The* (1954); *Case of the Screaming Woman, The* (1957); *Case of the Shapely Shadow, The* (1960); *Case of the Shoplifter's Shoe, The* (1938); *Case of the Silent Partner, The* (1940); *Case of the Singing Skirt, The* (1959); *Case of the Sleepwalker's Niece, The* (1936); *Case of the Smoking Chimney, The* (1943); *Case of the Spurious Spinster, The* (1961); *Case of the Step-daughter's Secret, The* (1963); *Case of the Stuttering Bishop, The* (1936); *Case of the Substitute Face, The* (1938); *Case of the Sulky Girl, The* (1933); *Case of the Sunbather's Diary, The* (1955); *Case of the Terrified Typist, The* (1956); *Case of the Troubled Trustee, The* (1965); *Case of the Turning Tide, The* (1941); *Case of the Vagabond Virgin, The* (1948); *Case of the Velvet Claws, The* (1933); *Case of the Waylaid Wolf, The* (1960); *Case of the Worried Waitress, The* (1966); *D.A. Breaks an Egg, The* (1949); *D.A. Breaks a Seal, The* (1946); *D.A. Calls a Turn, The* (1944); *D.A. Calls It Murder, The* (1937); *D.A. Cooks a Goose, The* (1942); *D.A. Draws a Circle, The* (1939); *D.A. Goes to Trial, The* (1940); *D.A. Holds a Candle, The* (1938); *D.A. Takes a Chance, The* (1948); *Dead Men's Letters* (1989); *Murder Up My Sleeve* (1937)

As A. A. Fair:

All Grass Isn't Green (1970); *Bachelors Get Lonely* (1961); *Bats Fly at Dusk* (1942); *Bedrooms Have Windows* (1949); *Beware the Curves* (1956); *Bigger They Come, The* (1939); *Cats Prowl at Night* (1943); *Count of Nine, The* (1958); *Crows Can't Count* (1946); *Cut Thin to Win* (1965); *Double or Quits* (1941); *Fish or Cut Bait* (1963); *Fools Die on Friday* (1947); *Give 'em the Ax* (1944); *Gold Comes in Bricks* (1940); *Kept Women Can't Quit* (1960); *Owls Don't Blink* (1942); *Pass the Gravy* (1959); *Shills Can't Cash Ships* (1961); *Some Slips Don't Show* (1957); *Some Women Won't Wait* (1953); *Spill the Jackpot* (1941); *Top of the Heap* (1952); *Traps Need Fresh Bait* (1967); *Try Anything Once* (1962); *Turn on the Heat* (1940); *Up for Grabs* (1964); *Widows Wear Weeds* (1966); *You Can Die Laughing* (1957)

Garrity (Dave J. Garrity, David J. Gerrity)
(1923–1984)

David J. Gerrity was one of several old army buddies and cronies of Mickey SPILLANE who slid into the writing game on Spillane's coattails. "Why not,"

Gerrity told the bibliophile Lynn Myers. "You sit at Spillane's table for a couple of hours and drink beer with him and you could steal enough of his throw-away ideas to write twenty books. . . . It looked like an easy way to make a buck." When Gerrity finally had a manuscript together, Spillane helped get it published by Gold Medal Books. *Kiss Off the Dead*, published under the name "Garrity," was about a cop framed for murder. It had plenty of blood, guts, and broads, in the best Mike Hammer tradition. He followed it with a second hard-boiled tale, *Cry Me a Killer*, brought out by Gold Medal in 1961.

Gerrity never achieved anything like Spillane's success as a writer. He kept his day job, in the merchant marine, and did not publish another book for six years. By then, in 1967, Spillane was no longer the force he had been, but Gerrity pursued the connection explicitly with his detective story *Dragon Hunt*, published by Spillane's softcover house, Signet, and featuring on the back cover a photo of "Dave J. Garrity" sitting beside his "close friend . . . world famous writer Mickey Spillane"; inside, the story included a guest-star appearance by Spillane's hero Mike Hammer. *Dragon Hunt's* "mayhem and metaphor and . . . sudden-sex tempo" were among the reasons the back copy said "Mickey thinks it's the greatest."

Gerrity then wrote a pair of race-car novels and, in the mid-1970s, three Mafia revenge thrillers, one of them sporting a big Spillane endorsement on the cover ("I wish I had written it!"), all originals for Signet. In addition Gerrity ghostwrote two lurid memoirs, one for the legendary stripper Georgia Southern (*Georgia: My Life in Burlesque*) and the other for Fred Otash (*Investigation: Hollywood*), in which the notorious ex-L.A. cop, private detective, and Hollywood fixer (the source of a lot of author James Ellroy's sleazier Hollywood lore) recounted some of his colorful exploits with everyone from Judy Garland and Frankie Avalon to Mickey Cohen and Yma Sumac; the book contained a foreword by—who else?—Mickey Spillane.

In later years Gerrity had little luck in getting his work published. He died of cancer at age 60. At the time of his death he lived just down the road from his pal Spillane.

Works

Cry Me a Killer (1961); *Dragon Hunt* (1967); *Hot Mods, The* (1969); *Kiss Off the Dead* (1960); *Never Contract, The* (1975); *Numbers Man, The* (1977); *Plastic Man, The* (1976); *Rim of Thunder* (1973)

As Fred Otash:

Investigation: Hollywood (1976)

Garstin, Crosbie

(1887–1930)

Crosbie Garstin was a poet, a warrior, a world traveler, and an entertaining novelist who died too young, possibly the victim of an ancient Druid curse. At an early age he left his native England on a quest for adventure, working in the gold fields and lumber camps of Northern Canada and doing a stint as a ranger in British East Africa. He returned to his homeland at the start of World War I and took a commission in the cavalry. His writings, mainly poetry and memoirs of the front lines, began to appear after the war. His claim to literary fame came between the years 1923 and 1926 with the publication of his Penhales novels—*The Owls House*, *High Noon*, and *West Wind*—a magnificent trilogy of swashbuckling adventures that roamed the 18th century from quaint Cornwall to the pirate lairs of the Caribbean. The books, periodically reprinted and rediscovered, rank among the best works of their kind.

Garstin's journey to the Far East in the late 1920s resulted in an excellent travel book, *The Dragon and the Lotus* (1928), and a contemporary adventure novel that made use of the same setting, *China Seas* (1930). The latter was an atmospheric and exciting tale of a rugged ship's captain hauling freight, passengers, and pirates between Singapore and Hong Kong, with an interim recollection of a more decent and promising early life, and a concluding section detailing his love affair with a lustful Indo-Chinese merchant woman—plus typhoons, fistfights, flashbacks to old cricket victories, opium degenerates, and Anglo/Asian sex along the way. The book, with the story streamlined and cleaned up, became a hit MGM movie of



Crosbie Garstin's *China Seas* (1930) became a hit movie starring Clark Gable.

the same name released in 1935, starring Clark Gable, Jean Harlow, and Wallace Beery.

Flush with the success of his popular wash-bucklers, Garstin bought a fabulous old house in a Cornish valley southwest of Penzance, and there continued to write about the exotic East. Built on the site of an ancient Celtic shrine, the house has been said to have a curse on it—that all of its owners through the years have suffered a premature expiration. The English writer would prove no exception: In 1930, at the age of 42, Garstin, in the company of a female acquaintance, was rowing a boat back to a yacht after a party onshore. The boat overturned, and although the woman survived, Crosbie Garstin was never seen again.

Works

China Seas (1930); *Dragon and the Lotus, The* (1928); *High Noon* (1925); *Houp La!* (1928); *Owls House, The* (1923); *West Wind* (1926)

Gault, William Campbell

(1910–1995) *Also wrote as: Will Duke*

Born and raised in Milwaukee, Gault came to be one of the very best of the novelists in the crowded field of Los Angeles private eye fiction. Never a name-brand author on the level of CHANDLER or ROSS MACDONALD (though he was friendly with both of them), Gault nonetheless wrote at a very high level, with a distinctive, personal touch and an avoidance of the easy, sensationalist material that sustained so many of his peers. Gault's P.I. novels about the series characters Brock Callahan and Joe Puma belonged squarely to the hard-boiled tradition fostered by *Black Mask* magazine, but they had a unique voice. Callahan in particular was a realistic, reasonable conception, not the ruminative poet/P.I. of Chandler nor the bloody avenger of Mickey SPILLANE. A former football star ("Brock the Rock") turned private investigator, learning his new trade as he goes along, Callahan is mellow, decent, and tough enough, but not prone to proving it. Violence, the hero understands, usually causes more problems than it solves. Typical of Gault's down-to-earth approach, Callahan was one of the few tough private eyes with a loving, steady relationship (with moody Jan Bonnett, a Beverly Hills interior decorator who often derides his erratic career); he is not exactly monogamous, but his flings throughout the series are low-key affairs. Gault's depiction of Los Angeles is equally distinct, viewed with insight and dismay but without heavy-handed skepticism or contempt.

Gault's writing career got off to a slow, bumpy start. Educated at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, he worked in the hotel business for some years, becoming the manager of the Blatz Hotel in Milwaukee. In his spare time he tried writing. He set his sights very low, on the fringe sex pulps that cigar stores sold under the counter. His first sales were to a pair of obscure magazines, *Paris Nights*

and *Scarlet Adventuress*, the latter an oversized pulp devoted to tales of “the woman adventuress . . . the sort who has a definite goal—love, money, power, or revenge—toward which she steadily forges, using the allure of her body.” Some 50 years later Gault would recall, “They were published in Pennsylvania somewhere, and paid a third of a cent a word. They bought anything as long as you made all the female characters voluptuous. I guess men read them like they read *Playboy* today. They were supposed to be hot stuff, but the stories were about as sexy as church.” By 1939 he had sold—to *Ten Detective Aces*—his first crime story. After a sufficiently encouraging number of sales, Gault quit the hotel business and devoted himself full time to freelance writing. The war took him away for several years, but when he returned in 1945 he began writing steadily for the remaining pulps, primarily mystery/detective and sports stories.

Gault’s first novel, *Don’t Cry for Me* (1952), won the Edgar Allan Poe Award for the best first novel of the year. It was a tough crime novel without gratuitous sensationalism, a serious mystery with a controlled, mature narrative voice that could bear comparison with a masterpiece like Chandler’s *The Long Goodbye*. He followed it with the remarkable *The Bloody Bokhara*, a mystery set in Milwaukee’s exotic world of immigrant carpet dealers. In 1955 he published *Ring Around Rosa*, introducing Brock Callahan. He continued with Callahan in hardback and added a paperback detective, Joe Puma, who was less idiosyncratic than Callahan but shared many of Callahan’s superficial characteristics (including suit size and a love for Einlicher beer).

Gault’s mystery novels never enjoyed big sales (his Edgar winner was available for only eight weeks before going out of print), despite good reviews, awards, and some steadfast fans. He had started writing short novels for the juvenile market in the same year as his adult novels, most centered on high school sports or hot-rodding. These proved to be bigger and steadier moneymakers, and after 1962 Gault gave up the mysteries and wrote juvenile fiction exclusively. These books were not as much fun, Gault would remark, “but one has to eat.” For the next 19 years, the author of *End of a Call Girl* and *Sweet Wild Wench* turned

out books with titles like *Dirt Track Summer* and *Cut-Rate Quarterback*.

Then, in his seventies and semiretired, and with the encouragement of some writer friends and fans, Gault got a new Brock Callahan adventure into print (as a paperback original from a new publisher, Raven House). The novel was wittily titled *The Bad Samaritan*. The style was nearly as strong as in Gault’s heyday, but there were some differences. Callahan had inherited some big money from a relative and now lived in great comfort in a wealthy California seaside town (modeled on Gault’s own final residence, Santa Barbara). *Samaritan* was followed by *The Cana Diversion*, which featured both of Gault’s series characters, Callahan and—until he is bumped off—Joe Puma. Several more new works followed (though some of these may have been written earlier). The books were twilight classics, a wonderful parting gift from an underappreciated master of American crime fiction.

Works

Atom and Eve, The (1958); *Backfield Challenge* (1967); *Bad Samaritan, The* (1982); *Big Stick, The* (1975); *Blood on the Boards* (1953); *Bloody Bokhara, The* (1952); *Bruce Benedict, Halfback* (1957); *Cana Diversion, The* (1982); *Canvas Coffin, The* (1953); *Cat and Mouse* (1988); *Checkered Flag, The* (1964); *Chicano Way, The* (1986); *Come Die with Me* (1959); *Convertible Hearse, The* (1957); *County Kill* (1962); *Cut-Rate Quarterback* (1977); *Day of the Ram* (1956); *Dead Hero* (1963); *Dead Pigeon* (1992); *Death in Donegal Bay* (1984); *Death Out of Focus* (1959); *Dim Thunder* (1958); *Dirt Track Summer* (1961); *Don’t Cry for Me* (1952); *Drag Strip* (1959); *End of a Call Girl* (U.K. title: *Don’t Call Tonight*) (1958); *Gallant Colt* (1954); *Gasoline Cowboy* (1974); *Hundred-Dollar Girl, The* (1961); *Karters, The* (1965); *Last Lap, The* (1972); *Little Big Foot* (1963); *Lonely Mound, The* (1967); *Long Green, The* (1965); *Million Dollar Tramp* (1960); *Mr. Fullback* (1953); *Mr. Quarterback* (1955); *Night Lady* (1958); *Oval Playground, The* (1968); *Quarterback Gamble* (1970); *Ring Around Rosa* (1955), also published as *Murder in the Raw*; *Road-Race Rookie* (1962); *Run, Killer, Run* (1954); *Showboat in the Backcourt* (1976); *Speedway Challenge* (1956); *Square in the Middle* (1956); *Stubborn Sam* (1969); *Sunday Cycles* (1979); *Sunday’s Dust* (1966);

Sweet Wild Wench (1959); *Thin Ice* (1978); *Through the Line* (1961); *Thunder Road* (1952); *Trouble at Second* (1973); *Two-wheeled Thunder* (1962); *Underground Skipper* (1975); *Vein of Violence* (1961); *Wayward Widow, The* (1959); *Wheels of Fortune* (1963); *Wild Willie, Wide Receiver* (1974)

As Will Duke:

Fair Prey (1956)

Geis, Richard E.

(1927–) *Also wrote as: Frederick Colson, Richard Elliott, Randy Guy, Albina Jackson, Peggy Swenson*

Beatnik, cult author, accused pornographer, and master of a rare blend of erotica and science fiction, Richard E. Geis is proof that a talented writer can impose a distinct aesthetic and philosophic stamp on even the most anonymous hack assignments—in this case outré work at the far fringes of the publishing business for which writers ordinarily neither seek nor achieve recognition. An Oregon native, Geis had a “religious experience” at age 10 one summer day while reading a science fiction pulp magazine on the beach, whereupon the writing profession became his life’s goal. As a teen he nurtured this desire through work on the school newspaper and personal journals and fan publications, but his attempts to sell stories to the pulps were not successful. These early rejections, combined with the effects of (at first) undiagnosed cerebral palsy, aggravated the young man’s inferiority complex. He aimed his subsequent creative work at amateur publications and eventually at what he imagined was an indiscriminating market, the “girlie” magazines that proliferated in the ’50s. His first sale was a sextinged science fiction story to *Adam*, which printed pulp fiction between glossy photos of naked women. Relocated to the beach at Venice, California, Geis became a regular contributor to *Adam* and the many other second-string men’s magazines of the era, selling hundreds of short stories that mixed science fiction, fantasy, and sex.

Living in Venice, at that time the bohemian beatnik capital of the West Coast, where the denizens had melded sun, surf, and bikinis to the

Beat movement’s lifestyle ideal of pot, sex, and poetry, Geis centered his first novel on that hipster enclave. Once again aiming low, Geis sent the racy manuscript to a small paperback house in Chicago, Newstand Library, which paid a three-figure advance and brought the book out in 1960 with the title *Like Crazy, Man*, and with a cover illustration featuring a goateed painter in a beret and a nearly bare-breasted blonde ecstatically playing the bongos. Geis found other publishers specializing in erotic fiction ready to buy his work—Midwood Books, France Books, Beacon—and he was soon turning out spicy, softcore novels by the score, including subsequent chronicles of hip bohemia like *Bongo Bum* and *Beat Nymph*.

In this period Geis’s stories were contemporary and relatively realistic, and dealt with sex as explicitly and arousingly as the law allowed. Some defenders of the law, however, felt Geis and his cronies had overstepped this boundary. In 1964, Geis, as the author of a novel called *Three-Way Apartment*, along with several other authors and editors, was indicted on obscenity charges and had to stand trial, first in California, and then, under federal prosecution, in Sioux City, Iowa. The trial lasted three months in Sioux City and Geis was convicted on all charges. To make ends meet he continued turning out erotic novels even as the trial was going on. In the end the verdict was reversed after a Supreme Court decision, and some literary historians have given Geis and his saucy novel credit (if that is the word they use) for crushing literary censorship. In any case, more and more small publishing houses began to specialize in increasingly explicit erotic fiction, and Geis was ensured steady employment in this genre through the next decade.

In 1968 Geis began contributing to a new erotic paperback line called Essex House. Born in the era of flower power and free love, Essex was conceived by editor Brian Kirby as a cutting-edge publisher producing books that were arousing, stylish, and experimental. To that end he sought out talented, daring, uninhibited writers like Philip José Farmer, Charles Bukowski, David Meltzer, and Geis. Not since the heyday of Olympia Press in the 1950s had there been such an intriguing blend of exploitation, erotica, and the avant-garde. Kirby

seemed particularly interested in a psychedelic combination of sex, science fiction, and fantasy, something Geis had already experimented with years before. His *Ravished* (1968) and *Raw Meat* (1968) were among the most highly regarded of Essex House's many unusual (and now hotly collected and very expensive) original works. The Essex House experiment did not last long, but Geis would continue to explore his intriguing blend of fantasy, philosophical speculation, and sexuality in such later books as *The Endless Orgy* (1968) and *The Arena Women* (1972).

Unlike many other talented writers who apprenticed in pulp erotica and then moved on to more mainstream careers, Geis remained in the adults-only camp. In the anything-goes 1970s he produced work that explored such ultimate transgressive subjects as incest and bestiality. Although he wrote the occasional mainstream science fiction/fantasy novel for respectable houses like Fawcett Gold Medal, the nonconformist Geis seemed constitutionally drawn to the obscure end of the publishing spectrum and preferred to reserve his most personal, serious work for self-publication, like the mimeographed novel *The Corporation Strikes Back*, and his various limited-distribution screeds and journals.

For those ready to explore the career of an idiosyncratic and talented writer existing almost entirely outside the box of literary respectability, Geis makes a fascinating case study.

Works

Anal Husbands and Deviant Wives (1971); *Arena Women, The* (1972); *Bedroom City* (1962); *Bongo Bum* (1966); *Corporation Strikes Back, The* (1972); *Endless Orgy, The* (1968); *Eye at the Window* (1967); *Girlsville* (1963); *Honeymoon Hotel* (1962); *Like Crazy, Man* (1960); *Male Mistress* (1964); *Nurses Who Seduce the Young* (1970); *Orality '69* (1969); *Orality '70* (1970); *Punishment, The* (1967); *Ravished* (1968); *Raw Meat* (1968); *Saturday Night Party* (1963); *Sex Kitten* (1960); *Sex Turned On* (1967); *Shum Virgin* (1963); *Swap Orgies* (1971); *Three Way Swap* (1970); *Women and Bestiality* (1971); *Young Tiger* (1965)

As Frederick Colson:

Devil Is Gay, The (1965); *Roller Derby Girl* (1967)

As Richard Elliott:

Burnt Lands (with Elton Elliott) (1985); *Einstein Legacy, The* (with Elton Elliott) (1987); *Master File* (with Elton Elliott) (1986); *Sword of Allah* (with Elton Elliott) (1984)

As Randy Guy:

Horny Wild Daughter (1984); *Hot Twins Next Door* (1982); *Hot Wife for Hire* (1981)

As Albina Jackson:

Dusty Dyke (1964)

As Peggy Swenson:

Beat Nymph (1965); *Blonde, The* (1960); *Captive of the Lust Master* (1972); *Easy* (1962); *Gay Partners, The* (1964); *Ghetto Whore* (1976); *Girl Possessed* (1973); *Hot Kids and Their Older Lovers* (1971); *Love Tribe, The* (1968); *Mouth Girl, The* (1968); *Pleasure Lodge* (1962); *Queer Beach* (1964); *Rita and Marian* (1967); *Saturday Night Party* (1963); *Three Way Apartment* (1964); *Virgin No More* (1963)

Gibson, Walter

(1897–1985) *Also wrote as: Maxwell Grant*

Walter Gibson was a professional magician—the president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Society of American Magicians by 1926—and magicologist. He was, as well, a reporter, a composer of crossword puzzles, the ghostwriter for the world-famous magician Howard Thurston and the even more famous Harry Houdini, and the author of numerous nonfiction books on the subject most dear to him, including *After Dinner Tricks*, *Popular Card Tricks*, and *The Book of Secrets, Miracles Ancient and Modern*. He had accomplished all this by the time he walked into the office of Street & Smith editor Frank Blackwell and nabbed the assignment that would become the source of his lasting fame as a legend of pulp fiction.

In the fall of 1930, a mentally unstable radio writer named Harry Charlott—eventually murdered in a Bowery flophouse—thought up an identity for a previously anonymous narrator of *The Detective Story Hour*, a radio mystery series designed as a promotional vehicle for Street &

Smith's *Detective Story* magazine, a top-selling pulp. Each week an actor named James LaCurto read over the airwaves a story from the magazine's latest issue. Charlott provided a melodramatic characterization for the narrator, the Shadow, and had the programs begin with LaCurto doing a hammy, scarifying laugh and intoning the words, "The Shadow knows . . ." Listeners enjoyed this new addition, and soon Street & Smith was trying to figure out how to exploit the Shadow in print as well.

Street & Smith circulation chief Henry Ralston conceived of a single-character publication, mystery adventures about this Shadow fellow. Single-character titles had been popular in the heyday of the dime novels, featuring characters like Nick Carter and Buffalo Bill. Ralston was a veteran of those days and remembered the huge profits they had once brought in. He developed *The Shadow* pulp under the dime-novel model: targeting a young male audience, maintaining creative control, and using a house name for the author's by-line. He even found an old, unpublished Nick Carter story he thought could be rewritten. Ralston handed the project to Frank Blackwell and told him to get a magazine out right away, while the radio show and the cackling Shadow were still causing a stir.

Serendipitously, for both Street & Smith and for Walter Gibson, the magician/writer was visiting New York from Philadelphia that day in December 1930 and stopped by Blackwell's office. Gibson talked his way into the assignment. Speed was of the essence, as the premiere issue of *The Shadow* was already scheduled to hit the newsstands in a little more than two months' time. Gibson began working on the story that night, on the train ride back to Philadelphia.

The first issue of *The Shadow* went on sale right on schedule (April 1931 cover date). The by-line was "Maxwell Grant." Gibson claimed that he devised the name after two "friends in magic," Maxwell Holden and U. F. "Gen" Grant, but the moniker would remain a house name owned by the publisher. The novel-length story opened on a scene thick with tension, mystery, and despair. On a New York bridge clouded by a black mist, a young man prepares to commit suicide. He leans

over the distant dark waters and his fingers loosen their hold on the rail. Suddenly, while "balanced between life and death," he is gripped by an iron force. Someone drags him back, someone with an irresistible power. The would-be corpse sees a frightening figure before him, "a tall black-cloaked figure that might have represented death itself. . . . The stranger's face was entirely obscured by a broad-brimmed felt hat bent downward over his features, and the long, black cloak looked like part of the thickening fog." Hauled into the back of a chauffeured limousine, the dazed man hears the mysterious stranger's offer of a new lease on life: "I shall improve it . . . I shall make it useful. But I shall risk it, too. Perhaps I shall lose it, for I have lost lives, just as I have saved them." A few paragraphs later, the young man has sworn his allegiance, a holdup man has been shot dead, and the stranger has vanished, "like a shadow!"

So began the great epoch of pulp heroes and superheroes. *The Shadow* was a sensation, moving quickly from quarterly publication to monthly to bi-weekly. The character would make Street & Smith several fortunes in sales and licensing fees, and the magazine would last for nearly two decades. Henry Ralston had been right: the old dime novel formula could be repackaged and made to work again. The Shadow himself, a Victorian wraith with his black cloak and sinister cackle, might have felt at home in a 19th-century story paper. He also owed something to the flamboyant pulp heroes of the pre-1920 period, like Johnston MCCULLEY's masked swordsman of Old Capistrano, Zorro, and Frank Packard's Jimmie Dale, also known as the Gray Seal. The Shadow may have actually seemed startlingly fresh in the 1930s, when crime-fighting heroics had become the province of the hard-boiled, bluntly realistic private eye. The Shadow was no Sam Spade (see HAMMETT, Dashiell) and his character roamed not the urban mean streets of the tough private eyes but instead a foggy, gaslit setting somewhere near the stamping grounds of Sherlock Holmes, filtered through Walter Gibson's theatrical, magician's imagination.

In the first novels the Shadow is an almost peripheral character, making sudden, decisive appearances at critical points in the narrative. The Shadow preferred to use an informal army of re-

cruits and lieutenants to do his groundwork, investigating incipient crimes, setting the traps that will thwart the hordes of evil; then, when the time is right, and from some unknown sanctum, he arrives, a being in black, striking swiftly with blazing automatics. The ending is invariable, the foe vanquished, crime for the time being stilled, and the midnight victory announced by the creepy peaks of the Shadow's mighty laugh (that radio actor's improvisation became the literary Shadow's permanent and most famous characteristic). As the series went on, readers gradually came to know more about their hero. The Shadow acquired what would become familiar props—twin .45s and an autogiro—and his true identity was revealed. Known only to a pair of close-mouthed Xinka Indians (and implicitly to countless trustworthy young readers), the Shadow was actually Kent Allard, the famous aviator. (Lamont Cranston was merely one of the literary Shadow's many impersonations—the radio series that starred Orson Welles as the Shadow got that all wrong).

Walter Gibson had to pass his work through an unusual committee system, as Street & Smith maintained a proprietary watch over their bread-winning hero. The writer had to work out a detailed synopsis for each novel and then take it to Henry Ralston and editor John Nanovic for approval or amendment. New gimmicks, settings, and characters were kicked around by the three during committee meetings. Then Gibson had to run home and make a story out of it. "To meet the Shadow's schedule, I had to hit 5,000 words or more per day," he once recalled. "I made 10,000 words my goal and found I could reach it. Some stories I wrote in four days each. . . . On these occasions I averaged 15,000 words a day, or nearly 60 typewritten pages, a pace of four or five pages an hour for 12 to 15 hours. By living, thinking, even dreaming the story in one continued process, I found ideas came faster and faster." Gibson typed so furiously that his fingers bled. Incredibly, he maintained this pace—and a generally high standard of storytelling—for more than a decade. For a time, Gibson shared a small portion of the workload with another pulp scribe, Theodore Tinsley, but eventually he became the Shadow's sole author again and stayed with it—except for a two-

year break after a fight with the publisher—until the magazine ended its run in 1949. He wrote 283 Shadow novels in all.

The choice of Walter Gibson to chronicle the immortal Shadow's adventures could not have been more inspired, the perfect match of author and character. As a magician and historian of magic, Gibson brought to the Shadow a unique perspective. The stories were the literary equivalent of a master illusionist's stage act, full of tricks, threats of sudden death, and mysterious atmosphere. Despite his output, Gibson was not a hack. Bleeding fingers and all, he felt an intense dedication to the series and the character he had largely created. Each novel had to top the last in plot twists, trickery, and surprise endings.

Despite his enormous output as the Shadow writer, Gibson found time to write still more stories for other pulps. The most noteworthy of these



Looks That Kill! (1948), a paperback original by Walter B. Gibson, is best remembered for its cover art.

were the tales of Norgil the Magician, published in the pages of *Crime Busters* magazine in the late '30s. Obviously drawn even more directly than the Shadow from Gibson's own background as a prestidigitator, the hero blended many attributes and activities of several top magicians of the author's acquaintance, and the stories made narrative use of classic trick acts like the Kellar Levitation (having a "floating lady" suddenly coated in blood in "Murder in Wax"). The stories provided an interesting, offhand glimpse of the seedy backstage world of the traveling vaudeville troupes and carnivals Gibson knew so well.

With the end of the pulps and his long-running assignment as Maxwell Grant, Gibson returned to writing nonfiction books, mostly about magic, but also about astrology, yoga, judo, and harness racing. He returned briefly to the lurid pulp world during the early, sensational years of the paperbacks with two tough crime thrillers, *A Blonde for Murder* and *Looks That Kill!*, best remembered for their stunning cover art. Gibson's one frustration with the Shadow and the assignment that would take up such a chunk of his life was its enforced anonymity. Street & Smith never wavered from its policy about the Shadow's byline. All of Gibson's novels would be credited to Maxwell Grant. As the magazine soared to prominence and the new radio series and motion picture adaptations followed, Gibson's crucial contribution to it all remained mostly unknown outside pulp inner circles. In later years, the secret more widely revealed, Gibson did get to enjoy the acclaim of legions of Shadow readers around the world.

Works

BOOKS

Anne Bonny, Pirate Queen (1962); *Blonde for Murder, A* (1948); *Looks That Kill!* (1948); *Norgil: More Tales of Prestidigitation* (1979); *Norgil the Magician* (1976)

As Maxwell Grant in The Shadow:

Alibi Trail (1942); *Atoms of Death* (1935); *Banshee Murders, The* (1949); *Battle of Gred* (1939); *Bells of Doom* (1935); *Black Circle, The* (1949); *Black Dragon, The* (1943); *Black Falcon, The* (1934); *Black Hush, The* (1933); *Blackmail King, The* (1941); *Blackmail Ring, The*

(1932); *Blue Sphinx, The* (1935); *Blur, The* (1941); *Book of Death, The* (1942); *Broken Napoleons, The* (1936); *Brothers of Doom* (1937); *Buried Evidence* (1937); *Cards of Death* (1938); *Case of Congressman Coyd* (1935); *Castle of Crime* (1939); *Castle of Doom* (1936); *Chain of Death* (1934); *Chest of Chu Chan, The* (1944); *Chicago Crime* (1938); *Chinese Disks, The* (1934); *Chinese Primrose, The* (1941); *Chinese Tapestry, The* (1935); *Circle of Death, The* (1934); *City of Crime* (1936); *City of Doom, The* (1936); *City of Ghosts* (1939); *City of Shadows* (1939); *Clue for Clue* (1942); *Cobra, The* (1934); *Condor, The* (1935); *Creeper, The* (1935); *Crime at Seven Oaks* (1940); *Crime Caravan* (1944); *Crime Circus* (1934); *Crime Clinic, The* (1933); *Crime Country* (1940); *Crime Crypt, The* (1934); *Crime Insured* (1937); *Crime Master, The* (1934); *Crime Out of Mind* (1949); *Crime Over Boston* (1938); *Crime Over Miami* (1940); *Crime Ray, The* (1939); *Crime Rides the Sea* (1939); *Crime Under Cover* (1941); *Crime's Stronghold* (1941); *Crooks Go Straight* (1935); *Crystal Buddha, The* (1938); *Crystal Skull, The* (1944); *Curse of Thoth, The* (1949); *Cyro* (1934); *Dark Death* (1935); *Dead Man's Chest* (1949); *Dead Men Live* (1932); *Dead Who Lived, The* (1938); *Death About Town* (1942); *Death by Proxy* (1936); *Death Clew* (1934); *Death Diamonds* (1942); *Death from Nowhere* (1939); *Death Has Gray Eyes* (1945); *Death in the Crystal* (1944); *Death in the Stars* (1940); *Death Jewels* (1938); *Death Premium* (1940); *Death Rides the Skyway* (1936); *Death Ship* (1939); *Death Sleep, The* (1934); *Death Token* (1937); *Death Triangle, The* (1933); *Death Turrets* (1937); *Death's Masquerade* (1943); *Devil Master, The* (1941); *Devil Monsters, The* (1943); *Devil's Feud, The* (1942); *Dictator of Crime* (1941); *Doom on the Hill* (1934); *Embassy Murders, The* (1934); *Face of Doom* (1938); *Fate Joss, The* (1935); *Fifth Face, The* (1940); *Five Chameleons, The* (1932); *Five Ivory Boxes* (1942); *Five Keys to Crime* (1945); *Forgotten Gold* (1941); *Formula for Crime* (1942); *Foundation of Death* (1944); *Four Signets, The* (1935); *Freak Show Murders, The* (1944); *Garaucan Swindle, The* (1934); *Garden of Death* (1941); *Gems of Doom* (1940); *Getaway Ring, The* (1940); *Ghost Murders, The* (1936); *Ghost of the Manor, The* (1933); *Golden Grotto, The* (1933); *Golden Masks, The* (1936); *Golden Master, The* (1939); *Golden Pagoda, The* (1938); *Golden Quest, The* (1935); *Golden Vulture, The* (1938); *Gray Ghost, The* (1936); *Green Box, The* (1934); *Green Hoods, The* (1938); *Guardian of Death* (1945); *Gypsy Vengeance* (1934); *Hand, The* (1938); *Hills*

of Death (1938); *Hooded Circle, The* (1940); *House of Ghosts* (1943); *House of Shadows* (1939); *House of Silence* (1937); *House on the Ledge, The* (1941); *House That Vanished, The* (1935); *Hydra, The* (1942); *Intimidations, Inc.* (1936); *Invincible Shivan Khan, The* (1940); *Isle of Doubt, The* (1933); *Isle of Gold* (1939); *Jade Dragon* (1949); *Jade Dragon, The* (1942); *Jibaro Death* (1936); *Judge Lawless* (1942); *Keeper's Gold, The* (1937); *Key, The* (1934); *Killer, The* (1933); *King of the Black Market* (1943); *League of Death, The* (1941); *Legacy of Death* (1942); *Lingo* (1935); *Living Joss, The* (1933); *Living Shadow, The* (1931); *London Crime, The* (1935); *Lone Tiger, The* (1939); *Look of Death* (1937); *Magical's Mystery, The* (1949); *Malmordo* (1949); *Man from Scotland Yard, The* (1935); *Man from Shanghai, The* (1936); *Mansion of Crime* (1941); *Mardi Gras Mystery, The* (1935); *Masked Headsman, The* (1937); *Masked Lady, The* (1939); *Mask of Mephisto* (1945); *Master of Death* (1933); *Masters of Death* (1940); *Merry Mrs. Macbeth* (1945); *Messenger of Death* (1943); *Money Master, The* (1942); *Muggers, The* (1943); *Murder by Moonlight* (1943); *Murder by Magic* (1945); *Murder Every Hour* (1935); *Murder for Sale* (1938); *Murder House* (1937); *Murdering Ghost, The* (1942); *Murder Lake* (1943); *Murder Mansion* (1941); *Murder Marsh* (1934); *Murder Master, The* (1938); *Murder Town* (1936); *Museum Murders, The* (1943); *No Time for Murder* (1944); *North Woods Mystery, The* (1936); *Northdale Mystery, The* (1942); *Plot Master, The* (1935); *Python, The* (1935); *Q* (1940); *Quetzal* (1937); *Rackets King, The* (1938); *Racket Town* (1937); *Radium Murders, The* (1937); *Realm of Doom* (1939); *Red Blot, The* (1933); *Return of the Shadow* (1963); *Ribbon Clues, The* (1935); *Road of Crime* (1933); *Robot Master, The* (1943); *Room of Doom* (1942); *Salamanders, The* (1936); *Scent of Death, The* (1940); *Sealed Box, The* (1937); *Serpents of Siva* (1938); *Seven Drops of Blood* (1936); *Shadow Meets the Mask, The* (1941); *Shadow Over Alcatraz* (1938); *Shadow's Justice, The* (1933); *Shadow's Rival, The* (1937); *Shadow, the Hawk, and the Skull, The* (1940); *Shadow Unmasks, The* (1937); *Ships of Doom* (1939); *Shivan Khan Returns* (1939); *Silver Scourge, The* (1933); *Silver Skull* (1939); *Six Men of Evil* (1933); *Sledge Hammer Crimes, The* (1936); *Smugglers of Death* (1939); *Spoils of the Shadow* (1934); *Spy Ring, The* (1940); *Star of Delhi, The* (1941); *Stars Promise Death, The* (1945); *Strange Disappearance of Joe Cardona, The* (1936); *Syndicate of Death* (1944); *Taiwan Joss, The* (1945); *Teardrops of Buddha* (1945); *Temple of*

Crime (1941); *Terror Island* (1936); *Third Shadow, The* (1936); *Third Skull, The* (1935); *Three Brothers, The* (1939); *Three Stamps of Death* (1945); *Thunder King, The* (1941); *Time Master, The* (1941); *Toll of Death, The* (1944); *Tower of Death* (1934); *Town of Hate* (1944); *Trail of Vengeance* (1942); *Treasure of Death* (1933); *Treasure Trail* (1937); *Triple Trail, The* (1935); *Twins of Crime* (1942); *Unseen Killer, The* (1934); *Vampire Murders, The* (1942); *Vanished Treasure* (1938); *Veiled Prophet, The* (1940); *Vengeance Bay* (1942); *Vengeance Is Mine* (1937); *Vindicator, The* (1939); *Voice, The* (1938); *Voice of Death* (1940); *Voodoo Death* (1944); *Voodoo Master, The* (1936); *Voodoo Trail* (1938); *Washington Crime* (1937); *Wasp, The* (1940); *Wasp Returns, The* (1941); *Whispering Eye, The* (1949); *White Skulls, The* (1945); *Wizard of Crime* (1939); *Wizard of Crime* (1943); *Xitli—God of Fire* (1940); *Yellow Band, The* (1937); *Yellow Door, The* (1936)

Glyn, Elinor (1864–1943)

Sixty years before Jacqueline SUSANN was thought to have invented the type of the scandal novelist with a genius for publicity, there was Elinor Glyn. A British author whose book, *Three Weeks* (1907), shocked Edwardian England, Glyn was a determined self-promoter who established herself as the epitome of literary sophistication and the most famous delineator of romantic passion for two continents. Born on the island of Jersey in the English Channel to British Canadian parents of wealth and aristocratic lineage, she grew up on an estate in Ontario, then, after her father's death and mother's remarriage, returned with the family to Jersey. Money problems eventually plagued the family, and they lost most of the trappings of a privileged life. Elinor, pushing 30 and single, was hurried into a marriage with a rich playboy, Clayton Glyn. For 10 years or so she contented herself with life as a society hostess and the mother of two children, but as the 19th century turned into the 20th and her domestic life, it was rumored, suffered from the disaffection of her husband, she looked for some new means of expressing herself. She found it in writing. Her first novel, the semiautobiographical *The Visits of*

Elizabeth, was published in 1900. Several other demure works followed.

Then, in 1907, came Glyn's sixth novel and her first best-seller, a book that would cause a stir for a generation of readers and made Glyn a household name. The novel's title, *Three Weeks*, referred to the duration of a passionate love affair between a handsome, newly engaged young Englishman (a "god among men") and a mysterious, bewitching European woman (known only as "the Lady") whom he meets while on holiday at an Alpine resort. Glyn described their intense relationship in rapturous prose and with what some readers considered a most unexpected and outrageous intimacy. Audiences of the 1900s were startled, titillated, and in a few cases disgusted by Glyn's unblinking (though hardly explicit) account of her couple's coupling. Most remarked-upon and scandalizing of all the book's passionate scenes was the notorious "tiger skin rug" scene: "They were on the tiger by now," Glyn wrote, "and she undulated round and all over him, feeling his coat, and his face, and his hair, as a blind person might, till at last it seemed as if she were twined about him like a serpent." As shocking as the book's concupiscent content was that Glyn had made her female character more experienced and sexually aggressive than the male (the Lady is, the reader eventually learns, unhappily married—an adulterer on top of everything else—and comes to a tragic end).

Glyn followed her first hit with similar passionate melodramas and liberated-lady characters, including *His House* (1910) and *These Things* (1915), and many were big sellers, though none topped the phenomenal status of *Three Weeks*. Glyn came to be known as one of the forces behind a rising acceptance of a more sexually open literature, and would become something of a figurehead for a nascent feminist movement. An undoubted celebrity, Glyn would spend as much time cultivating her public persona as she would creating her fiction.

In the 1920s she accepted an offer to come to Hollywood and advise the studio heads and suggest story ideas. In the movie colony, where many stars and producers were unlettered and fresh from previous work as junkmen and ditchdiggers,

Glyn's self-consciously snobbish, regal manner and dress were awe-inspiring. In 1926 she sold to Paramount chief Ben Schulberg a sexy novelette called, simply, *It*. The movie made from Glyn's title (little of her story remained in the eventual script) starred Clara Bow. In a much-publicized encounter, Elinor Glyn would dub the saucy Brooklyn silent movie star "The IT Girl"—"IT" being something (the publicists couldn't get too explicit) having to do with raw sexual magnetism. The title took hold in the public imagination, and Glyn profited from the attachment to one of the fastest-rising stars in Hollywood. She maintained a sort of godmother status to a new generation of liberated, short-skirted females known as "flappers." Glyn lived the good life in Hollywood for many years, a sought-after party guest and friend of the movie elite, but she eventually wore out her welcome and returned to England by the late 1920s. She wrote more books, worked with the British film studios on a few projects, and gradually slid from public view, dying in 1943, a year shy of her 80th birthday.

Works

Career of Katherine Bush (1916); *Did She?* (1934); *Elizabeth Visits America* (1909); *Eternal Youth* (also known as *The Wrinkle Book*) (1928); *Flirt and the Flapper*, *The* (1930); *Glorious Flames* (1932); *Great Moment*, *The* (1923); *His Hour* (1910); *It and Other Stories* (1927); *Letters from Spain* (1924); *Love's Blindness* (1926); *Love's Hour* (1932); *Man and Maid* (1922); *Philosophy of Love* (1923); *Reflections of Ambrosine*, *The* (1902); *Romantic Adventure* (1936); *Six Days* (1924); *Sooner or Later* (1933); *Third Eye*, *The* (1940); *This Passion Called Love* (1925); *Three Weeks* (1907); *Vicissitudes of Evangeline*, *The* (1905); *Visits of Elizabeth*, *The* (1900)

Goines, Donald

(1937–1974) *Also wrote as: Al C. Clark*

Goines was and remains the master of black street-gangster fiction conceived from the inside out. In 16 novels, written in a five-year burst of creativity, Goines explored and exploited ghetto life at its most violent and hopeless, a grimly exciting nihilist's tour of hell on Earth.

Born in Detroit to a relatively stable and comfortable family (his parents owned a local dry cleaner), Goines in his early years had minimal contact with the lawless, bloody world that he would ultimately write about. But during a stint in the army he got hooked on heroin, and when he returned to Detroit in 1955 he quickly became a member of the crime and drug underworld.

Sometime in the '60s, while serving a prison sentence, Goines began writing stories for his own amusement. A love for cowboy movies—and perhaps a desire to think about wide open spaces while in confinement—led him to write a western. A few years later—serving a different sentence at a different prison—Goines read the new book by a black writer with a criminal background named ICEBERG SLIM. The book inspired Goines to take another shot at writing, this time a story about his own colorful and dramatic life on the streets. Following in Iceberg's footsteps, Goines wrote *Whoreson* (1972), a first-person "memoir" about a Detroit ghetto pimp, based on the author's own experience hustling and running prostitutes. Goines sent the manuscript to Holloway House, Iceberg Slim's publisher; Holloway accepted it and asked for more like it. Goines quickly pounded out a second autobiographical novel, *Dopefiend*, a grueling, compelling work of fiction drawn from his dreadful life as a heroin addict.

Out of prison and now a published author, Goines tried to live the straight life. He continued writing, and Holloway House eagerly purchased the manuscripts as soon as they arrived. *Black Gangster* (1972), his third novel, was a more elaborately imaginative effort, with an intriguingly ambivalent attitude toward the subject of black political movements and self-styled revolutionaries, hot-button topics of the day. In *Black Gangster*, the title character invents and leads a "liberation" movement in order to provide a cover for his oncoming crime wave. Later novels would take on the social and political turmoil of the ghetto with a more Manichean, us-against-them perspective ("them"—the enemy—being the white race). In 1974, Holloway House and Goines introduced a more pointedly political action series published under the pseudonym of Al C. Clark. Beginning with *Crime Partners*, the series tracked the explo-

sive adventures of a black militant named Kenyatta (the name of postcolonial Kenya's first president). Patterned in part on the rhetoric of the Black Panther Party (and anticipating some of the goals of the Black Muslims under the leadership of Louis Farrakhan), Kenyatta's movement declares war on ghetto vice, its suppliers and enablers, and the white police officers who patrol the black neighborhoods like colonial rulers.

Goines's writing was primitive, his plotting anarchic, but the overall impact was often powerful and had the high-voltage charge of the real; finding himself in the middle of one of Goines's swirling visions of violence and hate, the weak-kneed reader could become almost nauseated.

Goines's initial dream of a quiet author's life did not last long. He was back on smack, and other bad habits were gradually returning. Hoping that getting away from his old haunts might be the key to salvation, Goines and his family left Detroit for California, moving to the Los Angeles ghetto of Watts. There, a short drive from Holloway House headquarters in Hollywood, Goines wrote the majority of his 16 published works. After two productive years, Goines decided to go back to Detroit. Back in his hometown, on the night of October 21, 1974, Goines and his wife were shot to death, the motive and identity of the killers unknown (though they were reported to as have been "two white men"). A completed manuscript was found among Goines's belongings, published by Holloway House as *Inner City Hoodlum*, described by the publishers as a tale of "smack, numbers money and murder in the black cesspool of Los Angeles." A mere four years had passed between Goines's completion of *Dopefiend* and the writing of 15 other novels, his release from prison for the last time, his new career as the best-selling king of what Holloway House called the "Black Experience genre," and his murder.

Works

Black Gangster (1972); *Black Girl Lost* (1973); *Cry Revenge* (1974); *Daddy Cool* (1974); *Dopefiend* (1971); *Eldorado Red* (1974); *Inner City Hoodlum* (1975); *Never Die Alone* (1974); *Street Players* (1973); *Swamp Man* (1974); *White Man's Justice, Black Man's Grief* (1973); *Whoreson* (1972)

As Al C. Clark:

Crime Partners (1974); *Death List* (1974); *Kenyatta's Escape* (1974); *Kenyatta's Last Hit* (1975)

Goldsmith, Martin M.

(1910–1997)

Detour, the spare, delirious, haunting film noir released by the penurious studio PRC in 1945, has come to be regarded as one of the most remarkable achievements of golden age Hollywood, the ultimate triumph of no-budget filmmaking and subversive, against-all-odds artistry. Shot in less than a week, mostly on cheap posterboard sets no larger than a closet, with worn-out technical equipment and a cast of second-raters and unknowns, *Detour* told the story of a hapless man's battering by the heavy hand of Fate, the waking-nightmare misadventure of a drifting loser who meets the wrong femme fatale on a desert highway. This dark, claustrophobic movie of murder, madness, and bad breaks ranks among the handful of quintessential classic noir films, and as the greatest work—along with *The Black Cat* (1934)—of the cult director Edgar Ulmer. Through the years, reams of paper have been devoted to *Detour*: writers have examined nearly every aspect of its existence, including its furiously compact storytelling, sordid characters, downbeat tone, dreamlike logic, and spookily deterministic philosophy. The amount of ink given to the film's screenwriter and story source, Martin M. Goldsmith, however, could easily fit into a femme fatale's purse with room left over for a smoking .38 and a spare telephone cord.

Ulmer's contribution to the ultimate quality of the film is not in question, but the focus on Ulmer as "auteur" of the film in discussions of *Detour* is more a result of narrow-mindedness and ignorance among film buffs and critics than a true indication of the film's actual authorship. The shunning of *Detour's* screenwriter is all the more short-sighted because Goldsmith adapted his own published novel for the screen—a circumstance that was rare and generally considered undesirable by the studios—and thus was able to bring an uninterrupted continuity of vision from the original text to the cinematic version. More than this, Goldsmith's

1938 pulp novel, though little known, can be seen to have been a strong and very early progenitor of the noir vision in popular culture, a full-blown expression of theme, motifs, settings, and character types that would not have their vogue in the American cinema until the mid-1940s. "Here you'll find no happy ending," wrote the *New York Times* reviewer of the book, "nothing but defeat and frustration and complex confusion of double crossing among a set of characters who are as unsavory a lot of scum as ever drifted into the pages of a latter-day thriller."

Goldsmith, whose first novel, *Double Jeopardy* (1938), was praised for its highly suspenseful story line and excellent characterization, took many of the elements in his second book, *Detour*, from actual experience. Earlier, the young New York writer, unemployed and adrift on account of the Great Depression, wanted to try his luck in California. Goldsmith owned an aged sedan but didn't have enough cash for gas and food to make the cross-country drive. To cover his expenses, he solicited a group of paying passengers to ride with him, mostly out-of-work Broadway actors hoping for jobs in Hollywood. The trip would prove highly dramatic and give Goldsmith the impetus for the novel published by Macaulay in 1938. The characters in *Detour*, he would later say, had their real-life counterparts in the front and back seats of his old Buick.

More expansive than the film version and more experimental in structure, Goldsmith's *Detour* included two separate first-person narratives: that of Alex, a big-band musician hitchhiking west to find the fiancée who took off for Hollywood days before their wedding; and Sue, the erratic girlfriend herself, gone to seek stardom but finding mostly disappointment and depravity. Frustrating the conventional reader's expectations, Sue and Alex never meet again. Goldsmith, who had spent several frustrating years in the movie colony by the time he wrote *Detour*, painted Hollywood as a sordid place populated exclusively by pimps and lechers and part-time hookers, a tangy element of the book that the movie version ignored. Also left out of the film, to avoid censorship, were some of the other lurid ingredients in the nihilistic novel: loose women, attempted suicide, and marijuana.

At the time of the film's release, Goldsmith's contribution was hardly slighted. PRC's publicity kit for *Detour* highlighted Goldsmith's contribution as his motion picture debut: "For one week he read every good script he could get hold of. Then he started the screenplay on *Detour*. Without changing the theme of his novel or his characters, he turned in such an excellent script that PRC immediately signed him to a contract. Further, a Hollywood agent offered PRC \$70,000 for the completed script!" The same publicity pages misspelled Ulmer's name as "Edgar Elmer." Goldsmith went on to a bumpy career in movies and television, providing the story lines for other notable noir films, including *The Narrow Margin* (1951) and *Hell's Island* (1955). His later published work included *Shadow at Noon* (1943), a dreamy, speculative novel about a devastating air attack on New York City.

Works

Detour (1938); *Double Jeopardy* (1938); *Shadow at Noon* (1943)

Goodis, David (1917–1967)

A young writer of promise who came close to the big time, David Goodis landed in Hollywood, parted with Bogart and Bacall, and saw his work become a big screen hit. But the glamor years were over quickly. Goodis drifted back to his home town and spent the last third of his short life holed up in his parents' house in Philadelphia, writing sleazy drugstore paperbacks. None of them were still in print in the United States when he slipped even deeper underground, dead of a heart attack at the age of 49.

David Goodis was the softcover bard of Skid Row, the '50s paperback laureate of losers. His most typical protagonists were talented, wealthy, or otherwise gifted fellows whose various addictions and encounters with bad karma would send them straight to the gutter if not to hell. Paperback original writers were by all rights supposed to be pros who wrote very nearly to order, but Goodis's morose thrillers came right from his

soul, emotional autobiography disguised as lurid melodrama.

Born in Philadelphia, Goodis graduated from Temple University. He published his first novel, *Retreat from Oblivion*, when he was 21. It was an ambitious work, a complex blend of history and psychology, but did not sell, and Goodis quickly abandoned academic literature for something that paid the rent—the pulps. He began selling stories to a variety of pulp titles and found that he had a facility for the work; he could produce story after story without a pause. He peddled hundreds of stories and novelettes in the early '40s. World War II was on and, apparently arbitrarily, he became a specialist in air war stories for such aviation pulps as *Dare-Devil Aces*, *Battle Birds*, and *Sky Raiders*.

When Goodis returned to the novel, it was with a smarter feel for the market and a more readable prose style.

It was a tough break. Parry was innocent. On top of that he was a decent sort of guy who never bothered people and wanted to lead a quiet life. But there was too much on the other side and on his side of it there was practically nothing. The jury decided he was guilty. The judge handed him a life sentence and he was taken to San Quentin.

Thus begins *Dark Passage*, a gripping, noir crime thriller about a man, wrongly convicted of murdering his wife, who breaks out of prison and tries to prove his innocence. Warner Bros. bought the film rights, and the writer-director Delmer Daves turned it into a classic film noir with Humphrey Bogart as Parry. Warner Bros. offered Goodis a screenwriting gig with the deal and he moved to Hollywood to write movies. In a town full of eccentric and colorful characters, Goodis more than held his own. He wore wrinkled and stained suits, preferred to sleep on friends' couches rather than find his own place, and pursued prostitutes in derelict neighborhoods. He wrote a couple of novels while in Hollywood, added bits and pieces to scripts on the Warner assembly line, and then, in 1950, unemployed and homesick, returned to Philadelphia—for good.

Needing to make a steady living from his typewriter again, he turned to what had replaced the pulps as the major market for journeymen storytellers, the paperbacks. Fawcett Gold Medal had just started publishing original fiction paperbacks, instead of the hardcover reprints that had previously been the norm for paperback houses. Goodis sold them *Cassidy's Girl*, a grim erotic melodrama. He followed it with *Street of the Lost* and *Of Tender Sin*, and became, along with John D. MACDONALD, Bruno FISCHER, and others, one of the prolific "Gold Medal boys," the new masters of tough, unsentimental crime fiction and gutter melodrama. Goodis would also write for Jim THOMPSON's regular publisher, Lion Books (which published *Black Friday*, *The Burglar*, and *The Blonde on the Street Corner*). Goodis's downbeat, neurotic, sleazy stories were perfect for Lion. Goodis's novels became instantly recognizable for their squalid settings and loser heroes hunted by past mistakes and tragedies.

Goodis's work continued to sell to the movies. *The Burglar* (one of the Lion titles) was brilliantly transferred to film by Paul Wendkos, from a screenplay by Goodis, on authentic Philadelphia and Atlantic City locations, with a cast that included Dan Duryea and Jayne Mansfield. Nearly as good was *Nightfall*, directed by Jacques Tourneur and starring Aldo Ray. The most famous and acclaimed film of a Goodis novel was produced not in Hollywood or Philadelphia but in France. *Down There*, a Gold Medal original, was about Eddie, a concert pianist turned alienated barroom piano player. A man who just wants to be left alone, Eddie is reluctantly drawn into other people's lives, with consequences he dreads and predicts. In the end, shattered by the murder of his lover, Eddie returns to the bar, where he seats himself at his cheap piano and stares into the void:

His eyes were closed. A whisper came from somewhere, saying, you can try. The least you can do is try.

Then he heard the sound. It was warm and sweet and it came from a piano. That's fine piano, he thought. Who's playing that?

He opened his eyes. He saw his fingers caressing the keyboard.

The book became François Truffaut's second feature film, called *Shoot the Piano Player* for its American release.

While readers tend to think of '50s paperback fiction as brisk and sensationalistic, Goodis's books were different: they had relatively little violent action, and scenes of violence and sexuality had a depressing rather than exhilarating or arousing tone. Throughout the cycle of '50s paperbacks, Goodis continually returned to the same settings and characters and told variations on the same story. Reading several Goodis titles in a row reveals the compulsiveness and repetition in the work, the recurring character types, the relentless cycle of failure, regeneration, and failure. The repetitions, however, were not the result of Goodis's lack of narrative imagination but of a painfully personal set of obsessions being worked out in the most anonymous of forums.

Works

Behold This Woman (1947); *Black Friday* (1954); *Blonde on the Street Corner*, *The* (1954); *Burglar*, *The* (1953); *Cassidy's Girl* (1951); *Convicted* (1954); *Dark Passage* (1946); *Down There* (1956), also published as *Shoot the Piano Player*; *Fire in the Flesh* (1957); *Moon in the Gutter*, *The* (1953); *Nightfall* (1947); *Night Squad* (1961); *Of Missing Persons* (1950); *Of Tender Sin* (1952); *Retreat from Oblivion* (1939); *Somebody's Done For* (1967); *Street of No Return* (1954); *Street of the Lost* (1952); *Wounded and the Slain*, *The* (1955)

Gould, Nat (1857–1919)

Another writer whose later obscurity would have seemed inconceivable to readers in his heyday, Gould was one of the most popular authors in the early years of the 20th century. Many of his novels sold a half-million copies in hardcover alone. "In the way of sales," wrote one journalist, "his books surpass all others—and we have heard that a newspaper purchasing serial rights of one of his stories could promise itself an increased circulation of 100,000 a day, no matter what its politics or principles." Gould wrote books on travel, history, sports, and various types of fiction, but he would

become best known as a writer of horse racing tales, short fiction and novels containing the tatty pageantry and colorful characters of the racetrack. In his time, Gould's name was all but synonymous with the turf, and when, in "The Rocking Horse Winner," D. H. Lawrence has a character invoke Gould's name, no further explanation was deemed necessary for contemporary readers (although since that time no doubt countless students have scratched their heads over this passing reference in the much-anthologized story).

The Lincolnshire-born Gould immigrated to Australia as a young man and spent more than 10 years there, working as a reporter on daily papers in Brisbane and Sydney, and starting his book-writing career, before returning to England. His first novel, *The Double Event* (1890), a racing tale of the Melbourne Cup, sold a very respectable 20,000 copies. Other early works reflected his Australian residence, including *Stuck Up* (1894), possibly the first fictional take on the life of Ned Kelly, the Aussie highwayman of legend. Gould went back to his homeland and continued to publish. By the end of the century he had hit it big with a series of thrillers and mysteries—each handwritten manuscript turned out, like a reporter's copy, at white-hot speed—set in the horse racing world. Many of Gould's works chronicled the adventures of a horse owner named Barry Bromley, his horse *Suspense*, and their continuing run-ins with the "nobbler" and cheats who try to keep them from winning. Gould appears never to have improved his prose style beyond the rudimentary readability of the daily newspaper, but his colorful, fast-moving stories, bought by the millions in the railway bookstalls throughout Britain, were clearly exactly what his many readers desired.

Works

Beating the Favorite (1925); *Chased by Fire: A Stable Mystery* (1905); *Dangerous Stable, A* (1922); *Dark Horse* (1899); *Dead Certainty, A* (1900); *Demon Twins, The* (1922); *Doctor's Double, The* (1896); *Exploits of a Racecourse Detective, The* (1927); *Famous Match, The* (1910); *Fast as the Wind* (1918); *Jockey Jack* (1930); *Jockey's Revenge, The* (1909); *Lad of Mettle, A* (1897); *Landed at Last* (1899); *Magpie Jacket: A Tale of the Turf* (1896); *Miner's Cup, The* (1935); *Pace That Kills, The* (1912);

Racecourse Tragedy, A (1901); *Racing Sinner, A* (1900); *Rajah's Racer* (1905); *Raymond's Ride* (1903); *Running It Off* (1892); *Seeing Him Through* (1900); *Silken Rein* (1902); *Stable Mystery and Other Stories, A* (1921); *Stolen Race, The* (1909); *Story of Black Bess, The* (1910); *Stuck Up* (1894); *Turf Conspiracy, A* (1916); *Warned Off* (1901); *Whip, The* (1919); *Who Did It?* (1896)

Green, Anna Katherine (1846–1935)

Anna Katherine Green is the "godmother" of the mystery/detective genre, generally credited as the first successful female writer in the genre, and an author whose long career was a human link between the birth and the modern era of detective fiction. Talk about your transitional figures—in the year Green was born Edgar Allan Poe was still alive, and in the year of her death Raymond CHANDLER's career as a hard-boiled pulp writer was already two years old. Although archaic by modern standards, Green was an innovator and one of the few major crime-writing names to sustain a career in both the 19th and 20th centuries.

Brooklyn bred and college educated, Green published her first novel, *The Leavenworth Case* (1878), at age 32. The crime story, set in a contemporary New York City, featured two male protagonists, the lawyer narrator and a venerable, bulky Manhattan police detective named Ebenezer Gryce. Green's debut was clever and creative by the standards of the day, and the author's sophisticated handling of a realistic murder case did much to position the police detective story as a respectable source of entertainment for middle-class American and British readers. Numerous popular adventures of policeman Gryce followed.

Green's work was considered vastly entertaining in her day, but more than a century later it offers little more than archaeological interest. At its worst it is weighed with the melodramatic excesses and heavy moralizing of the Victorian period. "It was as if a veil had been rent before her eyes," begins a sentence in *Hand and Ring* (1883):

. . . disclosing to her a living soul writhing in secret struggle with its own worst passions;

and horrified at the revelation, more than horrified at the remembrance that it was her own action of the morning which had occasioned this change in one she had long revered, if not loved, she sank helplessly upon her knees and pressed her face to the window in a prayer for courage to sustain this new woe and latest, if not heaviest disappointment.

After nearly 20 years of writing about Gryce, along with the occasional stand-alone title, Green decided to shake up her series formula with a formidable addition and innovation, the first female amateur-detective series character. The elderly, nosy spinster Miss Amelia Butterworth made her fictional debut in the 1897 publication *That Affair Next Door*. Butterworth, a caustical, arrogant, but essentially lovable busybody, witnesses the activities leading to the violent murder of a neighbor; she has soon made herself an unofficial addition to the police investigation led by old Ebenezer, to the chagrin of Gryce and every other man she encounters. In this and future cases to come, Butterworth is more a rugged individualist than a profeminist figure, and confronts gender-based condescension forthrightly: “While I am not lacking, I hope, in many of the fine feminine qualities which link me to my sex . . . I have but few of that sex’s weaknesses and none of its instinctive reliance upon others which leads it so often to neglect its own resources.”

Green’s readers found the sparring relationship between the stuffy, strong-willed “old maid” and the streetwise, often exasperated veteran cop vastly entertaining. She put a second Gryce-Butterworth investigation into print within a year. *Lost Man’s Lane* was a Gothic shocker in which the author sent Butterworth to check on the bizarre happenings in the neighborhood where a deceased friend’s children reside; Green threw child kidnapping, out-of-control vivisectionism, and a criminal lunatic into the creepy tale.

The Gryce-Butterworth adventures continued in several more sequels—and echoed, long after the original models had been forgotten, in the many “spinster detective” characters that followed, from Agatha Christie’s famous Miss

Marple to Stuart PALMER’s novels about the new York cop Oscar Piper and the schoolmarm Miss Hildegard Withers.

Green continued her innovations to the end. In short stories (collected in the volume *The Golden Slipper and Other Problems*, published in 1915) about a young, earnest, and impetuous private detective named Violet Strange, Green paved the way not only for the “girl detectives” of juvenile literature (Nancy Drew, the Dana Girls, Cherry Ames, and others) but also for such spiritual descendants as P. D. James’s Cordelia Gray.

Works

Agatha Webb (1899); *Amethyst Box, The* (1905); *Behind Closed Doors* (1888); *Chief Legatee, The* (1906); *Circular Study, The* (1900); *Cynthia Wakeham’s Money* (1892); *Dark Hollow* (1914); *Doctor, His Wife, and the Clock, The* (1895); *Doctor Izard* (1895); *Filigree Ball, The* (1903); *Forsaken Inn, The* (1890); *Golden Slipper and Other Problems for Violet Strange, The* (1915); *Hand and Ring* (1883); *House in the Mist, The* (1905); *House of the Whispering Pines, The* (1910); *Leavenworth Case, The* (1878); *Lost Man’s Lane* (1898); *Marked Personal* (1893); *Matter of Millions, A* (1890); *Mayor’s Wife, The* (1907); *Mill Mystery, The* (1886); *Miss Hurd: An Enigma* (1894); *Mystery of the Hasty Arrow, The* (1917); *Old Stone House and Other Stories, The* (1891); *Step on the Stair, The* (1923); *Strange Disappearance, A* (1880); *Sword of Damocles* (1881); *Three Thousand Dollars* (1910); *Woman in the Alcove, The* (1908); *XYZ* (1883)

Grey, Harry (Harry Goldberg)

(unknown)

Whatever resonance the name Harry Grey may now carry is almost entirely a result of the motion picture adaptation of his first book, *The Hoods* (1952). The long, blunt pulp “autobiography” of an immigrant Jewish criminal in prewar Manhattan became the epic, complex, poetic masterwork of the gangster film genre, *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984), directed by Sergio Leone.

An understandable cloak of mystery surrounded the exact number of facts behind Grey’s fictionalized memoir, but Grey (real name Harry Goldberg) had apparently lived much of the event-

ful, dangerous life he gave to his narrator in *The Hoods*. He was said to have spent time in Sing Sing prison, and, like the book's protagonist at the end of the story, eventually dropped out of his criminal world and went underground to save his life. Known only as Noodles in the book—or Noodles the Shiv—the hero relates, at length and in a stripped-to-essentials prose style (few paragraphs in the thick volume extend beyond two lines), how a tough ghetto boy from the bustling 1900s Lower East Side of New York grows up with his pals to become a ruthless Prohibition-era mobster. For all the primitive nature of the prose, *The Hoods* vividly conveys an insider's view of the scenery, a lowlife Manhattan of speakeasies, slums, whorehouses, and opium dens, through which the characters travel on their way to bloody oblivion.

Sergio Leone, the brilliant, innovative director of the Clint Eastwood spaghetti westerns, had cherished a dream of turning *The Hoods* into a film for more than a dozen years. When the project at last found a backer, he came from Rome to New York to try and meet with the elusive Mr. Grey. After some difficulty, a meeting was arranged. At a sordid New York bar Leone and his translator sat down with Grey, a seventyish Edward G. Robinson lookalike. Gradually, a conversation ensued. "The other people in the bar must have thought that we three, sitting beneath the neon Coca-Cola sign, were exchanging forbidden secrets. I'm surprised no one called the police. It was tough. . . . But after fifty minutes we had certainly entered the dark American night of Harry Grey." Out of this meeting Leone came up with the idea for the tangled, time-traveling structure of his adaptation of *The Hoods*, in which the events of the novel would become the reflections of Noodles as an old man, the remembrances of gangsterism past and their final impact on the present.

Grey's second book, *Call Me Duke*, was an equally long but more conventional story of gang youth. *Portrait of a Mobster* was the author's quasi-historical, fictionalized return to the world of Jewish gangsters in Prohibition-era New York, the story of the notorious Dutch Schultz. This, too, was filmed, in 1961, with a screenplay by writer Howard Browne (who reportedly hated Grey's book).

Works

Call Me Duke (1955); *Hoods, The* (1952); *Portrait of a Mobster* (1958)

Grey, Zane (1872–1939)

The name of Zane Grey is synonymous with the Old West. Born in Zanesville, Ohio, Grey was a New York City dentist who became the most famous western fiction novelist of his day. His successful tales of cowboys and Indians and outlaws and settlers played a key role in the worldwide establishment of the western as arguably the most popular genre—in print and on film—of much of the 20th century. His book titles alone still ring with the force of myth: *Riders of the Purple Sage*, *Code of the West*, *Thunder Mountain*, *West of the Pecos*. Grey established many of the precepts of the western, like the vaunted "code of the West," the heroic adherence to honor and loyalty and chivalry, and other shibboleths that resonated in the minds of readers and with the culture at large, transcending the author's invention to become a kind of perceived history. His position as the great, legendary chief of all writers of westerns is appropriate not only for his lasting influence but for the scope of his achievement. Grey's work cumulatively encompassed the American frontier experience—landscape and nature, pioneering, lawlessness and gunfighters, cattle drives, range wars, the problems of the Native Americans, the coming of telegraphs and railroads and boom towns, romance, racial intolerance, revenge, tragedy—in an epic vision of the West that dwarfed all other writers in the genre.

Grey's flaw, noted even in his heyday, was an antiquated prose style that owed too much to James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851) and other stolid writers of an earlier era and nothing to the vigor and immediacy introduced to American literature by Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Jack London, and others from whom Grey could have learned. Still, Grey had his creative virtues, including a journalistic thoroughness about research, much of it gathered from authentic residents of the Wild West whom Grey interviewed and befriended

when he began touring the actual locations in the 1900s. Grey also was socially modern (if erratically so), with enlightened views of the Indians and the their mistreatment by the American government.

Although Zane Grey is no longer widely read and his status as the all-time best-selling writer of westerns was long ago taken over by Louis L'AMOUR, he remains a totemic figure, one of the great folklorists of American history.

Works

Arizona Ames (1932); *Betty Zane* (1903); *Black Mesa* (1955); *Border Legion, The* (1916); *Boulder Dam* (1963); *Call of the Canyon, The* (1924); *Captives of the Desert* (1952); *Code of the West* (1934); *Deer Stalker, The* (1949); *Desert Gold* (1913); *Desert of Wheat, The* (1919); *Drift Fence, The* (1933); *Fighting Caravans* (1929); *Forlorn River* (1927); *Hash Knife Outfit, The* (1933); *Heritage of the Desert, The* (1910); *Ken Ward in the Jungle* (1912); *Knights of the Range* (1939); *Last of the Plainsmen, The* (1908); *Last Trail, The* (1909); *Light of the Western Stars, The* (1914); *Lone Star Ranger, The* (1915); *Lost Wagon Train* (1936); *Majesty's Rancho* (1938); *Man of the Forest, The* (1920); *Maverick Queen, The* (1950); *Mysterious Rider, The* (1921); *Nevada* (1928); *Raiders of the Spanish Peaks* (1938); *Rainbow Trail, The* (1915); *Reef Girl, The* (1977); *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912); *Robbers' Roost* (1932); *Rogue River Feud* (1948); *Rustlers of Pecos County, The* (1914); *Shadow on the Trail* (1946); *Shepherd of Guadalupe* (1930); *Spirit of the Border, The* (1906); *Stairs of Sand* (1943); *Sunset Pass* (1931); *30,000 on the Hoof* (1940); *Thundering Herds, The* (1925); *Thunder Mountain* (1935); *To the Last Man* (1922); *Trail Driver, The* (1936); *Twin Sombreros* (1941); *U.P. Trail, The* (1918); *Under the Tonto Rim* (1926); *Valley of the Wild Horses* (1947); *Vanishing American, The* (1925); *Wanderer of the Wasteland* (1923); *Western Union* (1939); *West of the Pecos* (1937); *Wildfire* (1917); *Wild Horse Mesa* (1928); *Wolf Trackers, The* (1930); *Wyoming* (1953); *Young Lion Hunter, The* (1911); *Young Pitcher, The* (1911)

"Griff"

(unknown)

Like Madonna or Batman, he had a one-word moniker, sometimes framed by quotation marks, sometimes not. He was Griff—or "Griff"—"U.S.

ace crime reporter" and the million-selling author of some of the liveliest and most popular fiction published in the heyday of paperback pulp in Great Britain. Griff, the Yank tough guy with the inside track on crime, wrote of gangsters, killers, white slavers, dope dealers, and other rough stuff from the mean streets of America. Griff took you "bang into the Vice Dens!" and let you see "Real Life smashing into your own. Exposing the degrading methods of prostituting Beautiful Girls to earn fabulous Fortunes for the Vile Owners of some of the World's worst places of Vice . . ." Griff, like most of the "American" authors of postwar English paperbacks, was in reality an Englishman, or a series of Englishmen, among them Ernest McKeag, William Newton, and Frank Fawcett, who banged out the novels to order, usually in less than two weeks.

Griff's debut followed on the heels of Hank JANSON and Ben Sarto, two previous writers of hard-boiled, sexy action for the early paperback houses that began to thrive just after World War II. These writers in turn were followed the model created by James Hadley CHASE, the first Englishman to make a fortune parroting the tough-guy snarl and blood-and-sex formula of U.S. crime pulp. The first "Griff" book, *Rackets Incorporated*, published in 1948, was written by Ernest McKeag, who moonlighted from his job as a children's magazine editor to write sexy novels under the name of Roland Vane. McKeag's hero was originally a newspaperman but was turned into a private eye for subsequent adventures. William Newton took on Griff's identity with the fourth title in the series, and by the time of the 10th, *Hot Shot Rita*, published in April 1950, Frank Fawcett—also known as Ben Sarto, another popular paperback author—was behind the byline, writing most of the Griff books for the next three years. According to the Fawcett fan and British publishing historian Steve Holland, it was Fawcett who really pushed up Griff's sales with his intensely readable style, and gave the series an occasional creative high point, as in his *Demon Barber of Broadway*, which transferred the old Sweeney Todd story to New York. Fawcett gave up the Griff series early in 1953, and it fizzled out of existence a few months later.

Works

Backalley Blonde (1952); *Bad as Could Be* (1952); *Brooklyn Moll Shoots Bedmate* (1951); *Bullets for Snoopers* (1953); *Cage of Corruption* (1953); *Caribbean Cutie* (1953); *City of Lost Women* (1953); *Come and Get Me* (1949); *Crooked Coffins* (1952); *Curves Can Cast Shadows* (1953); *Dames Don't Forget* (1949); *Dared by a Dame* (1953); *Dead Bones Tell Tales* (1953); *Demon Barber of Broadway* (1953); *Devil's Daughter* (1952); *Dope Is for Dopes* (1949); *Eastern Men, Chicago Women* (1951); *From Dance Hall to Opium Dive* (1950); *Goodbye Tomorrow* (1952); *Hank Tries the Sidewalk* (1953); *Hell Bomb Floozies* (1951); *Hijack That Dame* (1950); *Hot-Shot Rita* (1950); *I Spit on Your Grave* (1953); *Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye* (1952); *Main Street Morgue* (1953); *Molls Mean Murder* (1949); *Murder by Contract* (1951); *Night Patrol* (1953); *Only Mugs Die Young* (1948); *Poisonous Angel* (1953); *Quick of the Dead, The* (1953); *Rackets Incorporated* (1948); *Rubout Specialty* (1949); *She Had It Coming* (1951); *She Paid 'Em Off* (1951); *Shoot to Live* (1953); *Silver Key, The* (1953); *Some Rats Have Two Legs* (1950); *Stiffs Can't Squeal* (1950); *That Room in Camden Town* (1953); *Too Tough to Live* (1952); *Trading with Bodies* (1950); *Vice Queens on Broadway* (1951); *You Pay the Price* (1952)

Gruber, Frank (1904–1969)

At the end of a busy and successful career as author, movie screenwriter, and television producer, Frank Gruber reflected on his creative beginnings. For a small-press compilation of some of his early pulp magazine stories, published in 1966 as *Brass Knuckles*, Gruber wrote a lengthy introduction about his years as a struggling would-be storyteller. This in turn led to an expanded memoir which Gruber called *The Pulp Jungle*, published by Sherbourne in 1967. The book is a fascinating document, not least as one of the more unusual firsthand accounts of life in New York City in the throes of the Great Depression, but also for its rare, uniquely revealing look at the subculture of the 1930s pulp writer. Gruber describes a hand-to-mouth existence of grubby hotel apartments, Automat dinners of ketchup and hot water, days and nights spent pounding

the typewriter, and a slow, bumpy struggle to get a foot—and a manuscript—in the door at one of the penny-a-word (or less) pulp publishers that lined the avenues of Manhattan. Along the way Gruber meets most of the characters who supplied a large percentage of the material for that golden age of the pulps, most living within a few subway stops of one another in New York, a quirky brotherhood of determined pros able to churn out publishable product on a weekly, if not daily, basis—some headed for fame and fortune, most to remain obscure.

In *The Pulp Jungle*, Gruber makes no case for himself as an artist, stressing instead the need for formula, market savvy, and diligence. In his memoir Gruber comes off less like a writer than a grimly determined traveling salesman, and, indeed, his product would appear to have had a limited shelf life. Over time, nearly all of the hundreds of stories, novels, television episodes, and movies Gruber wrote were forgotten by all but a small cognoscenti. His tough mysteries never quite ranked with the hard-boiled favorites; his once-popular westerns were marginalized and then ignored. But like many other pulp craftsmen who never found personal fame or lasting popularity, Gruber is not without merit. His best stories have a driving readability, a zesty pace, amusing tough-guy dialogue, and lively lowlife characters.

Although he continued to write for publication until the end of his life, long after his Hollywood work gave him the bulk of his income, Gruber's most enjoyable fiction is the early stuff—the actual pulp magazine work like the Oliver Quade stories for *Thrilling Detective* and *Black Mask* (collected in *Brass Knuckles*) about a door-to-door encyclopedia salesman who stumbles into weird crime cases across the country; and his first crime novels, with their terse, wisecracking prose and breakneck pace. Best of all are the early books in the Johnny Fletcher/Sam Cragg series, the adventures of a pair of ne'er-do-well book peddlers (Gruber's bibliophilia shows up frequently in his stories)—especially *The Honest Dealer*, set in a pre-boom Las Vegas, and the first in the series, *The French Key*, in which Gruber put to creative use his experiences as a flat broke resident of seedy Manhattan residential hotels.

Works

Big Land, The (1957); *Bitter Sage* (1954); *Brass Knuckles* (1966); *Bridge of Sand* (1963); *Broken Lance* (1949); *Brothers of Silence* (1962); *Buffalo Box, The* (1942); *Buffalo Grass* (1956); *Bugles West* (1954); *Bushwhackers* (1959); *Curly Wolf, The* (1969); *Dawn Riders, The* (1968); *Etruscan Bull, The* (1969); *Fighting Man* (1948); *Fort Starvation* (1953); *Fourth Letter, The* (1947); *French Key, The* (1940); *Gift Horse, The* (1942); *Gold Gap, The* (1968); *Greek Affair, The* (1964); *Gunsight* (1942); *Highwayman, The* (1955); *Honest Dealer, The* (1947); *Hungry Dog, The* (1941); *Johnny Vengeance* (1954); *Laughing Fox, The* (1940); *Leather Duke, The* (1949); *Limping Goose, The* (1954); *Little Hercules* (1965); *Lock and the Key, The* (1948); *Lonesome Badger, The* (1954); *Lonesome River* (1957); *Man from Missouri, The* (1956); *Market for Murder* (1947); *Marshal* (1958); *Mighty Blockhead, The* (1942);

Murder '97 (1948); *Navy Colt, The* (1941); *Outlaw* (1941); *Peace Marshall* (1939); *Pulp Jungle, The* (1967); *Quantrell's Raiders* (1954); *Rebel Road* (1954); *Run Fool Run* (1966); *Scarlet Feather, The* (1948); *Silver Tombstone, The* (1945); *Simon Lash, Private Detective* (1941); *Smoky Road* (1949); *Spanish Prisoner, The* (1969); *Swing Low Swing Dead* (1964); *Tales of Wells Fargo* (1958); *Talking Clock, The* (1941); *This Gun Is Still* (1967); *Twon Tamer* (1958); *Twenty Plus Two* (1961); *Twilight Man* (1967); *Wanted* (1971); *Whispering Master, The* (1947); *Zane Grey: A Biography* (1970)

As Stephen Acre:

Yellow Overcoat, The (1942)

As Charles K. Boston:

Silver Jackass, The (1941)

H

Haggard, H. Rider (1856–1925)

One of the uncontested immortals of pop storytelling, Sir Henry Rider Haggard reigned nearly supreme as a writer of adventure and fantastic fiction from the time of his first sensational best-seller, *King Solomon's Mines*, published in 1886, until his death some 39 years later. He is most closely identified with the still largely unmapped “Dark Continent” setting of *Solomon's Mines*, its sequels, and assorted other titles, but his lingering reputation as the author of “African adventures” does not do justice to an astonishingly varied and imaginative body of work. Haggard's stories melded elements as disparate as contemporary travelogues, ancient folklore, histories, the Bible, Norse sagas, and scientific and anthropological speculation. His settings ranged from Iceland to the South Seas, and journeyed back in time as far as ancient Egypt and the Ice Age. His impact and influence were enormous; without Haggard there would have been no Edgar Rice BURROUGHS, no Talbot MUNDY, no Robert E. HOWARD, no A. MERRITT, nor innumerable other writers who followed his lead with exotic adventure-fantasies on a grand scale.

Henry Rider Haggard was born at Bradenham Hall in Norfolk, England, to a wealthy landowning family. The Haggard bloodline included Jewish and Indian relations, which may have influenced his relatively open-minded and curious approach to other races and religions throughout his work—a

rarity in the conservative, racist atmosphere of imperialist England. Rider was apparently treated as the weakest link among his parents' eight children, and was denied the good private school education that was offered to his male siblings. He pursued a law degree with little enthusiasm, abandoning his studies at 19 to take a position in South Africa, where he worked as a secretary in the office of the governor of Natal province. In various administrative posts he remained in the region for more than five years, time enough to travel widely and to absorb the sights and legends of Africa. It was said that he had also found time for a love affair with an African woman, a relationship that might have contributed to his sympathetic and discerning depiction of many of the African characters in his future work. Returned to England, Haggard completed his legal studies but showed little interest in practicing his profession. He married a wealthy Norfolk woman and made plans to return to South Africa as a gentleman farmer, but the increasing turbulence in that part of the world—from the Zulu rebellion to the Boer War—did not appeal to his wife, and they settled down in the English countryside.

Still reluctant to begin a law career, Haggard turned to writing. His first books were undistinguished: *Dawn*, a coming-of-age saga in three tedious volumes, and *The Witch's Tale*, slightly better, with his first use of the African setting for which he would become famous. The appearance of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* changed Haggard's literary direction, firing his

imagination and looming as a challenge to his own dreams of literary success. As the legend has it, Haggard bet his brother that he could write a book every bit as good as or better than Stevenson's. The brother took the bet, and Haggard, in six weeks, in a white heat of concentration, wrote *King Solomon's Mines*.

Like Stevenson's pirate tale, Haggard's was a romantic adventure about a hunt for treasure in an exotic land, in this case the author's beloved Africa, using the landscapes and legends he knew from his time there, including aspects of the ancient kingdom of Zimbabwe. Allan Quatermain, a veteran hunter, agrees to lead two Englishmen, Sir Henry Curtis and Captain John Good, in search of Curtis's brother, who has gone missing on an expedition to find the lost treasure of King Solomon. In vivid, thrilling prose, Haggard sends the trio of adventurers, with a mysterious African guide, across a daunting landscape of desert and mountain, on to the unknown land of the Kakuanas, into the middle of a civil war and a fight for royal succession, a savage battle, and at last to the awesome treasure trove of the title.

The book made Haggard an instant celebrity. Haggard's novel and its follow-ups would be crucial to a revolutionary upheaval in popular literature, the move away from sprawling family and social dramas and towards a new imaginative romanticism in literature.

King Solomon's Mines was a hard act to follow, but Haggard would arguably top it with a novel published two years later, in 1887—the remarkable *She*. While *King Solomon's Mines* had proceeded as an essentially realistic adventure story, anchored by the commonsensical persona of Allan Quatermain, *She's* venture into “darkest Africa” was a woozy, hallucinatory journey into the purely fantastical realm of a lost kingdom and an eternal white goddess/queen, She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed. Haggard's lush, hypnotic prose proceeded towards a delirious climax as the bizarre “amour fou” unravels and *She* disintegrates in the Flame of Life while her lover looks on in horror.

With these two books, Haggard secured his place in literature: in more than a century since they were originally published, the books have never been out of print.

But there was much more to come. Publishing one to three books a year for decades, Haggard continued to write at the speed and intensity with which he created his first best-sellers, though often—said the critics—at the expense of quality and intelligibility. There were the inevitable sequels to the first hits: *Allan Quatermain*, *Allan's Wife*, *The Treasure of the Lake*, *Allan and the Ice-Gods* (a stunningly weird adventure in which Allan ingests a hallucinogenic drug and finds his mind transported to the body of a prehistoric caveman); the *She* follow-ups, *Ayesha: The Return of She*, *Wisdom's Daughter*, and a volume bringing *Ayesha* and *Quatermain* together, *She and Allan*. Haggard wrote many more novels with an African setting, including the outstanding *Nada the Lily*, an epic account of King Shaka of the Zulus. Assorted stand-alone titles pursued the “lost race” theme Haggard had invented with *She* (and which would inspire works by numerous other authors as well): *The People of the Mist* (1894), *The Yellow God* (1908), and *Heu-Heu; or, The Monster* (1924). He wrote historical fiction on a varied canvas that included the ancient Holy Land, ancient Egypt, and Mexico at the time of the Spanish conquest (the amazing *Montezuma's Daughter*). He wrote a fictional biography of Queen Cleopatra and, with the editor and historian Andrew Lang, the impressive *The World's Desire*, a sequel to Homer's *Odyssey*. He traveled widely for inspiration and to research new settings, including extensive tours of Egypt, the Holy Land (scene of *The Pearl Maiden*, his epic historical novel about Christ's followers), and Iceland, where, under the northern lights, he conceived his own Norse saga, *Eric Brighteyes*, another masterpiece of fantastic adventure.

Writing and researching an unending stream of novels was not enough to occupy Haggard's mind, and in addition he dabbled in politics (running unsuccessfully for Parliament) and social concerns, writing and lobbying on the subjects of agricultural experimentation and colonial reforms. A complex character, Haggard contained within him the conventional thinking and prejudices of the straitlaced Victorian gentry along with enlightened ideas about race and foreign cultures and an abiding interest in mysticism (encouraging the no-

tion that his ability to recreate the consciousness of ancient times was an offshoot of reincarnation).

Three of Haggard's siblings followed him into print—Andrew Haggard, Edward Haggard, and their sister Eleanora, who wrote under her married title as Baroness Albert D'Anethan; all three, like their brother, wrote fiction in exotic settings such as Egypt and Japan, they had experienced firsthand, but none had anything like Rider's worldwide success.

In recognition of Haggard's accomplishments, particularly his social work through the years, the author was knighted in 1912. When he died in 1925 at the age of 68, Haggard had four completed novels stockpiled, completed far ahead of his publisher's schedule.

Works

Allan and the Ice-Gods (1927); *Allan Quatermain* (1887); *Allan's Wife* (1889); *Ancient Allan* (1920); *Ayesha: The Return of She* (1905); *Beatrice* (1890); *Belshazzar* (1930); *Benita* (1906); *Black Heart and White Heart* (1900); *Brethren, The* (1904); *Call to Arms* (1914); *Child of Storm* (1913); *Church and State* (1895); *Cleopatra* (1889); *Colonel Quaritch* (1888); *Dawn* (1884); *Days of My Life, The* (1926); *Dr. Thorne* (1898); *Eric Brighteyes* (1891); *Fair Margaret* (1907); *Farmer's Year, A* (1899); *Finished* (1917); *Gardener's Year, A* (1905); *Ghost Kings, The* (1908); *Heart of the World* (1895); *Heu-Heu* (1924); *Holy Flower, The* (1915); *Ivory Child, The* (1916); *Jess* (1887); *Joan Haste* (1895); *King Solomon's Mines* (1885); *Lady of Blossholme* (1909); *Love Eternal* (1918); *Lysbeth* (1901); *Mahatma and the Hare, The* (1911); *Maiwa's Revenge* (1888); *Marie* (1912); *Mary of Marion Isle* (1929); *Montezuma's Daughter* (1893); *Moon of Israel* (1918); *Morning Star* (1910); *Mr. Meeson's Will* (1888); *Nada the Lily* (1892); *Pearl-Maiden* (1903); *People of the Mist, The* (1894); *Queen of the Dawn* (1925); *Queen Sheba's Ring* (1910); *Red Eve* (1911); *Regeneration* (1910); *She* (1987); *She and Allan* (1921); *Smith and the Pharaohs* (1920); *Stella Freglius* (1904); *Swallow* (1898); *Spring of Lion, The* (1899); *Tale of Three Lions, A* (1877); *Treasure of the Lake* (1926); *Virgin of the Sun* (1922); *Way of the Spirit, The* (1906); *Wanderer's Necklace, the* (1914); *When the World Shook* (1919); *Winter Pilgrimage, A* (1901); *Wisdom's Daughter* (1923); *Witch's Head, The* (1884); *Wizard, The* (1896); *World's Desire, The* (with Andrew Lang) (1890); *Yellow God, The* (1908)

Hallas, Richard (Eric Knight)

(1897–1943)

"No one is sane here," says Quentin Genter, the alcoholic, unpredictable movie director in *You Play the Black and the Red Comes Up* (1938), "here" being Southern California. "No one is sane and nothing is real." Richard Hallas took what was an already established literary (East Coast) view of the West Coast as an amoral, crackpot alternative universe and wedded it to the stripped-down prose style and tabloid plot devices of James M. CAIN's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. The result was *You Play the Black*, a delirious, lightning-fast, corrosively funny novel, a kind of tough-guy *Alice in Wonderland*, if Alice was an army-deserting, freight-hopping, opportunistic schmo and Wonderland was Hollywood, U.S.A. Lewis Carroll's characters had nothing on Hallas's bizarre cast of showbiz weirdos, criminals, scam evangelists, and sleazy politicians. The jumpy plot involved murder, robbery, confidence games, bogus religious rites, gambling dens, sex, more murder, a murder trial, and a suicide. To some critics the book was so over-the-top it seemed a burlesque more than a legitimate work of fiction, a notion made more evident by the fact that the author, whose real name was Eric Knight, was British, giving a rollicking imitation of what was supposed to be a strictly Yankee style. "It is indicative of the degree to which this kind of writing has finally become formularized," wrote the critic Edmund Wilson, "that it should have been possible for a visiting Englishman . . . to tell a story in the Hemingway-Cain vernacular almost without a slip." Aggravating the unlikeliness of it all, Hallas/Knight would later write the sentimental dog story *Lassie, Come Home*.

Hallas came, wrote, and conquered in this one hard-boiled classic and published nothing else in the genre. Settled in America, he joined the U.S. Army during World War II and died in transit to the war zone when his plane crashed in South America.

Works

You Play the Black and the Red Comes Up (1938)

Hamilton, Edmond

(1904–1977) *Also wrote as: Hugh Davidson*

One of the young pioneers of science fiction, in particular the branch known as space opera, Edmond Hamilton was a near-ubiquitous name in the SF pulps from the 1920s until their virtual extinction in the 1950s. (He continued to write for them in their more mature afterlife as digests, until his own demise.)

In fact, Hamilton first made his name in the magazine better known for its horror and fantasy stories, *Weird Tales*. Born in Youngstown, Ohio, the writer was 21 when he sold *Weird Tales* his first story, “The Monster God of Mamurth.” It had been rejected once by editor Farnsworth Wright, and Hamilton had taken a year to tinker with it before sending it in again and getting it accepted. That first story, of a creature within a mysterious temple setting, was typical of the magazine’s supernatural offerings. But with his second offering, Hamilton took *Weird Tales* into new, unexplored territory. His “Across Space,” published in three installments, dealt with a colony of Martians on Easter Island conspiring to bring the rest of their kind to Earth. The magazine bought more of Hamilton’s work, stories that expanded the definition of a still-amorphous genre—stories like the epic “Crashing Suns,” which featured grand-scale settings, an interstellar alliance, and alien protagonists. He continued to write unusual and breathlessly readable stories for the magazine for many years, sometimes under the pseudonym of Hugh Davidson (with stories about psychic detective Dr. John Dale). In the 1940s he returned to the fold after some time away, and came through with another group of fascinating tales that played off elements of Norse, Irish, and other mythologies.

He joined the *Amazing Stories* roster in 1928 with the story “The Comet Doom,” and became a regular contributor to all of the SF pulp titles of pioneering publisher Hugo Gernsback. Year after year he turned out eye-widening imaginative tales like the time-traveling “The Man Who Saw the Future” and his many stories of the Earth at risk, a motif that earned him the somewhat derisive nickname of “World-Wrecker” Hamilton. Later, he wrote the first SF hero pulp about spaceman Curt

Newton, or Captain Future—“the most dynamic space-farer the Cosmos has ever seen!” The stories were popular with young science fiction fans and eventually, for a time, Hamilton moved from fiction writing to write comic books aimed at children, including *Superman* and *Batman*. A brilliant man with a photographic memory, Hamilton amazed writer friends with his ability to remember the tiniest details of every story he had ever read (critics said this aided his tendency to repeat himself in his plots). A caustic wit and something of a cynic, he wrote his stories quickly and with little revising. Some other writers in the field, such as Jack WILLIAMSON, believed that Hamilton seldom lived up to his great potential as a writer (“Very little of his work shows the full range of his mind”). Hamilton married a fellow SF writer (and notable screenwriter), Leigh BRACKETT, in 1946, and the pair lived happily together, mostly on a farm in Ohio, for the rest of their lives.

Works

Battle for the Stars (1961); *Beyond the Moon* (1950); *Calling Captain Future* (1967); *Captain Future and the Space Emperor* (1967); *Captain Future’s Challenge* (1969); *City at World’s End* (1951); *Closed Worlds* (1968); *Comet Kings, The* (1969); *Crashing Suns* (1965); *Danger Planet* (1967); *Doomstar* (1966); *Fugitive of the Stars* (1965); *Galaxy Mission* (1967); *Harpers of Titan, The* (1973); *Horror of the Asteroid, The* (1936); *Magician of Mars, The* (1968); *Monsters of Juntenheim, The* (1950); *Murder in the Clinic* (1945); *Outlaws of the Moon* (1969); *Outlaw World* (1968); *Outside the Universe* (1964); *Planets in Peril* (1969); *Quest Beyond the Stars* (1968); *Return to the Stars* (1970); *Star Kings, The* (1949); *Star of Life, The* (1959); *Sun Smasher, The* (1959); *Tharkol, Lord of the Unknown* (1950); *Tiger Girl* (1945); *Valley of Creation, The* (1964); *Weapon from Beyond, The* (1967); *What’s It Like Out There?* (1974); *World of the Starwolves* (1968)

Hammett, Dashiell (Samuel Dashiell Hammett)

(1894–1961)

In a single 10-year period of extraordinary creativity (followed, equally extraordinarily, by 30 years of writer’s block), Dashiell Hammett produced a se-

ries of short stories and five novels that remain among the benchmarks of American genre fiction. The author of *The Maltese Falcon*, *Red Harvest*, and *The Thin Man*, Hammett is at once a founding father of the hard-boiled crime story and arguably its foremost literary stylist. Before Hammett, the detective story was a fairly bloodless form, a kind of literary parlor game. Hammett changed all that. With hard, precise language and authentic-seeming crime-solvers—not brainy, eccentric aristocrats, as was common—Hammett brought the real world into the mystery genre.

Born in St. Mary's County, Maryland, on May 27, 1894, the largely self-educated Samuel Dashiell Hammett at age 20 answered a help-wanted ad in a Baltimore newspaper and became an employee of the Pinkerton's National Detective Service. As a gun-toting Pinkerton, for the next several years he roamed the country on a variety of assignments, from missing persons and "wandering husband" cases to violent strikebreaking assignments. World War I interrupted his detective work, and it was during his stint in the army that Hammett was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Following long-term, but unsuccessful, treatment in military hospitals, he returned to civilian life in San Francisco and there attempted to fulfill a long-nurtured dream of becoming a writer. After some false starts with literary vignettes and melodrama in a Southeast Asian setting, Hammett soon recognized the value of his colorful Pinkerton experience as potential subject matter. Finding a sympathetic home for his work in *Black Mask*, a pulp magazine that at that time offered mystery, detective, and cowboy fiction, Hammett introduced the distinctive style and approach that would change the face of American mystery writing.

His recurring protagonist and narrator, an unnamed operative for the Continental Detective Agency ("The Continental Op," as the magazine would dub him), was an urban professional—tough, street-smart, conversant with both sides of the law. Unlike the other mystery-writing contributors to the *Black Mask*, Hammett the former Pinkerton knew the actual ways and means of crime and detection. His stories were colorful and had plenty of car chases and shootouts and sexy dames to entertain the thrill-seeking reader, but



Dashiell Hammett was a founding father of the hard-boiled crime story. (Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin)

the overall effect was realistic, not fanciful. Hammett's innovative writing—the sentences icy cold, full of understatement and absent overt emotion, the dialogue sharp and cynical—had the ring of truth. This was how criminals really talked and how a real detective did his job.

In 1927 Hammett's first novel-length work, a story featuring the Op called *The Cleansing of Poisonville*, was published serially in *Black Mask* beginning with the November issue. As much a gangster epic as a detective mystery, *Poisonville* tells of a Montana mining town completely run by criminals and the Op's attempt to destroy them by pitting one rival gang against another. The novel contains—in the unbowdlerized serial version—26 murders, and writing as spare and clear as any

in the history of American fiction. As *Red Harvest*, the novel was published in book form by Alfred A. Knopf in 1929. In the next three years, *Black Mask* would introduce three more Hammett novels: *The Dain Curse*, *The Glass Key* (another groundbreaker, detailing mob involvement in big-city politics), and *The Maltese Falcon*. The latter, the ultimate hard-boiled detective caper, featured the private eye Sam Spade and a dazzling opposition—lush femme fatale Brigid O’Shaughnessy and the homosexual troika of rotund Casper Gutman, gungel Wilmer, and perfumed Levantine Joel Cairo—in their ultimately futile pursuit of “the black bird.”

Hammett’s fifth and final novel was *The Thin Man*, published in 1934. This was the famous tale that introduced Nick and Nora Charles, whose spirited, sparring relationship was based upon the real life duo of Hammett and his long-time lover, the writer Lillian Hellman (1905–1984). Nick is a former detective now living happily on the wealth of his loving wife Nora, but he is drawn back into the fold during a drunken visit to New York at Christmastime by an old friend with a missing relative. Though often criticized by hard-boiled fans for having a lighter, more frivolous tone than Hammett’s other work, *The Thin Man* is in fact as excellent and original as any of the other novels, with tough, smart prose, precisely etched characters, and vivid settings (high-life and lowlife Manhattan at the tail end of Prohibition), along with brilliant and in this case sometimes hilarious dialogue. MGM bought Hammett’s novel and immediately turned it into a film, starring William Powell and Myrna Loy as an unforgettable Nick and Nora—five sequels followed. As entertaining as the novel and highly influential, *The Thin Man* movie helped initiate the “screwball comedy” trend that featured squabbling, wisecracking romantic duos, and made viable the notion of a sexy married couple.

Perhaps even more influential in Hollywood history was an adaptation of *The Maltese Falcon* (in fact, the third version in 10 years), filmed in 1941 by writer-director John Huston, with Humphrey Bogart as Sam Spade. The critical and commercial success of this tough private-eye thriller—a mystery as hard-boiled as any gangster picture—would

spark the era of dark, daring crime films that became known as film noir.

Hammett himself was on the sidelines by this time, unable or unwilling to produce another novel after 1933. He lived a largely dissipated life on movie money and royalties, and later on the largesse of Lillian Hellman. Sickly from tuberculosis and 47 years old, he still managed to serve a hitch in the army during World War II, stationed in the frigid Aleutian Islands. In the early ’50s, as a sometime marxist and political activist, he became a target of anticommunist witch-hunters and was railroaded into a five-month federal prison stay for contempt of court. He died in 1961, broke, with all of his work out of print in his own country. He lives on as one of popular fiction’s immortals, an artist and innovator.

Works

STORIES

“Afraid of a Gun” (1924); “Assistant Murder, The” (1926); “Bodies Pile Up” (1923); “Corkscrew” (1925); “Creeping Siamese” (1926); “Crooked Souls” (1923); “Dead Yellow Women” (1925); “Death and Company” (1930); “Farewell Murder, The” (1930); “Fly Paper” (1929); “4,106,000 Blood Money” (1927); “Golden Horseshoe, The” (1924); “Gutting of Couffignal, The” (1925); “House in Turk Street, The” (1924); “It” (1923); “Man Called Spade, A” (1932); “Man Who Killed Dan Adams, The” (1924); “New Racket” (1924); “One Hour” (1924); “Ruffian’s Wife” (1925); “Scorched Face, The” (1925); “Tenth Claw, The” (1924); “Zigzags of Treachery” (1924)

As Peter Collinson:

“Arson Plus” (1923); “Road Home, The” (1922); “Slippery Fingers” (1923); “Vicious Circle, The” (1923)

BOOKS

Adventures of Sam Spade and Other Stories (1944); *Big Knockover: Selected Stories and Short Novels, The* (edited by Lillian Hellman) (1966); *Continental Op, The* (1945); *Continental Op, The* (edited by Steven Marcus) (1974); *Dain Curse, The* (1929); *Dead Yellow Women* (1947); *Glass Key, The* (1931); *Hammett Homicides* (1946); *Maltese Falcon, The* (1930); *Man Named Thin and Other Stories, A* (1951); *Nightmare Town* (1948); *Red Harvest* (1929); *Return of the Continental Op, The* (1945); *Thin Man, The* (1934); *Woman in the Dark* (1933)

Harris, Clare Winger

(1891–?)

Harris is one of the significant and more mysterious figures in the history of science fiction. She is significant as one of the pioneers of modern SF in the 1920s and as the first female to write for Hugo Gernsback's groundbreaking first SF pulp, *Amazing Stories*. She is mysterious in that she disappeared from the publishing scene for many years, reappeared briefly to publish her only book, and then vanished forever.

Harris sold her first piece of fiction, "A Runaway World," to *Weird Tales* and subsequently contributed several more stories to that magazine. Her fiction for Gernsback's publications included the prizewinning "Fate of the Poseidonia," the highly regarded "A Baby on Neptune" (written with Miles Breuer), and the anthologized "The Miracle of the Lily," a centuries-spanning tale of the Earth's destruction by insects, with a sardonic conclusion that illustrates the fluid definition of the term *pest*.

The 11 science fiction stories Harris wrote for the pulps were gathered together in a volume published in 1947, *Away from the Here and Now*. The collection met with acclaim by SF fans, but it would turn out to be the last known work of the author, who disappeared from the scene shortly after the book's release.

Works

Away from the Here and Now (1947)

Haycox, Ernest

(1899–1950)

Ernest Haycox was one of the most highly regarded authors of western fiction, a skilled and serious writer to whom critics and readers awarded—however condescendingly—consideration as a "real" novelist instead of another purveyor of lowly cowboy stories. Without doubt, Haycox worked to transcend the hackneyed in his work, avoiding the standard white hat–black hat shoot-'em-up clichés. His best work contained engrossing, original plots, strong, three-dimensional characters, and unusual

and authentically detailed backgrounds. By the time he published *Canyon Passage* and *Bugles in the Afternoon*, Haycox was less a writer of westerns—in the tradition of Clarence Mulford and Luke SHORT—than a fine historical novelist.

Born in Portland, Oregon, Haycox joined the military as a young teen and saw action in Europe in World War I. He subsequently earned a degree from the University of Oregon, then spent some time as a reporter before starting to sell fiction to the pulp magazines, beginning in the mid-1920s. A few years after that Haycox was contributing regularly to the more lucrative slick magazines such as *Collier's* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. It was *Collier's* that published his "Stage to Lordsburg," a tense, character-rich account of a stagecoach journey through hostile Indian territory. The story became one of the most famous and acclaimed movies in Hollywood history, *Stagecoach* (1939), directed by John Ford.

Haycox roamed all over the western landscape, including the standard horse opera settings of Arizona and the Dakotas, but he was especially fond of his own home state, Oregon, a region seldom used in the normal run of western fiction. In such works as *Canyon Passage* (1945) and *The Earth Breakers* (1952), he brought to life Oregon's spectacular wilderness and colorful history. Like "Stage to Lordsburg," *Canyon Passage* became a classic film, directed in rich Technicolor by Jacques Tourneur. Several other Haycox works were turned into A-budget films, including his great *Trouble Shooter*, centered on the building of the transcontinental railroads, which became the melodramatic Cecil B. DeMille epic *Union Pacific* (1939), and *Man in the Saddle* (1938), a terrific vehicle for Randolph Scott in the 1950s, directed by Andre DeToth. A more lackluster film was made from Haycox's *Bugles in the Afternoon* (1944), but the novel is possibly the greatest literary take on General Custer and the Little Big Horn.

Works

Adventurers, The (1954); *Border Trumpet, The* (1939); *Bugles in the Afternoon* (1944); *Canyon Passage* (1945); *Chafee of Roaring Horse* (1930); *Dead Man Range* (1957); *Earth Breakers, The* (1951); *Free Grass* (1929); *Lone Rider* (1959); *Man in the Saddle* (1938); *Murder on*

the Frontier (1952); *Outlaw* (1953); *Powder Smoke and Other Stories of the West* (1966); *Return of a Fighter* (1952); *Riders West* (1934); *Rim of the Desert* (1939); *Rough Justice* (1950); *Silver Desert* (1935); *Starlight Rider* (1933); *Trail Smoke* (1936); *Trail Town* (1941); *Trouble Shooter* (1937); *Whispering Range* (1930); *Wild Bunch, The* (1943)

Henry, O. (William Sydney Porter)
(1862–1910)

O. Henry retains a mythic status for the style of his short stories, with their surprise endings, sudden, unexpected reversals and comic or poignant ironies found in such legendary tales as “The Gift of the Magi,” “The Clarion Call,” and “Ransom of Red Chief.” Although he is generally thought of as a chronicler of turn-of-the-century Manhattan and a quintessential New Yorker, he came to the city only in middle age, after spending most of his life in the South and in Texas. He was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, where he worked for some time as a pharmacist. He drifted to Texas, took jobs as a ranch hand, did some newspaper reporting, and for a couple of years worked as a bank teller in Austin. The bank eventually accused him of embezzlement. O. Henry fled to Honduras; then, when his wife became ill, he was forced to return to the United States, where he faced the consequences. It was during a three-year stretch in a federal penitentiary that he developed his skill as a writer and adopted the pen name that would become internationally famous.

He settled in New York City about 1902 and began to find recognition and financial success for his clever, floridly written stories and their notorious twist endings. The rich cross-section of humanity and criminal characters in 1900s New York populated most of his work, but O. Henry also specialized in stories of the Wild West, taking advantage of his firsthand experiences as a Texas cowboy. At least one of O. Henry’s western stories would have a lasting impact. In “The Caballero’s Way,” Henry introduced a lovable Mexican range rogue known as the Cisco Kid. Cisco would go on to a long life as the protagonist of a long-running movie western series and television program.

O. Henry’s style would have a lingering influence on the short story form as well as on radio and television dramas (most notably on the twist-ending-fixated *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* TV program of the 1950s and 1960s).

Works

Cabbages and Kings (1904); *Cops and Robbers* (1948); *Four Million, The* (1906); *Gentle Grafter, The* (1908); *Heart of the West* (1907); *Let Me Feel Your Pulse* (1910); *Options* (1909); *Roads of Destiny* (1909); *Rolling Stones* (1912); *Sixes and Sevens* (1911); *Strictly Business* (1910); *Two Women, The* (1910); *Voice of the City, The* (1908); *Waifs and Strays* (1917); *Whirligigs* (1910)

Hervey, Harry
(1900–1951)

“Zamboanga. A savage, lyrical beauty in the name,” Harry Hervey wrote in the travelogue *Where Strange Gods Call* (1924), in a typical outburst of romantic enthusiasm for all things foreign, exotic, dangerous. “The first time I saw it on the map, printed in italics across the end of Mindanao and the Sulu Sea, it gave me an exquisite thrill. Immediately, regardless of distance or place, it seemed associated with Zanzibar and Mombasa, those ports of black men and ivory and spices. Here, I said to myself, is a town where high adventure waits; and I shall go there one day while I am still young.”

Hervey went to Zamboanga eventually, and to Japan, China, Burma, and assorted teeming ports and lush tropic islands of Asia and the Pacific, and to Africa, and who knows where. In spirit he never returned. Hervey gathered a career’s worth of memories, sights, smells, and stories from regions that all but a few Americans knew only as the “mysterious East” or “darkest Africa.” He used his travel experiences in his writing for the rest of his life. Even in *Black Mask* magazine, for which Hervey was one of the first regular writers, he managed to use his favorite exotic places, with stories set in Tibet and Burma. His first books were novels with exotic settings, full of fresh lore and authentic detail from the East, doing nothing to spoil the reader’s wildest imaginings: *Caravans by Night* (1922), a romantic adventure of the remote Hi-

malayas, and *The Black Parrot* (1923) a “yellow peril” thriller set in Java and Borneo. Subsequent journeys to the “Dark Continent” expanded his fictional landscape.

The African-set *Iron Widow* (later published under the blunter title *She Devil*) was Hervey’s most outrageous and entertaining novel, the relentlessly lurid tale of a Foreign Legion prison camp in a living hell somewhere up the Senegal River, a tense setting made all the more volatile by the presence of two voluptuous and frisky females. Hervey’s evocative prose and traveler’s experience brought to vivid life a savage, exotically seedy setting of sun-baked villages; markets full of rancid foodstuffs and thick with flies; mud-hut brothels; sorcerers peddling gris-gris of giraffe horn and bat dung; and camel caravans loaded down with gold dust and bales of ostrich feathers.

Hervey worked for the Hollywood studios beginning in the late 1920s, writing scripts and supplying original ideas. Unsurprisingly, he specialized in adventure and romance in exotic and colonial locales. The typical Hervey hero wore a pith helmet, slept in a hammock, and was seldom far from a swaying palm tree. Some of the films to which he contributed included *Prestige* (1932), *The Devil and the Deep* (1932), *Green Hell* (1940), the Marlene Dietrich classic *Shanghai Express* (1932), and the first of the Bob Hope–Bing Crosby “road pictures,” *The Road to Singapore* (1940).

Hervey continued to publish until his death in the ’50s, but World War II and events that followed had made passé the sort of romantic, otherworldly view of the foreign on which his career had thrived in print and on the screen.

Works

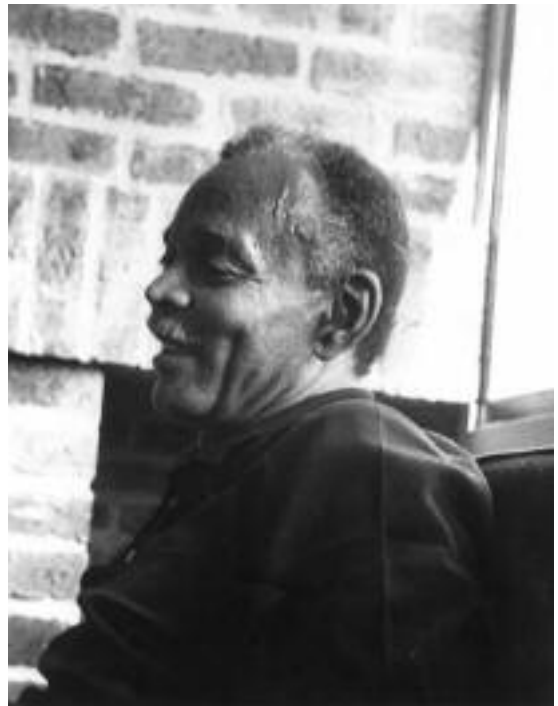
Black Parrot, The (1923); *Caravans by Night* (1922); *Iron Widow, The* (also published as *She Devil*) (1932); *Red Ending* (1929); *Red Hotel* (1932); *Where Strange Gods Call* (1924)

Himes, Chester

(1909–1984)

Born in Jefferson City, Missouri, in 1909, Chester Himes was the son of educated, middle-class par-

ents who raised him well and sent him off to college, which in that era was still a rare opportunity for many young Americans. A decent and substantial life should have been Himes’s future but for a violent temper, wide antisocial streak, and the critical fact that his skin was black. He ended up a criminal, serving a long sentence at Ohio State Penitentiary for armed robbery. He spent part of the sentence learning to write, and in 1934 he sold a prison story, “Crazy in the Stir,” to *Esquire* magazine. Other sales to the magazine followed. Himes worked on a novel but had difficulty selling it. He wandered to California and took factory and menial jobs. Life remained tough and embittering. Out of his experiences in World War II-era Los Angeles he wrote another novel, his first to be published: *If He Hollers Let Him Go*. The book with its unblinking account of racist America, read like an open wound. Himes followed it with several



Chester Himes created the black detectives Coffin Ed Johnson and Grave Digger Jones. (*Roslyn Targ Literary Agency*)

other grimly autobiographical novels, all painful, enraged works.

After many years of failing to overcome or come to terms with the humiliation of being non-Caucasian in the United States, and thinking to follow in the footsteps of other restless American artists, including Richard Wright (1908–1960), the acclaimed black novelist (*Native Son*) to whom he was sometimes compared, Himes set off for Europe. He wandered from France to Spain and elsewhere and wrote another angry book that drew heavily from his own experience (*The Primitive*), then, in the mid-1950s, settled for a long stay in Paris. Badly in need of income, Himes jumped at the offer of a sympathetic French editor named Marcel Duhamel for him to write a detective story for the publisher Gallimard's line of hard-boiled, mostly American crime fiction. He came up with a setting—Harlem, the legendary heart of black America, and the one Negro neighborhood the average European was likely to have heard about. He came up with his ostensible crime solvers, two ferocious, cynical but honest black detectives he named Coffin Ed Johnson and Grave Digger Jones. And he came up with a plot, an intricate series of cons and crimes laced with scenes of caustic humor and even outright farce. The result was a pop fiction masterpiece, called, in America, *For Love of Imabelle*, and the start of one of the greatest of all crime fiction series.

Following his editor's suggestions ("Like motion pictures. Always the scenes are visible. . . . We don't give a damn who's thinking what—only what they're doing. . . . Don't worry about it making sense. That's for the end. Give me 220 typed pages . . .") Himes wrote in a straightforward, cinematic prose style that could be easily and quickly translated into French, giving each scene a fast pace with little introspection or digression. *Imabelle* and the books that followed were hard, brutal, and viciously funny, with some of the most vivid and exciting action sequences ever written. Himes himself was not very familiar with the real Harlem, but created through his imagination an outlandish, teeming setting of larger-than-life characters and life-and-death situations, with Coffin Ed and Grave Digger like a dour Greek chorus following the absurd and dangerous developments and then stepping

in just as chaos reaches epic proportions. Himes's "serious" novels had been filled with evidence of his greatness as a writer, but the author's anger sometimes got the better of his art. Writing escapism under the imposed limitations of the French Série Noir crime line, Himes was necessarily cut off from the ordeal of autobiography and the responsibility of explicit sociological truth-telling (although these action thrillers were full of offhand critiques of American realities). His humor, talent for satire, and storytelling skill were unleashed. The series was fantastic.

Himes stuck with the Harlem detective novels for 10 years or so, publishing no other novels except for a delightfully raunchy comic sex novel for Olympia Press, *Pinktoes*, a kind of interracial version of *Candy* (1964), by Terry Southern and Mason Hoffenberg. The crime novels gave him fame and a degree of financial security, although the series remained much better known in Europe than in America—at least until a moderately successful film version of *Cotton Comes to Harlem* was released in 1970. In the mid-1960s, by which time Himes had had several return visits to his homeland and America had become engulfed in a violent civil rights struggle, Himes found it more difficult to sustain the fun and exhilaration of the early books in the series. In *Blind Man with a Pistol*, the two strands of his writing career—the crime pulp and the novels of social protest and autobiography—came together as one. A final, unfinished work, posthumously published as *Plan B*, took things even farther, with an apocalyptic civil war between blacks and whites and the careers of Coffin Ed and Grave Digger ended in blood and madness.

Himes spent his last years in coastal Spain, and a street near his final residence was named in his honor.

Works

(dates of first English-language publication)

All Shot Up (1960); *Black on Black* (1973); *Blind Man with a Pistol* (1969); *Case of Rape, A* (1980); *Cast the First Stone* (1953); *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (1965); *Crazy Kill, The* (1959); *For Love of Imabelle* (1959), also published as *A Rage in Harlem*; *Heat's On, The* (1966); *If*

He Hollers Let Him Go (1945); *Lonely Crusade* (1947); *My Life of Absurdity* (1976); *Pinktoes* (1965); *Plan B* (1993); *Primitive, The* (1955); *Quality of Hurt, The* (1972); *Real Cool Killers, The* (1959); *Run Man Run* (1966); *Third Generation, The* (1954)

Hitt, Orrie (unknown)

In the 1950s and 1960s, the golden age of paperback sleaze, the name Orrie Hitt was scattered across the wire racks in cigar stores, tenderloin newsstands, and other venues for softcore softcovers. Hitt was a workhorse, churning out one book after the other, as many as his publishers would buy. But unlike so many other paperback hacks of the '50s, Hitt did not spread himself thin by writing in an assortment of genres and chasing after new trends. Sordid, "adults only" literature was his specialty, and he stuck to it with all the dedication of a monk. Hitt established a relationship with one publisher in particular, Beacon Books, the best in the business at that time (if "best" is at all an applicable word for the sort of thing Beacon produced). Knowing he had a regular buyer for his work, Hitt lost no time in worrying about marketing and simply focused on his art.

He resided in a small town in upstate New York, working full time for his muse. He followed a grinding regimen of 12-hour days in front of an aged Remington Royal typewriter perched on the kitchen table. He wrote while surrounded by noisy children and a constant supply of Winston cigarettes and iced coffee. His only respite was to eat supper or to watch wrestling or *Sergeant Bilko* when they came on the television. Hitt produced a novel every two weeks, for which he was paid very little, sometimes \$250. Most of his writing was done on the fly—think up a good title, a few hot situations, and start typing. Only occasionally would he feel the need to go out into the world and do some practical research, such as the time he visited a nudist colony before writing *Nudist Camp* (a Beacon Book—"They Worshipped Nature in the Raw"), although he claimed he did not disrobe during his visit. One had to maintain a certain journalistic objectivity in such circumstances.

Hitt's lively body of work—highly prized by vintage paperback collectors—included such classics as *Dolls and Dues* ("The Sordid Story of a Union Boss and His Women—Timely as Tomorrow"), *Trailer Tramp* (winner of Beacon's prestigious Award of Excellence), *Ellie's Shack* ("They Were Always Peeking and Pawing at Her. How Could a Girl Stay Good?"), and *Girls' Dormitory* ("A Scathing Attack on the Evils of Off-Campus Housing—And Co-Eds Obligated to Live in Dangerous Proximity!"). Hitt's novels mapped a sordid universe of "heels" and "tramps," characters with all the incandescent glamor of a 15-watt bulb.

Works

Add Flesh to the Fire (1959); *Affairs of a Beauty Queen* (1958); *Affair with Lucy* (1959); *As Bad as They Come* (1959); *Autobiography of Kay Adams* (1962); *Bed Crazy* (1962); *Burlesque Queen* (1958); *Cabin Fever* (1953); *Call Me Bad* (1960); *Call South 3300: Ask for Molly* (1958); *Carnival Girl* (1959); *Carnival Sin* (1962); *Cheat, The* (1958); *Cheaters, The* (1959); *Color of Lust, The* (1964); *Dial "M" for Man* (1961); *Dirt Farm* (1961); *Doctor and His Mistress, A* (1960); *Dolls and Dues* (1957); *Easy Women* (1961); *Ellie's Shack* (1958); *Ex-Virgin* (1961); *Four Women* (1961); *Frigid Wife* (1961); *From Door to Door* (1960); *Girl of the Streets* (1959); *Girls' Dormitory* (1958); *Hot Cargo* (1958); *I'll Call Every Monday* (1954); *Inflamed Dames* (1963); *Ladies Man* (1957); *Lady Is a Lush, The* (1960); *Loose Women* (1964); *Love Season, The* (1961); *Love Thief* (1961); *Lust Prowl* (1964); *Mail Order Sex* (1961); *Married Mistress* (1961); *Motel Girls* (1960); *Never Cheat Alone* (1960); *Nudist Camp* (1959); *Passion Hunters, The* (1964); *Passion Pool* (1964); *Peeper, The* (1959); *Peeping Tom* (1961); *Playpit* (1962); *Private Club* (1959); *Promoter, The* (1957); *Pushover* (1957); *Rotten to the Core* (1958); *Sexurbia County* (1960); *Shabby Street* (1954); *Sheba* (1959); *She Got What She Wanted* (1954); *Sin Doll* (1959); *Suburban Sin* (1959); *Suburban Wife* (1958); *Sucker, The* (1957); *Summer Hotel* (1958); *Summer of Sin* (1961); *Tawny* (1959); *Teaser* (1957); *Tell Them Anything* (1960); *Too Hot to Handle* (1959); *Torrid Cheat* (1962); *Torrid Teens, The* (1960); *Trailer Tramp* (1957); *Trapped* (1958); *Twin Beds* (1962); *Two of a Kind* (1960); *Unfaithful Wives* (1957); *Unnatural Urge* (1962); *Untamed Lust* (1960); *Wayward Girl* (1960); *Widow, The* (1959); *Wild Oats* (1958); *Woman Hunt* (1958)

Hogan, Robert J.

(1897–1963)

Born in Buskirk, New York, the son of a minister, Robert Jasper Hogan grew up with the airplane: the flying machines came into their own as he came into manhood. On a summer trip to a Colorado ranch called the G-8, Hogan took his first flight. It was all he had imagined and more. With America's entry into World War I, Hogan trained in the fledgling air corps, but never made it into combat overseas. Hogan remained in aviation, however, as a booster and demonstration pilot for some of the early airplane manufacturers. The stock market crash of 1929 sent the burgeoning aircraft industry into a tailspin, and Hogan began looking around for other ways of making a buck. He had read some stories in one of the aviation pulp magazines that had sprung up in the wake of Charles Lindbergh's transatlantic flight and the cultural craze for anything that flew. In the time-honored tradition which has inspired so many would-be writers through the years, Hogan reportedly threw down the magazine he was reading and declared, "I can do better than that."

Not long after that, Hogan sent a story to *Wings* magazine and received in return a check for \$65. Robert J. Hogan was now a writer. He turned out more air war stories and wrote cowboy stories and sports stories as well. Hogan became a favorite of Popular Publications' head man Henry Steeger. After the publishing firm Street & Smith had such a great success with their single-hero pulp, *The Shadow*, Steeger wanted to publish some similar hero pulps of his own. The first two of these would be released with an October 1933 cover date. One was about another mysterious avenger, the Spider. The other was more original in concept, combining elements of the air war, horror, and superhero genres. The brainchild of Robert J. Hogan, it was to be called *G-8 and His Battle Aces*.

The first issue of *G-8*, with a stunning cover by Frederick Blakeslee, made it quite clear that this was not going to be ordinary air ace pulp. The cover showed a moonlit view of two war planes chasing a giant bat, the hero strapped to one of the rodent's massive wings. Inside, Bob Hogan's story, "The Bat Staffel," began in the dungeon of

Freiburg Castle at the height of the bloody world war. About to be executed, superspy G-8 wangles a meeting with the man who would become his most frequent adversary in the issues ahead, the evil Herr Doktor Krueger. The doctor, like all arrogant villains, feels compelled to reveal his top secret plans to G-8 before killing him. The Germans, it seems, are about to unleash the "poison breath" of the great bats of the Jura caves, a breath so deadly that a few canned drops—as Krueger demonstrates—shrink a guinea pig to dust. Now, with this intelligence to relay, G-8 must escape, using the doctor as a shield and heaving the canister of bat breath at the guards.

Aided in his escape by two passing fliers—future Battle Aces Nippy Weston and Bull Martin—G-8 returns to Paris headquarters, where General Pershing gives him a mandate to destroy the doctor's fiendish plan. In Hogan's account of World War I, America and her allies were ever on the verge of being destroyed by the enemy's terrifying experimental weaponry: that giant bat with the deadly bad breath, a skeleton ray, a dragon, a lightning machine, a chemical that turns humans into mummies, zombies, robots, wolf-men, hawk-men, tiger-men, and Martians. Each month in the pages of *G-8*, the fearless superspy and his devil-may-care flying buddies, Nippy and Bull, fought and defeated whatever the Kaiser could come up with from his bizarre arsenal.

G-8 was a hit with young readers, and Hogan had himself a regular assignment for a full-length *G-8* adventure every month. He was paid \$700 for each story, and earned as much as \$1,000 when the series was at its peak of sales. Hogan wrote pulp fiction for other magazines as well, and briefly he was given another novel-length assignment with a different single-character pulp, *The Mysterious Wu Fang*, concerning the misdeeds of an Asian villain. For a time Hogan's pulp output was thought to exceed 2 million words a year, more than any other writer in the business. Hogan made enough from this tremendous amount of prose to afford two houses, one in New Jersey, the other in Florida, where he worked six days a week from nine A.M. to six P.M., sometimes dictating his words to the two secretaries he employed. It was a credit to Hogan's readable prose and great imagination

that G-8 managed to last right through a new, second world war, by which time the background and aircraft in the pulp were hopelessly outdated. The final issue, featuring the story "Wings of the Death Tigers," was dated June 1944.

With G-8's demise, Hogan turned to writing western novels and had some success in selling fiction and nonfiction to the high-paying slick magazines like the *Saturday Evening Post*. Although he had intended the G-8 work as a way to pay the bills until he could write more serious works, Hogan's "flying spy" turned out to be his great contribution after all. Until his death, Hogan would hear from people, especially pilots and air force veterans, eager to tell him how reading the adventures of G-8 as children had inspired the course of their lives.

Works

Apache Landing (1965); *Challenge of Smoke Wade, The* (1952); *Hanging Fever* (1965); *Night Riders' Moon* (1971); *Renegade Guns* (1953); *Roaring Guns at Apache Landing* (1952); *Stampede Canyon* (1958); *Wanted: Smoke Wade* (1958)

G-8 NOVELS

Ace of the White Death (1933); *Aces of the Damned* (1938); *Bat Staffel, The* (1933); *Black Aces of Doom, The* (1938); *Black Buzzard Flies to Hell, The* (1939); *Black Wings of the Rave, The* (1939); *Blizzard Staffel, The* (1934); *Blood Bat Staffel, The* (1936); *Bloody Wings for a Sky Hawk* (1940); *Bloody Wings of the Vampire, The* (1938); *Bombs from the Murder Wolves* (1943); *Cave Man Patrol, The* (1935); *Claws of the Sky Monster* (1935); *Condor Rides with Death, The* (1938); *Curse of the Sky Wolves* (1936); *Damned Will Fly Again, The* (1940); *Death Is My Destiny* (1941); *Death Monsters, The* (1935); *Death of the Hawks of War* (1941); *Death Rides the Ceiling* (1936); *Death Rides the Last Patrol* (1939); *Death Rides the Midnight Patrol* (1940); *Devil's Sky Trap, The* (1944); *Dragon Patrol, The* (1934); *Drome of the Damned, The* (1937); *Dynamite Squadron, The* (1934); *Falcon Flies with the Damned, The* (1939); *Fangs of the Serpent* (1938); *Fangs of the Sky Leopard* (1937); *Fangs of the Winged Cobra* (1941); *Flames of Hell, The* (1938); *Flight from the Grave* (1937); *Flight of the Death Battalion* (1939); *Flight of the Dragon* (1937); *Flight of the Green Assassin* (1937); *Flight of the Hell Hawks* (1937); *Flying Coffins of the*

Damned (1938); *Gorilla Staffel, The* (1935); *Green Scourge of the Sky Raiders, The* (1940); *Hand of Steel, The* (1937); *Headless Staffel, The* (1935); *Here Flies the Hawk of Hell* (1940); *Horde of the Black Eagle* (1941); *Horde of the Wingless Death* (1941); *Hurricane Patrol, The* (1934); *Invisible Staffel, The* (1934); *Mad Dog Squadron, The* (1934); *Midnight Eagle, The* (1934); *Panther Squadron, The* (1934); *Patrol of the Cloud Crusher* (1936); *Patrol of the Dead, The* (1936); *Patrol of the Iron Hand* (1938); *Patrol of the Iron Scourge* (1939); *Patrol of the Mad* (1936); *Patrol of the Murder Masters* (1937); *Patrol of the Phantom* (1938); *Patrol of the Purple Clan* (1937); *Patrol of the Sky Vulture* (1938); *Patrol to End the World* (1943); *Purple Aces* (1933); *Raiders of the Red Death* (1941); *Raiders of the Silent Death* (1939); *Red Fangs of the Sky Emperor* (1939); *Red Skies for the Squadron of Satan* (1940); *Red Wings for the Death Patrol* (1940); *Satan Paints the Sky* (1938); *Scourge of the Sky Beast* (1936); *Scourge of the Sky Monster* (1943); *Scourge of the Steel Mask* (1937); *Skeleton Patrol, The* (1934); *Skeletons of the Black Cross* (1936); *Skies of Yellow Death* (1936); *Sky Coffins for Satan* (1940); *Sky Guns for the Murder Master* (1940); *Sky Serpent Flies Again, The* (1939); *Spider Staffel, The* (1934); *Squadron of Corpses* (1934); *Squadron of the Damned* (1940); *Squadron of the Flying Dead* (1941); *Squadron of the Scorpion* (1935); *Staffel of Beasts, The* (1935); *Staffel of Floating Heads* (1935); *Staffel of Invisible Men, The* (1935); *Sword Staffel, The* (1935); *Three Fly with Satan* (1939); *Vampire Staffel, The* (1934); *Vengeance of the Vikings* (1937); *Vultures of the Purple Death* (1936); *Vultures of the White Death* (1937); *White Wings for the Dead* (1940); *Winds of the Juggernaut* (1935); *Winged Beasts of Death* (1943); *Wings for the Dead* (1938); *Wings of Invisible Doom* (1936); *Wings of Satan, The* (1936); *Wings of the Black Terror* (1939); *Wings of the Death Monster* (1944); *Wings of the Death Tigers* (1944); *Wings of the Doomed* (1941); *Wings of the Dragon Lord* (1940); *Wings of the Hawks of Death* (1943); *Wings of the Iron Claw* (1943); *Wings of the White Death* (1939); *X Ray Eye, The* (1935)

Holland, Marty (Mary Holland) (unknown)

Marty Holland is now remembered only as the story source for a classic film noir of the 1940s, the sleazily romantic *Fallen Angel*, directed by Otto

Preminger and starring Alice Faye as a small-town spinster, Linda Darnell as a doomed good-time girl, and Dana Andrews in his greatest performance as a down-at-heels, self-loathing con man. The screenplay by Harry Kleiner made a number of changes to the original, which was not quite so corrosive and placed more weight on the shoulders of the policeman (a line on a paperback reprint of the novel described it as “The Story of a Big City Detective and a Small Town Virgin”). Holland’s second novel, *The Glass Heart* (also published as *Her Private Passions*), like the first, showed the lingering influence of James M. CAIN: a lowlife drifter who insinuates himself into a California household, assorted craven characters, a murder plot, and some daring (for the time) sexual encounters. *The Glass Heart*’s antihero is introduced in paragraph one with a wonderfully sordid incident, bidding his time at the counter of a “ritzy hash joint in Beverly Hills,” waiting for a sucker to walk in with an expensive coat he can steal. One arrives—a nice camel hair—and the protagonist grabs it on his way out, but half the diner gives chase after the coat thief. Like William Holden in the later *Sunset Boulevard*, the pursued hero runs into the driveway of a haunted old house and an eccentric old lady who takes him in as a handyman, and so the plot kicks in. The unfolding story uses bits and pieces from three or four Cain novels, but the effects are softer, Hollywood-influenced, lacking the force and harsh edges of the real thing (although Cain himself, perhaps sincerely flattered by the imitation, gave the book a nice jacket blurb: “Raw, unadorned, a little brutal, here is the authentic melodrama of the American scene . . .”). The two books were fairly successful and both were popularly reprinted as paperbacks (*Fallen Angel*, in its Novel Library edition, as *Blonde Baggage*, with a wonderfully literal cover illustration—a lush blonde crammed into an open suitcase, one of the great collectible softcover editions of the era).

The Marty Holland byline disguised the author’s real name and gender. She was Mary Holland, and little else seems to be known about her. A third novel appeared in 1949 as a paperback original, *Darling of Paris* (“Story of Passion, Violence and an American Singer in France”). The rest is silence.

Works

Darling of Paris (1949); *Fallen Angel* (also published as *Blonde Baggage*) (1945); *Glass Heart, The* (also published as *Her Private Passions*) (1948)

Hope, Anthony (1863–1933)

The 1880s and 1890s were decades of a glorious renaissance for romantic literature. One year after another in this period saw the publication of remarkable works of exciting pop fiction, works so distinct in their imaginative universe—from *Treasure Island* to *Dracula* to *She* to *The Invisible Man*—that they became instant archetypes, new models for entertainment (not only on the page but eventually in the theater, comic books, and motion pictures). One of these was Anthony Hope’s *The Prisoner of Zenda*, first published in 1894, the fourth of five books Hope published that year. Though contemporary in setting, this tale of heroism, derring-do, and regal intrigue in the spirit of Alexandre Dumas and Sir Walter Scott was a self-consciously anachronistic piece in the last years before the 20th century, a modern swashbuckler looking back with fondness and respect to a time of swinging swords, noblesse oblige, and chivalry.

A ripping yarn if ever there was one, *Prisoner* dealt with the extraordinary adventure of a vacationing English sportsman who becomes drafted into the dangerous palace intrigues of a tiny Mittel-Europa kingdom called Ruritania (the name itself would become a euphemism for any obscure, postage-stamp-sized country). The Englishman, as it happens, is an exact lookalike for the king, and only by his temporary impersonation of the monarch will the court insiders be able to keep the crown from the head of the evil would-be usurper known, tellingly, as Black Michael. Hope’s dazzling narrative includes a memorable cast of characters, from the beautiful Princess Flavia, the monarch’s intended, to the resolute king-tender Fritz von Tarlheim, to the impudent scoundrel Rupert Rassendyll, the pretend king, proves to be nobler, cleverer and sexier than the real thing—to the nontitled reader’s obvious satisfaction.

The Prisoner of Zenda was a tremendous hit (allowing Hope to give up his law practice and write full time) and later proved equally successful on the stage and in several motion picture adaptations, most memorably starring Ronald Colman in the dual-role lead and Douglas Fairbanks Jr. as a particularly dashing incarnation of the villainous Rupert.

Hope wrote other adventure romances through the years, but none had the impact of *The Prisoner of Zenda*. A sequel to his best seller, called *Rupert of Hentzau*, continued the plotting and intrigue in Ruritania, and was highly entertaining, though it never matched the storytelling perfection of the original. Like *Zenda*, this was produced on the stage (adapted by Hope himself) but a film version—planned by David Selznick in Hollywood after the success of the Colman production—was never made.

Works

Captain Dieppe (1900); *Chronicles of Count Antonio* (1895); *Cut and a Kiss, A* (1899); *Dolly Dialogues, The* (1894); *Father Stafford* (1891); *Frivolous Cupid* (1895); *God in the Car, The* (1894); *Great Miss Driver, The* (1908); *Half a Hero* (1893); *Indiscretion of the Duchess, The* (1894); *Intrusions of Peggy, The* (1902); *King's Mirror, The* (1899); *Lady of the Pool, The* (1894); *Little Tiger* (1925); *Love's Logic and Other Stories* (1908); *Lucinda* (1920); *Man of Mark, A* (1890); *Mrs. Maxon Protests* (1911); *Phroso* (1897); *Prisoner of Zenda, The* (1894); *Quisante* (1899); *Rupert of Hentzau* (1898); *Second String* (1910); *Servant of the Public, The* (1905); *Simon Dale* (1898); *Sophy of Kravonia* (1906); *Sport Royal and Other Stories* (1893); *Tristram of Blent* (1901)

Horner, Lance

(1902–1966) *Also wrote as: Kyle Onstott*

Lance Horner found success, and a degree of notoriety, late in life with the publication of the Falconhurst series, historical fiction of a most sensational sort about the slaves and the slave owners on a sprawling slave-breeding plantation in pre- and post-Civil War Alabama. Horner had been an advertising man with one novel to his credit when he collaborated with a septuagenarian dog-show

judge named Kyle Onstott on the creation of the best-selling saga, which began with *Mandingo*, published in 1957. *Drum* followed in 1962 and then an assortment of sequels, written by Horner alone (Onstott died in 1966) and later by Harry Whittington (writing as Ashley Carter) after Horner passed away in 1973.

Filled with ostensibly authentic historical detail, the episodic narratives centered on various periods in the life of the decadent Hammond Maxwell, from youth through his tumultuous reign as master of Falconhurst. The books presented a kind of savage “upstairs-downstairs” view of plantation life, dramatizing the brutality, selfishness, and sexual perversity of the whites and the suffering, anger, degradation, and sexual hunger of the blacks. The Falconhurst books were at least nominally sympathetic to the enslaved and condemnatory of slavery and the slave-owning class, although the scenes of torture, rape, and sexual subjugation were presented with an enthusiasm worthy of a psychotic Klansman. Then again, no proper racist could take much satisfaction in the series cast of depraved, slaving white people nor in the depiction of the constant sexual allure, often consummated, between virile slaves and Caucasian Southern females. The bloody retribution of the blacks in *Drum's* apocalyptic slave revolt might also have caused some discomfort for the reader/bigot.

Whether the authors hoped to deliver some kind of message in their violent, erotic saga is not entirely clear. Away from Falconhurst, Horner showed a continued interest in slavery in novels set in ancient Rome, and Onstott's previous books—the ones not about beekeeping—did concern breeding, although the focus was on dogs and not humans. The timing of the series, just as the civil rights movement and violent opposition to it were catching fire in the United States, may have fanned the books' popularity, but to most of the millions of readers of the series, it was likely enjoyed merely as titillating, taboo-busting entertainment with a nihilistic edge. Excessive and semipornographic as the Falconhurst series was, it could at least be credited as a bracing alternative to that earlier best-seller about the antebellum South, Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*

(1936), and its sentimental fantasy of benevolent slavers, maternal mammies, and devoted field hands.

Works

Black Sun, The (1967); *Child of the Sun* (1966); *Flight to Falconhurst* (1971); *Golden Stud* (1975); *Heir to Falconhurst* (1968); *Mahoud, The* (1969); *Mistress of Falconhurst* (1973); *Mustee, The* (1967); *Rogue Roman* (1965); *Street of the Sun, The* (1956)

As Kyle Onstott:

Drum (1962); *Mandingo* (1957); *Master of Falconhurst* (1964)

As Lance Horner and Kyle Onstott:

Falconhurst Fancy (1966)

Howard, Robert E.

(1906–1936) *Also wrote as: Sam Walser*

Robert E. Howard, one of the great discoveries of the magnificent pulp magazine *Weird Tales*, wrote larger-than-life fantasy adventure tales for most of his brief but dazzling career. Much of his work belongs to a genre now called “sword and sorcery,” a category Howard himself helped to invent.

Robert Ervin Howard was born in 1906 in the small Texas town of Paster. When he was nine, the family moved to another small community, Cross Plains, where he would live with his mother and father for the rest of his life. Interested in writing from a very early age, he was greatly inspired by books of western lore. The pulps had begun to come into their own as Howard reached his teen years. It was the heyday of *Adventure* magazine, *Western Story*, and other publications that offered a battery of new, imaginative, and innovative fiction writers, like Talbot MUNDY, with his combination of exotic locales, bizarre adventures, and touches of the occult and the magical, and his fearless, mighty superhero from the ancient world, the seafaring Tros of Samothrace; Harold Lamb, with his sweeping historical sagas and thundering warriors, Gordon Young, with his two-fisted, nihilistic, globe-trotting warriors; and H. P. LOVECRAFT, with his grim, disturbing horror stories and their stark

portrayals of evil. These and other writers of the day would spark Howard’s own bursting imagination to empower his writing and the amazing body of work to come.

It was to Lovecraft’s pulp home, *Weird Tales*, that Howard made his first professional sale, “Spear and Fang,” which was printed in the July 1925 issue. It was a momentous occasion. Howard would become a regular contributor to *Weird Tales*, and would also come to be known as one of that unique magazine’s three greatest contributors, with Lovecraft and Clark Ashton SMITH (though many of WT’s other regulars also had their rabid acolytes). Howard, unlike the other two members of the triumvirate, saw himself as a professional writer, and did write for other publications and in other genres—straight adventure, westerns, boxing stories—though he did not have much success in breaking into the mainstream prestige pulps (such as *Adventure*, *Argosy*, and the like. In retrospect, the ornate, daring, out-of-the-mainstream pages of *Weird Tales* were the perfect place for a writer as different and powerful as Robert E. Howard.

His stories were intensely imagined, action-packed, ruthless, and blood-drenched, written in a vivid, harsh, muscular prose. He created an assortment of fierce, pitiless warrior-heroes. There was Bran Mak Morn, leader of the Caledonian Picts against the legions of ancient Rome; Solomon Kane, an Elizabethan Puritan, battling savagery and sorcery in darkest Africa; Kull, a king in the antediluvian Atlantis; and his most popular and still thriving creation, Conan, the barbarian adventurer.

Conan lived in the “Hyborian Age” of some 12,000 years ago, a time of magic and monsters, voluptuous women, and spectacular, gore-spraying violence. There were 17 Conan stories of various lengths published in *Weird Tales*, and Howard developed the series in nonchronological order, taking the character back and forth from youth to middle age and through various forms of employment, including mercenary, thief, pirate, and king. It was wish-fulfillment fiction of the most delirious and sumptuous sort. “Let me live deep while I live,” Conan says in “Queen of the Black Coast,” as he drifts along a poison river in search of a treasure-laden lost city, “let me know the rich juices of

red meat and stinging wine on my palate, the hot embrace of white arms, and the mad exultation of battle when the blue blades flame and crimson, and I am content. Let teachers and priests and philosophers brood over questions of reality and illusion. I know this: if life is an illusion, then I am no less an illusion, and being thus, the illusion is real to me. I live. I burn with life. I love, I slay, and am content.”

Physically, Howard had grown up to be a powerful-looking young man who might well have served as a model for the illustrations of the sword-wielding heroes who strode across his pulp stories. But there was psychic autobiography at work in those pages too. In dreams Howard often saw himself as an ancient barbarian, and some of that self-absorption and passionate identification with the character gave Conan and other Howard characters their vivacity. It is part of the mythos of *Weird Tales*, part of what put that pulp in a category apart from all others of the '20s and '30s, the hectic golden age of pulp hackery—the notion that writers like Howard were stranger characters than the other pulp pros, in some way or other more closely a part of the material they invented, whether from artistry or psychological disturbance. For the reader, anyway, the result was stories that could have an intense, hallucinatory force and yet felt very real. Howard put readers, right inside those barbaric, imaginary landscapes. His typewriter caught the blinding glare on flashing steel, missed no splash of crimson blood, described landscapes that were at once familiar and bizarre, but three-dimensional, pumping with life.

Fantasy and “weird” stories and publication in the marginal, little-read *Weird Tales* was not considered a particularly admirable accomplishment in some areas of America in the 1930s. In the constricted community Robert Howard lived in, writing for *Weird Tales*—particularly as a result of the sexual, bosom-heaving cover art of Margaret Brundage—looked not unlike writing pornography. (Adding insult to injury, *Weird Tales* was often very far behind in its payments to contributors, even—or perhaps especially—to regular contributors like Howard.) Though as a young man he participated in the typical masculine rites of hunting, fishing, and drinking, Howard was not a typical Texas boy

at all. With his brooding, his daydreaming, and his bizarre imagination, he clearly stood apart from the simple farmers and small-town mentalities of Cross Plains, and was generally thought to be something of a strange duck among the locals. Howard once wrote, “It is no light thing to enter into a profession absolutely foreign to the people among which one’s lost is cast.”

Howard was known to have been unusually devoted to his domineering mother. He was prone to bouts of despairing self-reflection and spoke of suicide on a number of occasions (though depression did not seem to slow his productivity, as thousands of pages of prose, poetry, and correspondence flowed from his battered Underwood typewriter).

In the spring of 1936, Mrs. Howard became gravely ill. On the morning of June 11, after a sleepless night at his comatose mother’s bedside, Robert was informed that she would never recover. At the typewriter in his workroom he wrote some lines of poetry, then went outside to the family’s ’31 Chevrolet sedan. From the glove compartment he took out a Colt .380 he had borrowed from a friend, thumbed the safety, placed the barrel in his mouth, and pulled the trigger.

Jack Scott, a young Cross Plains reporter and an acquaintance of Robert’s, arrived at the Howard house a short time later. He recalled for this author what happened next:

It was a news story and I was running a newspaper here and I was a stringer for Associated Press. I went down and the yard was filling with people already. Robert was sitting in the front seat of the car and he’d blown his brains out. I was standing in the yard when the JP—the Justice of the Peace—came out of the house and called me in, said, “I want to ask you something.” The JP acted as a coroner in those small towns and he had to render a verdict on cause of death. He took me into Howard’s room and showed me a piece of paper rolled into the typewriter with some words on it and asked me to read it. It was a little poem. “All fled, all done, so lift me on the pyre; The feast is over, and the lamps expire.”

And then the JP—he was just a fine farmer, not a literary man—says, “What does ‘pyre’ mean?” And I told him it meant Robert had killed himself. And the JP says, “Yep.” And rendered the verdict. Robert’s mother died that evening and they were buried in a double funeral.

Robert Howard was 30 years old.

Weird Tales editor Farnsworth Wright eulogized Howard in the magazine’s letters section, “The Eyrie”: “As the issue goes to press, we are saddened by the news of the sudden death of Robert E. Howard . . . for years one of the most popular magazine authors in the country . . . his genius shone through everything he wrote and he did not lower his high literary standards for the sake of mere volume.” H. P. Lovecraft, a pen pal of the young writer, sent his own words of tribute: “Scarcely anybody else in the pulp field had quite the driving zest and spontaneity of Robert E. Howard. How he could surround primal megalithic cities with an aura of aeon-old fear and necromancy. Weird fiction certainly has occasion to mourn.”

Works

STORIES

“Hawks of Outremer” (1931); “Names in the Black Book” (1934); “Shadow Kingdom, The” (1929); “Skull-Face” (1929); “Slithering Shadow, The” (1935); “War on Bear Creek” (1935); “Wings in the Night” (1932)

CONAN STORIES

“Beyond the Black River” (1935); *Hour of the Dragon, The* (1935); *Pool of the Black One, The* (1934); *Queen of the Black Coast* (1934); *Red Nails* (1936); “Rogues in the House” (1934); “Scarlet Citadel, The” (1933); *Shadows in the Moonlight* (1934); *Shadows in Zamboula* (1935); *Tower of the Elephant, The* (1933); *Witch Shall Be Born, A* (1934)

BOOKS

Alleys of Darkness (1934); *Apache Mountain War* (1935); *Black Canaan* (1936); *Black Colossus* (1933); *Black Talons* (1933); *Black Vulmea’s Vengeance* (1938); *Blood of*

Belshazzar, The (1931); *Blow the Chinks Down* (1931); *Bull Dog Breed* (1930); *Cairn on the Headland* (1933); *Cannibal Fists* (1938); *Circus Fists* (1931); *Costigan vs. Kid Camera* (1938); *Cupid from Bear Creek* (1935); *Dark Man, The* (1931); *Dark Shanghai* (1931); *Fist and Fang* (1930); *Gent from Bear Creek, A* (1934); *Gods of Bal-Sagoth, The* (1931); *Graveyard Rats* (1936); *Hawk of the Hills* (1935); *Hills of the Dead* (1930); *Iron Man, The* (1930); *Jewels of Gwahlur* (1935); *Lion of Tiberias* (1933); *Lord of Samarcand* (1932); *Man-eating Jeopard, A* (1936); *Manila Manslaughter* (1937); *Moon of Skulls, The* (1930); *People of the Black Circle* (1934); *People of the Dark* (1932); *Pigeons from Hell* (1938); *Pit of the Serpent, The* (1929); *Rattle of Bones* (1929); *Red Blades of Black Cathay* (1931); *Road to Bear Creek* (1934); *Skull Face* (1929); *Skulls in the Stars* (1929); *Spear and Fang* (1925); *Swords of Shahrazar* (1934); *Texas Fists* (1931); *TNT Punch* (1931); *Treasures of Tartary, The* (1935); *Valley of the Worm, The* (1934); *Voice of El-Lil* (1930); *Vultures’ Sanctuary* (1936); *Waterfront Fists* (1930); *Wings in the Night* (1932); *Wolfshead* (1926); *Worms of the Earth* (1932)

As Sam Walser:

Desert Blood (1936); *Purple Heart of Erlik* (1936); *She Devil* (1936)

Hughes, Dorothy B.

(1904–)

Although Dorothy Hughes is often linked with the hard-boiled writers of the 1940s, making her chronologically the first great female hard-boiled novelist, her mysteries and suspense stories roamed across and outside the circumscribed categories. Hughes’s “hard,” understated style was in part found for her by her first editor, who demanded a cut of 25,000 words from the manuscript of her first suspense novel, *The So Blue Marble* (1940) and eliminated most of the story’s unrealistic elements.

Born in Kansas City, Missouri, Hughes spent much of her youth as a footloose academic, studying at assorted universities from New Mexico to New York, teaching a few classes, and achieving some acclaim as a young poet. Her first

commercial writings were for the love pulps. Her first attempts at writing and selling book-length fiction were not successful, but once she had a foot in the door with the publication of *Marble*—the story of a violent quest for a missing treasure, with a divorced woman as the protagonist—in 1940, Hughes began delivering, on average, a book a year for the next dozen years, with rising critical acclaim and popularity. Several of her novels transferred to the screen as major Hollywood productions.

Hughes claimed as her literary mentors writers Eric Ambler, Graham Greene, and William Faulkner, and the influence of the first two, at any rate, is felt in many of the novels, with their haunted loner/adventurer heroes, paranoid atmosphere, and corrosive psychological portraiture. *In a Lonely Place*, perhaps her greatest novel, was a brilliant distillation of postwar alienation and simmering violence into the suspenseful story of a suspected murderer. The book was turned into a great film noir starring Humphrey Bogart and Gloria Grahame, though the background and many details were switched around to give the film a Hollywood-insider setting (which Hughes had used in another work, *Dread Journey*). Several of the books centered on the Southwest, most memorably *Ride the Pink Horse*, wherein the protagonist tracks down some big-city gangsters in an atmospherically rendered New Mexico town during a fiesta.

Due to family constraints, Hughes stopped writing novels between 1952 and 1963, and never returned to her earlier productivity. For most of her life, though, she continued an alternate career as a book reviewer specializing in mystery fiction, and she wrote a nonfiction work on fellow mystery writer Erle Stanley GARDNER.

Works

Bamboo Blonde, The (1941); *Big Barbecue, The* (1949); *Blackbinder, The* (1943); *Candy Kid* (1950); *Cross-eyed Bear, The* (1940); *Davidian Report, The* (1952); *Delicate Ape, The* (1944); *Dread Journey* (1945); *Erle Stanley Gardner: The Case of the Real Perry Mason* (1978); *Expensible Man, The* (1963); *Fallen Sparrow, The* (1942); *In a Lonely Place* (1947); *Johnnie* (1944); *Ride the Pink*

Horse (1946); *Scarlet Imperial, The* (1946); *So Blue Marble, The* (1940)

Hull, E. M.

(unknown)

Not since Elinor Glyn's *Three Weeks*, which featured a seductress on a tiger skin rug, had a female author shocked the English-speaking world as did E. M. Hull with the scandalous success of 1921, *The Sheik*. It was the fervidly emotional story of an Englishwoman in the desert wastes of North Africa who is taken captive by a handsome tribal leader, becomes his sexual plaything and, at last, despite herself, his willing and adoring love slave. The novel played with transgression and teased with the threat of imminent rape, the taboos of female lust, and interracial sex. Readers loved it. The book was given an immediate Hollywood adaptation and became the star-making vehicle for Rudolph Valentino, in leather boots and burnoose, as the dark—but not too dark—desert lover whose cross-eyed stare at pith-helmeted Agnes Ayres left her—and moviegoers around the world—swooning in ecstasy.

Hull followed *The Sheik* with other novels of sand-covered passion, *Desert Healer* (1923), *Sons of the Sheik* (1925), and one passionate tale of circus folk, *The Lion Tamer* (1928), but her first work remained her one great success. Though much ridiculed even at the time of its first appearance, Hull's novel clearly spoke to certain vivid fantasies in the minds of her readership, and would anticipate the vogue, in the 1970s and thereafter, for the so-called bodice rippers by such authors as Rosemary Rogers—tempestuous romantic fiction aimed at the female reader and noted for the use of rape and threatened rape as titillation. Barbara CARTLAND, who in the '70s was the famed dowager of chaste romance fiction, nevertheless paid tribute to the long-forgotten E. M. Hull by making *The Sheik* the premiere volume in Cartland's "Library of Love," a line of reissues of classic romance novels.

Works

Desert Healer (1923); *Lion Tamer, The* (1928); *Sheik, The* (1921); *Sons of the Sheik* (1925)

Hume, Fergus

(1859–1932)

Hume retains a faded place in any account of the history of genre fiction for his phenomenally successful first novel, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1886), a convoluted murder story whose international success turned millions of readers into crime fiction fans and sent publishers looking for more of the same. Many of the book's elements, from the dysfunctional family members surrounding the murder victim, to the clues that lie in the hidden past, the clever solution to the crime, and the detailed big city atmosphere—in this case, Melbourne, Australia—became key ingredients in the form for more than 100 years, and although the stateliness of Victorian writing blurs the connection, Hume can be seen to anticipate the hard-boiled school of Dashiell HAMMETT in his realistic depiction of the legal system and the mingling of domestic, criminal, and professional milieus.

Hume was born in England but raised in New Zealand, where he studied law. Relocated to Melbourne, he worked in a barrister's office for some time before his writing career began. Though he was obviously well-placed to write about crime, it was supposedly a bookstore owner raving about the big sales of the novels of Emile Gaboriau, the French detective story writer, who inspired Hume's choice of subject. Uncertain of his first book's prospects, Hume sold all rights to a publisher for 50 pounds, and never saw another farthing for the million copies ultimately sold. Hume went on to write adventure fiction, war stories, tales of lost civilizations in the tradition of H. Rider HAGGARD, and more than 100 crime thrillers, many with a strong legalistic angle. He published about 150 titles in all, but never again had anything to compare with the success of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*.

Hume lived to an old age and continued publishing to the end. His career began in the Victorian era, before the first appearance of Sherlock Holmes, and ended in the Great Depression, just before Dashiell Hammett published his last work. Much had changed in the course of mystery fiction in that time, and Hume, one of the groundbreakers, had already become little more than a footnote.

Works

Across the Footlights (1912); *Aladdin in London* (1892); *Amethyst Cross, The* (1908); *Answered: A Spy Story* (1915); *Best of Her Sex* (1894); *Bishop's Secret, The* (1900); *Black Carnation, The* (1892); *Black Image, The* (1918); *Black Patch, The* (1906); *Blue Talisman, The* (1912); *Caravan Mystery, The* (1926); *Carbuncle Clue, The* (1896); *Caretaker, The* (1916); *Chinese Jar, The* (1893); *Claude Duval of Ninety-five* (1897); *Clock Struck One, The* (1898); *Coin of Edward VII, A* (1903); *Crazy-Quilt* (1919); *Creature of the Night, A* (1891); *Crime of the Crystal, The* (1901); *Crime of the Liza Jane* (1895); *Crimson Cryptogram, The* (1900); *Crowned Skull, The* (1908); *Curse, The* (1915); *Dancer in Red* (1906); *Dark Avenue* (1920); *Devil's Ace, The* (1909); *Devil Stick, The* (1898); *Disappearing Eye, The* (1909); *Dwarf's Chamber and Other Stories, The* (1896); *Fatal Song, The* (1905); *Fever of Life, The* (1892); *Flies in the Web* (1908); *For the Defense* (1898); *Four P.M. Express, The* (1914); *Gates of Dawn, The* (1894); *Gentleman Who Vanished, The* (1890); *Girl from Malta, The* (1899); *Golden Wang-Ho: A Sensational Story, The* (1901); *Green Mummy, The* (1908); *Grey Doctor, The* (1917); *Hagar of the Pawnshop* (1898); *Harlequin Opal, The* (1893); *Heart of Ice* (1918); *High Water Mark* (1911); *In Queer Street* (1913); *Jade Eye, The* (1903); *Jew's House, The* (1911); *Lady from Nowhere, The* (1900); *Lady Jezebel* (1898); *Lady Jim of Curzon Street* (1905); *Last Straw, The* (1932); *Lonely Subaltern, The* (1910); *Lost Parchment, The* (1914); *Madame Midas* (1888); *Mandarin's Fan, The* (1904); *Masquerade Mystery, The* (1895); *Midnight Mystery* (1894); *Miss Mephistopheles* (1890); *Mother Mandarin* (1912); *Mother of Emeralds, The* (1901); *Moth-Woman, The* (1923); *Mystery of a Hansom Cab, The* (1886); *Mystery of a Motor Cab, The* (1908); *Mystery of Landy Court, The* (1894); *Mystery of the Shadow, The* (1906); *Next Door* (1918); *Not Wanted* (1914); *Opal Serpent, The* (1905); *Pagan's Cup, The* (1902); *Peacock of Jewels* (1910); *Piccadilly Puzzle, The* (1889); *Pink Shop, The* (1911); *Purple Fern, The* (1907); *Rainbow Feather, The* (1898); *Red Bicycle, The* (1916); *Red-headed Man, The* (1899); *Red Window, The* (1904); *Sacred Herb, The* (1908); *Scarlet Bat, The* (1906); *Sealed Message, The* (1908); *Secret Passage, The* (1905); *Seen in the Shadow* (1913); *Shylock of the River* (1900); *Silent House* (1907); *Solitary Farm, The* (1909); *Spider, The* (1910); *Steel Crown, The* (1911); *Thirteenth Guest, The* (1913); *Three* (1921); *Tombstone Treasure, The* (1897); *Top Dog*

(1909); *Traitor in London* (1900); *Unexpected, The* (1921); *Vanishing of Tera, The* (1900); *Whispering Lane, The* (1924); *Woman Who Held On, The* (1920); *Wooden Hand, The* (1905); *Year of Miracle: A Tale of the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred, The* (1891); *Yellow Holly, The* (1903); *Yellow Hunchback, The* (1907)

Hunt, E. Howard

(1918–) *Also wrote as: Gordon Davis, P. S. Donoghue, Robert Dietrich, Howard Hunt, David St. John*

The CIA's most famous pulp novelist, E. Howard Hunt had been writing books for 30 years and had not received an iota of the attention for his creative efforts that he found in one day in 1972 after getting caught in a burglary of the Democratic National Committee headquarters at a Washington office building known as the Watergate. In fact, Hunt's arrest and imprisonment for three years gave his career as an author a much-needed shot in the arm. A degree of unprecedented interest was directed at his old pulp thrillers, most published as paperback originals under various pen names. Some of these books were reprinted for the first time under the author's real name to capitalize on his notoriety.

The books originally dismissed as paperback hackery now appeared to have been written by a guy who had the inside track after all. Hunt, the newspaper stories revealed, was a longtime government spy, with all kinds of black book experience and connections, it was rumored, to the Bay of Pigs operation, attempts to murder Cuban leader Fidel Castro, and even, some conspiracy theorists eventually accused, a part in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy (Hunt vehemently denied the last accusation). Fiction writing had been a sideline Hunt did in his spare time when he was not otherwise engaged by his career as a government spy and, during the Richard Nixon administration, a White House covert operative and leak-fixing "plumber." Nevertheless, despite his workload and its recurring life-and-death decisions, Hunt had managed to turn out more than 30 books in that time, and, despite a certain humorlessness and heavy-handed

cold warrior self-righteousness, they were pretty good books.

Although it seemed unlikely that Hunt's early fiction revealed any shocking secret operations since his novels were subject to CIA scrutiny, post-Watergate information would reveal the many ways the author had used his extraordinary experiences as fodder for his fiction. The Nixon-era adventures, as well as the wild rumors, give an extra layer of interest to such vintage Hunt novels as *Bimini Run*, which featured as its hero a brawny adventurer some readers believe was based on the author's old friend, Watergate coconspirator and another alleged JFK plotter, Frank Sturgis. Of course, other Hunt fiction would seem—one has to hope—entirely invented, like his loopy 1951 Gold Medal Books paperback, *The Judas Hour*, in which a morose alcoholic protagonist is whisked away from skid row to a strange cross between a rehab clinic and a Stalinist spy headquarters. There, he is pumped full of Antabuse and given a recruitment pitch by a female Red agent, the kind with a "small waist that widened into full, firm buttocks . . ." Pitching the prospects of joining the global communist team, the shapely recruiter says, "It's getting in on the ground floor of an irresistible power that's destined to sweep the world!" "Television?" says the hungover hero.

Hunt wrote under several pseudonyms, including Robert Dietrich, author of a series of thrillers about an accountant, and David St. John, whose books chronicled the adventures of CIA man Peter Ward. In the 1980s, after getting out of prison and publishing a memoir of his colorful life, Hunt gave himself over entirely to his writing career and went back to political thrillers and spy stories. The novels were solid, politically ultraconservative midlist fare. With *Cozumel*, published in 1985, Hunt began his most enjoyable series yet, the adventures of rogue DEA agent Jack Novak—tough, action-packed adventures about the war on drug lords and other pests, full of balmy Mexican scenery and questionable Mexican stereotypes.

Works

Body Count (1992); *Chinese Red* (1992); *Cozumel* (1985); *Dragon Teeth* (1997); *Guadalajara* (1987); *Guilty*

Knowledge (1999); *Hargrave Deception, The* (1980); *Gaza Intercept, The* (1981); *Islamorada* (1995); *Ixtapa* (1994); *Izmir* (1996); *Kremlin Conspiracy, The* (1985); *Mazatlan* (1993); *Murder in State* (1990); *Sonora* (2000); *Undercover: Memoirs of a Secret Agent* (1974)

As Howard Hunt:

Bimini Run (1949); *East of Farewell* (1942); *Give Us This Day* (1973); *Limit of Darkness* (1944); *Maelstrom* (1948); *Stranger in Town* (1947); *Violent Ones, The* (1950)

As Gordon Davis:

Counterfeit Kill (1963); *House Dick* (1961); *I Came to Kill* (1953); *Where Murder Waits* (1965)

As Robert Dietrich:

Angel Eyes (1961); *Be My Victim* (1956); *Calypto Caper* (1961); *Cheat, The* (1954); *Curtains for a Lover* (1962); *End of a Stripper* (1959); *House on Q Street* (1958); *Mistress to Murder* (1960); *Murder on Her Mind* (1960); *Murder on the Rocks* (1957); *My Body* (1963); *Ring Around Rosy* (1964)

As David St. John:

Coven, The (1972); *Diabolus* (1971); *Festival for Spies* (1966); *Hazardous Duty* (1965); *Mongol Mask* (1968); *One of Our Agents Is Missing* (1972); *Return from Vorkuta* (1965); *Sorcerers, The* (1969); *Towers of Silence, The* (1966); *Venus Probe, The* (1966)

Iceberg Slim (Robert Beck)
(1918–1992)

In the 1960s and 1970s, academics, critics, and establishment East Coast literati may have ignored Iceberg Slim in favor of respectable practitioners of “Negro literature”—James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Langston Hughes, and others. In fact, many may never have heard of him, but it was Iceberg Slim, the pen name and hard-won street handle of Robert Beck, whose West Coast publisher could claim for him the title of “America’s Most Popular Black Author” for the multimillion-copy sales the author’s seven titles accrued in his lifetime. Part of a new wave of black pop/pulp paperbacks aimed at an inner-city readership, Slim’s titles flew off the shelves in ghetto storefronts, in numbers the academically-approved black authors could not have imagined, even with their substantial white liberal audience thrown in. A strong—if far more arguable—case could also be made for Slim’s artistry as well—his generally strong storytelling ability, gift for idiomatic language, vivid authenticity in the undiluted portrait of the urban black experience minus the flummery of conscious aesthetic and intellectual considerations.

Born in Chicago and raised mostly in Milwaukee by a doting, hardworking mother, Bob Beck returned to the Windy City in his late teens and soon thereafter began his life as a pimp, the agent and overlord to a “stable” of prostitutes. From the late 1930s until the early 1960s, with a cumulative seven years served in a variety of prisons, Beck

practiced his trade. Filled with a desire for “opulence” and possessing a self-described “superior intelligence,” Beck became one of the most successful pimps in the Midwest, with a stable that often numbered into the hundreds. Strong, ruthless, good-looking, and undeniably clever, Beck ruled by a combination of charm, psychological intimidation, and brutal violence. The nickname he would carry from the streets to the covers of his big-selling books referred to his unsentimental style. “The best pimps,” he would write, “keep a steel lid on their emotions and I was one of the iciest.” The goal of the successful pimp, however, the ultimate hustle, was to have to do nothing at all for your opulent life. “I just rested and dressed,” Beck would recall. “And petted my dog and ate chocolates and slept on satin sheets. And went to the penitentiary periodically.”

Having reached his early fifties, and not wanting to be “teased, tormented and brutalized by young whores,” Robert Beck gave up pimping. He sold insecticide for a while, but this sort of work was obviously minimal in ego gratification. He turned to writing, determined to make an impact, to provide a nest egg for his three daughters, and most of all, he would say, “to prove to the world, to dispel the myth that street niggers are devoid of intellect. You know that’s a myth. They think we are devoid of wit. I just want to prove that older black men, just because you’re past age 50, man, don’t give up.”

Pimp: The Story of My Life was published by Holloway House, a small Los Angeles paperback

outfit that had begun to cultivate a niche market, poor urban blacks, that had been entirely overlooked by mainstream publishers. *Pimp* was powerful in effect, bluntly Hobbesian in philosophy, sizzling with matter-of-fact, unapologetic violence and sexism, and containing a vivid self-portrait of Slim himself, the ego-driven, unsentimental, hedonistic, whip smart inner-city overachiever. He followed it with *Trick Baby*, another vibrant narrative based on real events, this time the life story of a man Beck had met in prison. *Trick Baby* (the title was street parlance for the unplanned child of a black hooker and a white client) dealt with crime, con games, racism (black and white), and interracial sex. The plot and its convoluted racial politics climaxes with the protagonist (passing as white) confronted by his older, upper-crust white mistress, who is pregnant with his child and has discovered that he has been having an affair with a black woman. "Never come in my direction again," screams the white woman. "Find a putrid coon girl and live unhappily ever after . . ." Incensed, Slim's hero reveals the secret of his own bloodline: "Mrs. Costain, you have a bona-fide bastard nigger baby in your sacrosanct guts!"

Mama Black Widow dealt in large part with yet another little-explored ghetto subculture, this time the world of the black homosexual and transvestite. *Death Wish*, on more conventional ground, followed a black avenger's attempt to destroy a Mafia gang's encroachments. There were seven titles in all from Iceberg Slim's pen. All sold well and Holloway House kept them in print. Slim's great success would make him rich, a ghetto folk hero, and an influence on the entire "blaxploitation" era in American movies of the 1970s, movie screens full of Superflys and macks and other offshoots of *Pimp: The Story of My Life*. The books remain popular, and their influence is still felt in a thriving subgenre of street pimp memoirs and exposés, including Randolph Harris's *Trickshot* (1983), Tariq Nasheed's *The Art of Mackin'* (2000), and *The Pimp's Rap* (1999), heralded as "the first rap novel."

Works

Airtight Willie and Me (1979); *Death Wish* (1977); *Doom Fox* (1998); *Long White Con* (1977); *Mama Black Widow* (1969); *Naked Soul of Iceberg Slim, The* (1971); *Pimp: The Story of My Life* (1967); *Trick Baby* (1969)

J

Jacobi, Carl (1908–1997)

Less well-known than the other stars of the golden age of weird fiction, Jacobi is nonetheless one of the most distinctive figures to work in that time, a writer whose subtle, carefully crafted eerie tales were often worthy of comparison with the best of H. P. LOVECRAFT.

Jacobi attended the University of Minnesota, where he contributed stories to the campus journals. He took a job as a rewrite man at the *Minneapolis Star* while beginning to contribute to the pulp magazines. Within a couple of years his freelance writing sales became steady enough for him to leave the newspaper job. His first professional sale was a detective story to a short-lived pulp called *Secret Service Stories*, but many of his subsequent early tales belonged in the supernatural and fantastic categories. He began a long relationship with *Weird Tales* with the sale of “Mive,” published in the January 1932 issue. This story of giant carnivorous butterflies was a beautifully written, atmospheric gem that brought forth the praise of *Weird Tales*’ star writers H. P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton SMITH. Jacobi topped this memorable work in the April 1933 issue with a superb vampire story called “Revelations in Black,” a tale many critics count among the best vampire stories of all time. Though Jacobi was not a frequent contributor, he would continue to write for *Weird Tales* through the years, and his stories were always a cause for great interest and excitement among the hardcore

fantasy and horror lovers who made up the magazine’s small but devoted readership.

In addition to weird fiction, Jacobi came to specialize in the exotic adventure tale. Unlike many adventure writers whose fiction was inspired by their own thrilling experiences in the far corners of the world, Jacobi was a rather inexperienced fellow, living at home with his parents (where he would live, never marrying, for most of his life) and seldom going beyond the Minneapolis city limits. Still, he was a diligent craftsman whose stories about crime and bizarre mysteries in the backwaters of Borneo had the ring of authenticity. In addition to soaking up the facts in travelogues and histories of the region borrowed from the library, Jacobi solicited background details through correspondence with the same sort of sweating, pith-helmeted colonials he was writing about. His letters of inquiry to the back of beyond traveled by ocean liner, coastal freighter, river launch and—for the final leg through the dense, humid jungle—by native runner, a journey of three months’ time, with another three or four months needed for the pulp writer to receive his reply. The results, though, were worth it—long, detailed letters from lonely traders and district officers, full of bizarre local customs and violent incidents: “Dear Mr. Jacobi. . . . In the middle Sepik between Origambi and the River there is a strong secret society called ‘Sanguman.’ They practice killing, the motive for which is not understood yet . . .” Jacobi extracted the interesting details from these missives and put them together with his own imagination and

evocative prose to come up with dozens of thrilling adventure stories.

After some years as a pulpster and freelance writer, beset by family obligations, Jacobi in 1942 took a full-time job at a local defense plant. He would remain there for more than 20 years. He continued selling to the pulps—more and more to the science fiction magazines that proliferated in the '40s—but his output began to dwindle. In 1947 Arkham House, the small publishing firm run by August Derleth and Donald Wandrei, brought out *Revelations in Black*, a collection of some of Jacobi's best work in the supernatural field. Within the cultish confines of the weird fiction community it was considered a landmark volume, but Jacobi's career was already at an ebb. The short story market was crumbling and he felt unable to write a longer work. Attempts to write novels came to nothing. Arkham House, though, would bring out two more short-story collections through the years, keeping Jacobi's name alive in the hearts of the true believers. In later years his stature grew as interest increased in the early history of the pulps and the stars of the *Weird Tales* school of fantasy fiction. Even Jacobi's adventure fiction—belonging to a genre generally ignored by the pulp revivalists—got a second chance at life in a small-press volume called *East of Samarinda*, a wonderful collection of Jacobi's Borneo stories.

Works

STORIES

"Aquarium, The" (1962) "Assignment on Venus" (1943) "Black Garden, The" (1981); "Black Passage" (1936); "Cane, The" (1934); "Carnaby's Fish" (1945); "Coach on the Ring, The" (1932); "Cosmic Castaway" (1943); "Cosmic Teletype" (1938); "Crocodile" (1934); "Dangerous Scarecrow, The" (1954); "Dead Man's River" (1936); "Death on a Tin Can" (1937); "Death's Outpost" (1939); "Deceit Post" (1934); "Devil Deals, The" (1938); "East of Samarinda" (1937); "Eclar Special, The" (1979); "Enter the Nebula" (1946); "Eternity When?" (1974); "Exit Mr. Smith" (1966); "Film in the Bush, A" (1937); "Hamadryad" (1975); "Holt Sails the San Hing" (1938); "Jungle Wires" (1934); "King and the Knave, The" (1938); "Last Drive, The" (1933); "Leopard Tracks" (1938); "Lodana" (1947); "Long Voyage, The" (1955); "Lorenzo Watch, The" (1948); "Lost Street, The" (1941);

"Made in Tanganyika" (1954); "Martian Calendar, The" (1957); "Matthew South and Company" (1949); "Mive" (1932); "Moss Island" (1932); "Phantom Pistol, The" (1941); "Pit, The" (1980); "Portrait in Moonlight" (1947); "Quarry" (1936); "Quire of Foolscap, A" (1987); "Random Quantity, The" (1947); "Redemption Trail" (1941); "Sagasta's Last" (1939); "Satanic Piano, The" (1934); "Sequence" (1972); "Singleton Barrier, The" (1971); "Spanish Camera, The" (1950); "Spider Wires" (1936); "Tiger Island" (1937); "Torn from Beyond, The" (1932); "Trial by Jungle" (1939); "Revelations in Black" (1933); "Smoke of the Snake" (1933); "Submarine I-26" (1944); "Tunnel, The" (1988); "Unpleasantness at Carver House, The" (1967); "Witches in the Cornfield" (1954); "World in a Box, The" (1937); "Writing on the Wall" (1944)

BOOKS

Disclosures in Scarlet (1972); *East of Samarinda* (1986); *Portraits in Moonlight* (1964); *Revelations in Black* (1947); *Smoke of the Snake* (1994)

Jakes, John

(1932–) *Also wrote as: William Ard, Alan Payne, Jay Scotland*

John Jakes's status as a brand name author with assorted best-sellers and television miniseries to his credit came only after more than 20 years of thankless labor in the pop fiction jungle. A Chicago native, with college degrees from DePauw and Ohio State universities, Jakes worked for many years as a corporate and industrial copywriter while starting to sell his early fiction efforts to mystery magazines and pulp paperback houses. He was just 21 when his first novel, *Gonzaga's Woman*, a lurid thriller about the vice racket, was brought out as a paperback original by Royal Books Giant Editions, paired with an old Talbot MUNDY novella called *Affair in Araby*. Jakes's half of the cover featured one of the most spectacularly sleazy sadomasochistic illustrations of the era, a whip-wielding, cigar-chomping stud hovering over a beautiful, voluptuous female sprawled across an ornate table, her bare back flecked with bloody stripes.

Over the next two decades, Jakes produced dozens of novels under his own and various pen

names, writing westerns, science fiction, gothics, sword and sorcery, erotica, children's novels, and low-level nonfiction items like *Famous Firsts in Sports* (1967). In addition to ghostwriting several Lou Largo crime novels after the premature death of William ARD, Jakes wrote his own detective series about a diminutive, red-haired, perpetually libidinous private eye named Johnny Havoc.

In the dark nights of batting out paperbacks with titles like *G.I. Girls* (1963) or the novelization *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes* (1972) or various pseudonymous assignments that paid minimum wage, Jakes must have felt little hope of ever finding fame or financial success in his chosen work. But in 1974, anticipating a much ballyhooed national publicity event known as the Bicentennial—the United States' 200th birthday—Pyramid Books published Jakes's novel about the Revolutionary War era, *The Bastard*, the first in what would be the multivolume American Bicentennial series Kent Family Chronicles. Jakes's story of the breakneck adventures of Philip Kent, the illegitimate son of an English royal, who travels to the colonies, joins the fight for independence, and crosses the path of Revolution notables from Ben Franklin to Sam Adams, was a well-timed and terrifically entertaining read. Word-of-mouth made sales climb with each subsequent Kent title, and the whole series became a publishing phenomenon. After 21 years Jakes was an "overnight" success, a newly discovered instant master of the blockbuster historical form, worshipped by readers for his ability to make the dusty past come to vivid life. By the time of the first volume of Jakes's next historical series, a sprawling Civil War saga known as the North and South trilogy—*North and South* (1982), *Love and War* (1984), *Heaven and Hell* (1987)—he was assured a prestigious hardcover publisher, millions of readers, big bucks, and an expensive, all-star (Patrick Swayze, Elizabeth Taylor, Gene Kelly, Robert Mitchum) ABC-TV miniseries.

After some slightly less crowd-pleasing subsequent works, Jakes was thought to have returned to form with *On Secret Service* (2000), an unusual Civil War epic centered on the espionage efforts of a Pinkerton agent and his Confederate counterparts, a novel chock full of battle, intrigue, bosomy

southern spies, and a lively, irreverent portrait of Abraham Lincoln.

Works

American Dreams (1999); *Arena* (1963); *Bastard, The* (1974); *Brak the Barbarian versus the Sorceress* (1969); *Brak versus the Mark of the Demons* (1969); *California Gold* (1989); *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes* (1972); *Furies, The* (1975); *G.I. Girls* (1963); *Gonzaga's Woman* (1953); *Heaven and Hell* (1987); *Homeland* (1993); *Imposter, The* (1959); *Johnny Havoc* (1960); *Johnny Havoc and the Doll Who Had "It"* (1963); *Johnny Havoc Meets Zelda* (1962); *Last Magicians, The* (1969); *Lawless, The* (1978); *Love and War* (1984); *Making It Big* (1967); *Mask of Chaos* (1970); *Master of the Dark Gate* (1970); *Mention My Name in Atlantis* (1972); *Monte Cristo 99* (1970); *Night for Treason, A* (1956); *North and South* (1982); *On Secret Service* (2000); *Rebels, The* (1975); *Seekers, The* (1975); *Six Gun Planet* (1970); *Strike the Black Flag* (1961); *Titans, The* (1976); *Veils of Salome, The* (1962); *Warriors, The* (1977); *Wear a Fast Gun* (1956)

As William Ard:

And So to Bed (1962); *Babe in the Woods* (1960); *Like Ice She Was* (1960); *Make Mine Mavis* (1961)

As Alan Payne:

Murder He Says (1958); *This'll Slay You* (1958)

As Rachel Payne:

Ghostwind (1966)

As Jay Scotland:

I, Barbarian (1959); *Seventh Man, The* (1958)

Janson, Hank (Stephen Frances)

(unknown)

The author once given claim to the title of "England's best-selling mystery writer" did not have an easy or enviable time with this success. Indeed, the career of Hank Janson, a byline that thrilled millions of readers in his heyday, would be a skyrocket soon come to earth in a cloud of criminal accusations, court cases, and general disreputability. Janson was, in the beginning, a man named Stephen

Frances, a man of great get-up-and-go personality, creativity, and ambition born of a desire to put a wretchedly poverty-stricken childhood behind him. Raised in the squalid slums of Lambeth by a widowed mother, Frances quit school at 14 to take a variety of jobs, briefly joining the Communist Party along the way (until he was ejected for counterproductivity). As a writer, Frances evolved from political screeds to fiction, and near the end of World War II—which he spent as a conscientious objector—he joined forces with a doctor friend and founded a tiny publishing concern, Pendulum Publications. The firm was so tiny that Frances was not only the co-owner and editor in chief but also the only source of material. To get things started, he wrote a novel that was based on his own life and a western that was not.

Even with the war over, there were still severe paper shortages and restrictions. The new fly-by-night British paperback houses that sprouted up in this period—the so-called mushroom publishers—would maintain a free-floating schedule adjusted to the availability of paper and the sudden demands of distributors. It was under just such improvised circumstances that Hank Janson was born: in a single weekend, Frances dictated Janson's first adventure, a novella to be titled *When Dames Get Tough*. In the next couple of months Frances produced more of the same—*Scarred Faces*, *This Woman Is Death*, *Gun Moll for Hire*—and distributors were soon gleefully reporting big sales and increasing their print orders by the week.

The Hank Janson stories were hard-boiled pulp fiction, and in those days hard-boiled meant American. Even the established English writers in the form, James Hadley CHASE and Peter CHEYNEY, used mostly American settings and characters for their tough novels. So Janson was a Yank (though biographical notes would eventually explain that he was English-born before finding a spiritual and actual home in the rawer-edged United States), and Janson was not only the author of his tough tales of action and adventure but the hero of most of them, too. It was an unlikely but well-established phenomenon that went back at least as far as the Nick Carter dime novels of the 19th century. About America and its mean streets and hard cases, Frances knew only what he had read or seen

in the movies. But his writing skill and intense concentration while writing—actually, while speaking into a dictaphone—breathed life into the secondhand clichés, and made the robust Janson adventures better by far than most of the other ersatz pulp thrillers that would soon swamp the paperback stalls of newsagents across Great Britain. “I completely identified myself with Hank Janson,” Frances would recall. “If a girl slapped his face my cheek stung. If he smelled rotting fish I felt nauseated and if he exhausted himself I had to gulp whiskey to revive myself. Because I could identify myself so thoroughly with Hank Janson, my readers were probably also helped to identify with the book's hero, which is what many readers like to do.” In addition to the books' intense readability, they were wonderfully packaged, most of them with cover illustrations by the great Reginald Heade, whose lustrous oil and airbrushed paintings of voluptuous women were virtually irresistible. Hank Janson fan clubs formed all over the nation, sellers bannered his latest releases, and Janson's combined sales began to move toward the million-copy mark. From a necessity invented to meet a deadline, Janson became a genuine phenomenon, England's answer to the spectacular success of American hard-boiled writer Mickey SPILLANE, the biggest-selling writer in the world. (For publicity purposes, of course, Spillane had the advantage with his own exploitable tough-guy personality and salesmanship, whereas Hank Janson did not in fact exist; Frances put forth the notion that Hank had to be a mystery man to remain at large in the underworld, but he would occasionally agree to venture forth for an interview, to be held at a strip-club or similar place of business, with “Janson” disguised in a mask and big hat.)

In Britain, many imitators followed hot on Janson's heels—numerous pulp writers hiding behind tough or colorful-sounding pen names, churning out the same sort of Americanized gangster and private eye fiction loaded with sex and violence and sordid settings. But very few would have the emotional intensity and dimension and overall zing of the Hank Janson novels. Janson varied professions from one series of books to another, there were continuing characters and plot devices that linked different volumes together, and

some of the Jansons were stand-alone efforts with a one-time-only cast and unusual settings, including a trilogy of books set in the Persian deserts and a volume of science fiction.

In 1952, Stephen Frances, pleased with his success as an author and wanting to get away from the travails of the business side of publishing, sold his publisher's share of the Hank Janson business to a man named Reginald Carter, and then moved to Spain to concentrate on writing. It was, as it happened, a fortuitous move. While Frances was leading an expatriate's life on the Mediterranean, back at home the publishers of Hank Janson books were getting into trouble. After a murderer was found to have been inspired in his methodology by a Hank Janson novel in his possession, the courts put a spotlight on the author's work and soon had the publishing and distribution principals arrested and charged with violating the anti-obscenity laws. Seven Hank Janson titles were entered as evidence of this outrage, including *Killer* (the book that had supposedly inspired the recent murder), *Accused*, and three books about the Persian slave trade. Prosecutors interpreted for the jury the contents of the books, including a lengthy discussion of the book titled *Accused*, a *Postman Always Rings Twice* (see James M. CAIN) rewrite with passages intimating sexual torture and mutilation (though these were never more than implied). In what many would later describe as an unfairly tried case, the seven accused were found guilty on all counts and sentenced to fines and six months in prison. Stephen Frances, who denied having written the titles that had caused the trouble (for was it not the case that Frances never wrote them, but dictated them into a machine?), at last returned from Spain to stand trial on his own. Evidence suddenly turned up that another writer, now conveniently dead, had been paid for the Jansons, and Frances was cleared of the charges. (The British pulp scholar Steve Holland has speculated that the receipts for the other writer may have been for payment for his services as a typist).

Eventually, Stephen Frances went back to writing under his breadwinning byline, until 1960 when yet another publisher would take over the name, and future Janson titles would be assigned

to a variety of cheaper writers. Hank Janson books continued to be written until the 1970s, at which time the series had become near pornographic in content. Stephen Frances continued writing, his works including some well-regarded historical novels, and continued to live in sunny Spain, where he died of a lung disease at 71, the exiled king of British hard-boiled fiction, by then largely forgotten.

Works

Abomination (1965); *Accused* (1953); *Affairs of Paula* (1965); *All Tramps Are Trouble* (1959); *Amok* (1953); *Auctioned* (1953); *Avenging Nymph* (1958); *Baby Don't Dare Squeal* (1951); *Backlash of Infamy* (1965); *Beloved Traitor* (1960); *Berlin Briefing* (1965); *Big H* (1965); *Big Round Bed, The* (1970); *Blonde on the Spot* (1949); *Blood Bath* (1962); *Break for a Lovely* (1961); *Bride Wore Weeds, The* (1950); *Broads Don't Scare Easy* (1951); *Catch Me a Renegade* (1965); *Chicago Chick* (1961); *Come Quickly Honey* (1960); *Contraband* (1955); *Cool Sugar* (1960); *Crowns Can Kill* (1961); *Crunch, The* (1968); *Cupid Turns Killer* (1960); *Cutie on Call* (1960); *Darling Delinquent* (1966); *Dateline Debbie* (1963); *Deadly Mission* (1955); *Death Wore a Petticoat* (1951); *Don't Dare Me, Sugar* (1950); *Don't Mourn Me, Toots* (1951); *Don't Scare Easy* (1958); *Ecstasy* (1960); *Escape* (1956); *F.E.U.D.* (1966); *Flight from Fear* (1958); *48 Hours* (1957); *Frails Can Be So Tough* (1951); *Go with a Jerk* (1963); *Gun Moll for Hire* (1948); *Gunsmoke in Her Eyes* (1949); *Hate* (1958); *Hell's Angel* (1956); *Hilary's Terms* (1965); *Honey Take My Gun* (1949); *Hot House* (1964); *Hotsy, You'll Be Chilled* (1951); *It's Always Eve That Weeps* (1951); *It's Bedtime Baby* (1964); *Jane with Green Eyes, The* (1950); *Jazz Jungle* (1965); *Kill Her for Kicks* (1962); *Kill Her If You Can* (1952); *Killer* (1953); *Lady Has a Scar, The* (1950); *Lady, Mind That Corpse* (1949); *Lady, Toll the Bell* (1950); *Lament for a Lover* (1970); *Late Night Revel* (1964); *Like Crazy* (1962); *Lilies for My Lovely* (1949); *Lola Brought Her Wreath* (1950); *Make Mine Mink* (1966); *Menace* (1955); *Milady Took the Rap* (1951); *No Regrets for Clara* (1949); *Nyloned Avenger* (1953); *Nymph in the Night* (1962); *Operation Obliterate* (1967); *Persian Pride* (1953); *Playgirl* (1963); *Pursuit* (1953); *Revolt* (1957); *Riviera Showdown* (1967); *Roxy by Proxy* (1965); *Sadie Don't Cry Now* (1952); *Savage Sequel* (1962); *Scarred Faces* (1947);

Silken Menace (1953); *Sister, Don't Hate Me* (1951); *Skirts Bring Me Sorrow* (1952); *Slay Ride for Cutie* (1949); *Smart Girls Don't Talk* (1949); *Some Look Better Dead* (1950); *Sugar & Vice* (1958); *Sweetheart, Here's Your Grave* (1949); *Sweetie, Hold Me Tight* (1952); *Sweet Talk* (1965); *This Dame Dies Soon* (1951); *This Hood for Hire* (1960); *This Woman Is Death* (1948); *Torment for Trixie* (1950); *Uncommon Market* (1962); *Vengeance* (1953); *When Dames Get Tough* (1947); *Women Hate Till Death* (1951); *Young Wolves, The* (1968)

Johnson, E. Richard

(1938–1997)

If Emil Richard Johnson's gritty, grim crime novels about crooks, killers, tough cops, and angry prisoners had a rare immediacy and a core of red-hot reality known to few other authors, it was no coincidence, and it didn't come cheap. The acclaimed author of *Mongo's Back in Town* and the award winning *Silver Street* was himself a convicted murderer and armed robber who spent most of his adult life behind bars and wrote nearly every page of his 11 mostly tough, dark works of fiction in the narrow confines of a cell at Stillwater State Prison in Minnesota. The mid-westerner had gotten into crime after returning from the army in the early 1960s. After two years of stickups he was caught during a robbery in one state and linked to another in Minnesota. The other state let Minnesota have him. A man had been killed in the stickup, and Johnson got 40 years for second-degree murder.

Johnson turned to writing as a way to pass the time in prison. After some inconsequential short pieces (some of them sold to children's magazines), he wrote his first novel. It was about a tough, honest police detective named Tony Lonto, working an urban hell crammed with humanity's dregs, and his job to save them from a marauding killer. The manuscript made the rounds. The legendary mystery fiction editor Joan Kahn (1914–1994) discovered it in the slush pile at Harper & Row. The book, *Silver Street*, won the Mystery Writers of America's Edgar Allan Poe Award for 1968 (it was ceremoniously handed over to him in the prison

visitors' room), and Johnson was hailed as one of the most exciting crime fiction discoveries of the decade. He produced a follow-up the next year and that did not disappoint. *Mongo's Back in Town* presented a more complex story and an even more vivid picture of the criminal underworld, as a gangland hit man coming home for Christmas finds himself in the middle of corruption, treachery, and murder. The book was as good—or better than—its award-nabbing predecessor. Film rights were bought and the book became a well-received television movie.

Working in his cell, surrounded by colorful characters and their violent life stories, studying the tricks of writing and storytelling as he went along, Johnson produced seven books in four years, including another Lonto thriller and the extraordinary *Cage Five Is Going to Break* (1970), a violent depiction of men turned into animals in captivity and a blistering attack on the American prison system. After 1971, Richard's literary output began to sputter. He was falling into destructive patterns in Stillwater. A bad Mafia mystery, *The Cardinali Contract*, appeared as a paperback original in 1975, the last of his work to be published for many years. The success and acclaim had not been enough to keep him out of trouble. Drugs, a prison escape, a return to crime on the outside, recapture, meant the hope of a reduction in his sentence evaporated.

Back in prison Johnson returned to writing. His old reputation had faded among readers, critics, and publishers and his new books were judged unpublishable. Finally, in 1988, with the help of his original editor, he got another Lonto crime story into print, *The Hands of Eddy Lloyd*. It came and went without much notice. Because of his bad behavior in the past, Johnson remained in Stillwater until the last day of his sentence. He came out in 1991, tried to rebuild his life and to go on writing, without much luck. In the mainstream of publishing he was considered washed up, although a growing cadre of hard-boiled and noir fiction fans came to know and worship Johnson's early work for its dark, unrelenting vision of crime and the sort of men who commit it.

Johnson passed away in 1997. The death of the award-winning prisoner/novelist went almost entirely unreported.

(1990); *God Keepers, The* (1970); *Hands of Eddy Lloyd, The* (1988); *Inside Man, The* (1969); *Judas, The* (1971); *Mongo's Back in Town* (1969); *Silver Street* (1968)

Works

Cage Five Is Going to Break (1970); *Cardinali Contract, The* (1975); *Case Load Maximum* (1971); *Dead Flowers*

K

Kalu, Peter (1963–)

The Afro-Caribbean population in the United Kingdom developed an increasingly strong cultural presence in Britain in the last decades of the 20th century. Popular literature, however, showed little activity in regard to this segment—serious and “experiential” novels, yes, but not entertainment—until the establishment of the X Press, an innovative publisher whose line of paperback pulp was specifically aimed at the black British public. The X Press’s first pop lit star was a 30-year-old Mancunian named Peter Kalu, a sometime poet and former law student at Leeds University, of mixed Nigerian and Danish roots. His first novel, *Lick Shot* (1993), an unconventional thriller, was the first of what the author would refer to as his “black cop futuristic novels.” Kalu’s hero was DCI Ambrose Patterson, a high-ranking investigative detective in the British police force. Kalu claimed his work was originally turned down by mainstream publishers because the premise of the black officer was considered too “off the wall,” so Kalu took them at their word and made it science fiction—setting the work in a vague 20 years or so in the future. Patterson was, nonetheless, a highly real and believable character, humane, decent, constantly dealing with the dilemmas of doing his job while knowing that some of the people he helps and works with hate him for the color of his skin.

Kalu had grown up on a diet of Anglo-American thriller writers, including James Mayo, Ross MACDONALD, Chester HIMES, and Marc BRODY, and black consciousness-raising poets like Maya Angelou and Linton Kwesi Johnson. He appreciated serious books on race and racism, but felt that such subjects were not being addressed in genre fiction, where he could reach and influence a wider audience. His second Patterson novel, *Professor X* (1995), went in a new and wilder direction in a story of a supervillain plotting to spread a poison that will kill only the black populace. Kalu, a long-time *Star Trek* buff, then changed gears to write *Black Star Rising*, (1998) an old-school space opera written, he would say, because no other science fiction novel by a black Briton existed.

Kalu struggled for some years—interrupted by various personal obligations—to write a third Patterson thriller. *Yard Dogs* (2001) is about Patterson’s involvement with a black female superstar implicated in a murder, with a more conventional, more down-to-earth narrative. Kalu may be coming to terms with the changing times, his “futuristic” premise starting to read like realism, but his work is no less thrilling for that.

Works

Black Star Rising (1998); *Lick Shot* (1993); *Professor X* (1995); *Yard Dogs* (2001)

Kane, Frank

(1912–1968) *Also wrote as: Frank Boyd*

Frank Kane's popular series about big-city private eye Johnny Liddell was a paperback equivalent of the B-movie westerns of the 1930s and 1940s: one read the books not expecting to find anything different, demanding, or even first-rate about them but because one enjoyed the form. Kane's name on a cover, usually in the company of an awful, punning title (*Trigger Mortis*, *Hearse Class Male*, and so on) and an enticing illustration by Harry Bennett or Robert Stanley, guaranteed an easygoing return to the world of tough guys and dangerous dames, unsavory settings and flippant dialogue punctuated by left hooks and gunfire. There were 29 published novels in the series, and before that an assortment of shorter pieces published in such pulp magazines as *Crack Detective*. With the exception that the hero graduated from being an investigator who worked for a large agency to becoming an owner-operated lone wolf, the last of the Liddell stories was not very different from the first of them—a notion that Kane made literal at times, as he was known to reuse whole scenes, verbatim, from earlier stories, thus cutting down on his thinking if not on his typing.

Kane, Brooklyn-born and a lifetime New Yorker, worked for many years in journalism and corporate public relations before shifting to fiction writing. At the time he was selling crime stories to the pulps he was also sustaining a career writing scripts for such radio shows as *Gangbusters* and *The Shadow*.

In addition to the Johnny Liddells, Kane wrote several suspense novels, some softcore erotica, and under the pen name of Frank Boyd, *Johnny Staccato*, a Gold Medal original paperback based on the fabulous, short-lived noir television series, starring John Cassavetes, about a Greenwich Village bebop pianist turned private detective.

Works

About Face (1947); *Barely Seen* (1964); *Bare Trap* (1952); *Bullet Proof* (1951); *Conspirators, The* (1962); *Crime of Their Life* (1962); *Dead Rite* (1962); *Dead Weight* (1951); *Due or Die* (1961); *Esprit de Corpse*

(1965); *Fatal Undertaking* (1964); *Final Curtain* (1964); *Grave Danger* (1954); *Green Light for Death* (1949); *Guilt-Edged Frame, The* (1964); *Hearse Class Male* (1963); *Johnny Come Lately* (1963); *Johnny Liddell's Morgue* (1956); *Juke Box King* (1959); *Key Witness* (1956); *Living End, The* (1957); *Liz* (1958); *Maid in Paris* (1966); *Margin for Terror* (1967); *Mourning After, The* (1961); *Poisons Unknown* (1953); *Real Gone Guy, A* (1956); *Red Hot Ice* (1955); *Ring-a-Ding-Ding* (1963); *Short Bier, A* (1960); *Slay Ride* (1950); *Stacked Deck* (1961); *Syndicate Girl* (1958); *Time to Prey* (1960); *Trigger Mortis* (1958); *Two to Tangle* (1965)

As Frank Boyd:

Flesh Peddlers, The (1959); *Johnny Staccato* (1960)

Kane, Henry

(1918–) *Also wrote as: Kenneth R. McKay, Mario J. Sagola, Katherine Stapleton*

Often confused with another ubiquitous paperback-writing Kane, the unrelated Frank, Henry had a livelier imagination and more flexibility within the hard-boiled private eye genre in which they both labored. Henry Kane wrote the adventures of two-fisted Manhattan P.I. Peter Chambers in the hero's own voice, which could bob and weave from the conventional style of Raymond CHANDLER to something closer to the pixilated voice of Robert Leslie BELLEM's Dan Turner. Here, for example, is the opening sentence of *Report for a Corpse* (1948):

It was crazier than seven Picassos upside down in the greenest light of early morning and you're drunk on rumba, rum, and remembrance and fresh from your only-beloved—except that five thousand dollars, banked along the edge of the desk in small-heaped hundreds, gave it the unreal aspect of normalcy.

In later years, Kane would tweak the series to keep up with supposed market conditions and made the Peter Chambers stories into highly sexualized mysteries somewhat in the vein of Ted Mark's *The*

Man from O.R.G.Y (or Bellem's early tales published in *Spicy Detective* magazine).

Kane was a lawyer for some years before he wrote his first novel, *A Halo for Nobody* (1947), which launched the crime-solving career of Peter Chambers. The first books in the series were published in hardcover by the prestigious house of Simon & Schuster, but beginning with *Laughter Came Screaming* in 1954, the rest appeared as soft-cover originals brought out by Avon, Popular Library, and other paperback houses.

Kane's attempts to establish another series character besides Chambers were not successful. In the 1970s, after interest in Peter Chambers had petered out, Kane tried to reinvent himself as a writer of contemporary thrillers and melodramas in the manner of a Robert Ludlum or Sidney Sheldon.

Works

Armchair in Hell (1948); *Avenger, The* (1975); *Bomb Job* (1970); *Case of the Murdered Madame, The* (1955); *Come Kill with Me* (1972); *Conceal and Disguise* (1966); *Corpse for Christmas, A* (1951); *Crumpled Cup, The* (1960); *Dead in Bed* (1961); *Deadly Doll, The* (1959); *Deadly Finger* (1957); *Death for Sale* (1957); *Death Is the Last Lover* (1959); *Death of a Dastard* (1963); *Death of a Flack* (1961); *Death of a Hooker* (1961); *Death on the Double* (1957); *Don't Call Me Madame* (1969); *Don't Go Away Dead* (1970); *Edge of Panic* (1950); *Escort Job, The* (1972); *Fistful of Death* (1958); *Frenzy of Evil* (1963); *Halo for Nobody, A* (1947); *Hang by Your Neck* (1949); *Kill for the Millions* (1972); *Kiss! Kiss! Kill! Kill!* (1970); *Kisses of Death* (1962); *Laughter Came Screaming* (1954); *Laughter in the Alehouse* (1968); *Little Red Phone, The* (1982); *Lust of Power* (1975); *Midnight Man, The* (1965); *Moonlighter, The* (1971); *My Business Is Murder* (1954); *Never Give a Millionaire an Even Break* (1963); *Nobody Loves a Loser* (1963); *Perfect Crime* (1967); *Peter Gunn* (1960); *Prey by Dawn* (1965); *Private Eyeful, The* (1959); *Report for a Corpse* (1948); *Run for Doom* (1960); *Schack Job, The* (1969); *Snatch an Eye* (1963); *Tail Job, The* (1971); *Too French and Too Deadly* (1955); *Trinity in Violence* (1955); *Tripoli Documents, The* (1976); *Two Must Die* (1963); *Unholy Trio* (1967); *Until You Are Dead* (1951); *Violator, The* (1974); *Who Killed Sweet Sue?* (1956)

As Kenneth R. McKay:

Indecent Relations (1982); *Shadow of the Knife* (1978)

As Mario J. Sagola:

Manacle, The (1978); *Naked Bishop, The* (1980)

As Katherine Stapleton:

Without Sin Among You (1979)

Keeler, Harry Stephen (1890–1967)

Boyce Barkstone learned forward in his chair, aghast. "And do you mean to tell me," he repeated, unbelievably, to the attorney seated facing him, "that my grandfather left me only a handful of beans—out of an estate of practically \$100,000? And left the \$100,000 itself?—or nearly so—to that fool Academy for the Proving of Social Theories?"

Upon encountering these disconcerting opening lines to the 1944 novel *The Case of the 16 Beans*, you might ask who on Earth would not feel compelled to continue reading. And, should you be familiar with the work of Harry Stephen Keeler, you might likely answer—*anyone who values his sanity*. Keeler, who wrote novels of crime, mystery, and melodrama from the 1920s until his death in 1967, specialized in a peculiarly original form of storytelling that grew more peculiar as the years went on. His oddest works display a madcap complexity, a startling erudition, a zesty, self-styled perhaps unintentional surrealism, and a grotesque devotion to ethnic dialect. A crackpot genius, dazzling polymath, and satiric avant-gardist to his fans, some ready to declare him a pulp Céline or Joyce, Keeler has also been declared a long-winded nutcase who managed to find publishers willing to print complete gibberish. The truth may lie somewhere in between—but it might be more accurate to say that both sides are entirely correct.

Certainly, much of Keeler's work would fit comfortably under the heading of "bad" or "crazy."



Three works from the strange mind of Harry Stephen Keeler. Cover illustrations by Gavin O'Keefe. (Ramble House)

His weirdly tin-eared titles (*The Man with the Magic Eardrums*, *The Defrauded Yeggman*, and *Finger! Finger!*) and character names (Yoho TenBrockerville, Sheriff Bucyrus Duckhouse, Joe Czeszcicki) and his fascinatingly stilted dialogue and loopy sentences often seem like the choices of a man who learned to speak idiomatic English while living on another planet. Lines like these, from *The Case of the Flying Hands* (1947), read as vivid and amusing and yet not quite *right*:

Quiribus Brown, 7-and-a-half-foot-high giant, ascending the narrow low-ceilinged staircase that led upstairs to the “restaurant of the 99 Blackbirds Returning to the Nest, Prop. Hung Fung Lee” in Chicago’s Chinatown, realized that this heavily adorned and ornate place, smelling of weird though fragrant incense, must undoubtedly have been constructed, and was being run, for the delectation of people visiting Chinatown for a thrill.

Keeler’s prose is easily dismissed as ridiculous by the casual and more dedicated reader alike, but it is hard to deny that the writer has an outrageous originality. Although the story lines pay lip service to mystery fiction conventions—they are full of crime, puzzles, clues, detectives, and gangsters—they also seem to explore or anticipate various strands of experimental fiction, such as stream of consciousness,

mixed media, and magic realism. His volumes of notorious “webwork” construction, involving a mounting series of seemingly unconnected narrative elements—supposedly all to aid coherence by the end—defy the rules of fiction conventions in a way that makes William Burroughs’s “cut-up” (words and phrases ordered at random) works seem like a model of narrative coherence.

Keeler was born in Chicago and grew up in a boarding house run by his mother, surrounded by indigent vaudevillians. He studied to become an electrical engineer but drifted into literary pursuits. At age 30 he landed the editor’s job at *10-Story Book*, a mildly risqué pulp magazine that featured a “sophisticated” mix of doggerel, saucy short fiction, and nude or seminude photographs. He stayed at this job for more than 20 years. His novels began appearing in the mid-1920s. Many of the early works were quite popular, and at least one, *Sing Sing Nights*, was filmed in Hollywood, in 1934. *The Man with the Magic Eardrums* was in fact adapted for television, but this was in 1940, before television had caught on, and the production was viewed by no more than 200 people.

As Keeler’s later novels proved less popular and considerably more bizarre, he lost his relatively mainstream United States and British publishers and was reduced to selling to a lending-library house. By the 1950s, though still turning out boxloads of manuscript, Keeler became unpublishable in the United States although later books,

perhaps gaining something in the translation, managed to find publication in Portugal and Spain. At his death, many Keeler works had not found publication anywhere. Beginning in 2000, the dedicated Keeler cultists at the small Ramble House press in Shreveport, Louisiana, have attempted to bring out these lost works at last.

Works

Amazing Web, The (1929); *Behind That Mask* (1933); *Book with the Orange Leaves, The* (1942); *Bottle with the Green Wax Seal, The* (1942); *Box from Japan, The* (1932); *Case of the Barking Clock* (1947); *Case of the Cammy Killer, The* (1946); *Case of the Ivory Arrow, The* (1945); *Case of the Jeweled Ragpicker* (1948); *Case of the Lavender Gripsack* (1944); *Case of the Mysterious Moll, The* (1945); *Case of the 16 Beans, The* (1944); *Case of the Transposed Legs, The* (1948); *Case of the Two Strange Ladies* (1943); *Chameleon, The* (1939); *Cleopatra's Tears* (1940); *Defrauded Yeggman, The* (1937); *Face of the Man from Saturn, The* (1933); *Find the Clock* (1925); *Finger! Finger!* (1938); *Five Silver Buddhas, The* (1935); *Fourth King, The* (1929); *Green Jade Hand, The* (1930); *Man with the Crimson Box, The* (1940); *Man with the Magic Eardrums, The* (1939); *Man with the Wooden Spectacles, The* (1941); *Marceau Case, The* (1936); *Matilda Hunter Murder, The* (1931); *Mysterious Mr. I* (1938); *Mystery of the Fiddling Cracksman* (1934); *Peacock Fan* (1941); *Portrait of Jirjohn Cobb* (1940); *Report on Vanessa Hewstone* (2001); *Riddle of the Traveling Skull, The* (1934); *Riddle of the Yellow Zuri* (1931); *Sharkskin Book, The* (1941); *Sing Sing Nights* (1927); *Six from Nowhere, The* (2001); *Skull of the Waltzing Clown, The* ((1935); *Spectacles of Mr. Cagliostro* (1926); *Ten Hours* (1937); *Thieves' Nights* (1929); *Voice of the Seven Sparrows* (1924); *Washington Square Enigma, The* (1933); *White Circle, The* (2001); *X. Jones of Scotland Yard* (1936); *Y. Cheung, Business Detective* (1939)

Kelley, Thomas P. (1905–1982)

The Canadian Thomas P. Kelley had a colorful and peripatetic upbringing, working with his father, the proprietor of a traveling medicine-show caravan. They roamed across the wilderness from one settlement to another singing, dancing, and peddling elixirs. Other odd jobs followed, including a bruising

period spent as a tank town boxer. Kelley's first substantial work as a writer was a novel-length, fantastic tale of a megalomaniacal Egyptian ruler threatening to destroy the modern world. Kelley's wife was the typist in the family, so he dictated the long story to her, then sent it to what was deemed the only possible destination for such an outlandish imaginative tale, the pulp magazine *Weird Tales*. Editor Farnsworth Wright enjoyed the Canadian's crazed story and began serializing *The Last Pharaoh* with the May 1937 issue.

Kelley's second sale to *Weird Tales* was another long narrative with an Egyptian motif, and it would prove to be his most enduring pulp creation: *I Found Cleopatra*. As described in the issue of November 1938, it was "a glamorous weird tale of romance and mystery, of the almost incredible fate that befell a young American who sought the tomb of the famous Egyptian Queen." *I Found Cleopatra* was a breathless pastiche of H. Rider HAGGARD and Sax ROHMER with Kelley's own over-the-top imagination mixed in. From page one, Kelley grabbed the reader by the throat: "Even at the beginning I warn you that you will not believe this strangest of stories. The human mind is quick to doubt the bizarre, and this tale takes us far beyond the borders of sanity. Indeed, have I not time and again tried to delude myself that it all has been some horrible dream, and I the unfortunate victim?" The story concerns a "young two-fisted American lawyer" who inherits a strange scroll that reveals the whereabouts of the body of the Egyptian queen Cleopatra in the innermost part of the Sahara Desert—"not dead, but sleeping." The lawyer is visited by beautiful strangers, attacked by strange beasts, thrown off an ocean liner miles from the African shore, attacked by a Tuareg army, lost in the desert, finds the actual Garden of Eden, an enchanted lake, and in the end, Queen Cleo herself, still quite fetching after 2,000 years.

Kelley produced one last serial for *Weird Tales*, another fantasy adventure called *A Million Years in the Future*, begun in the July 1940 issue. Kelley wrote for other pulps during the war years, but mostly for Canadian publications. With the end of the pulp era, he specialized in Canadian-interest material, writing novels, histories, and true crime

(including *The Vengeance of the Black Donnellys*, about Canada's bloodiest feud). In 1974 he wrote a well-received biography of his father and a memoir of his childhood in the medicine shows, *The Fabulous Kelley*.

Works

Black Donnellys, The (1954); *Face That Launched a Thousand Ships, The* (1941); *I Found Cleopatra* (1938); *I Stole \$16,000,000* (1956); *Jesse James: His Life and Death* (1950); *Last Pharaoh, The* (1937); *Million Years in the Future, A* (1940); *Run Indian Run* (1972); *Vengeance of the Black Donnellys* (1962)

Kelton, Elmer

(1926–) *Also wrote as: Tom Early, Lee McElroy*

Elmer Kelton is one of the most highly regarded of latter-day specialists in western fiction. Although most of his novels were first published as paperback originals, many qualify as serious historical novels, taking as their subject the rambunctious and violent state of Texas in the 19th century. Texas was where Kelton was born, educated, and has spent his entire life, and nearly all of his work is set within its vast confines, with only an occasional ride across the borders to Mexico and western Arkansas. Trained as a journalist, Kelton held various editorial positions on newspapers and trade periodicals, including five years as editor of *Sheep and Goat Raiser* magazine.

His career as a fiction writer began with the sale of western short stories to the pulp magazines. Early novels like *Shadow of a Star* (1959), the story of a frontier deputy, and *Donovan* (1961), a tale of outlaws and revenge, were traditional genre efforts that retained their pulp roots. Later efforts showed the author's expanding command as an artist—more complex characterization, larger themes, and unusual subject matter. Examples of the latter include Kelton's narrative of an actual 1880s labor strike by ranch hands (*The Day the Cowboys Quit*, 1971), and a novel about the interaction between Indians and an ex-slave, one of the legendary "Buffalo Soldiers," Negro cavalymen stationed in the 1870s southwest (*The Wolf and the Buffalo*, 1980).

Kelton has won all the awards available to the writers in his field, multiple times in some cases, and was given a supreme accolade in the late 1990s by his peers in the Western Writers of America, who voted him "All Time Best Western Author."

Works

After the Bugles (1967); *Badger Boy* (2001); *Barbed Wire* (1958); *Big Brand, The* (1986); *Bitter Trail* (1962); *Buckskin Line* (1999); *Buffalo Wagons* (1957); *Cloudy in the West* (1997); *Dark Thicket* (1985); *Day the Cowboys Quit, The* (1971); *Donovan* (1961); *Far Canyon, The* (1994); *Good Old Boys, The* (1978); *Hanging Judge* (1969); *Honor at Daybreak* (1991); *Horsehead Crossing* (1964); *Hot Iron* (1956); *Llano River* (1966); *Man Who Rode Midnight* (1987); *Manhunters* (1974); *Shadow of a Star* (1959); *Slaughter* (1992); *Smiling County* (1998); *Stand Proud* (1984); *There's Always Another Chance and Other Stories* (1986); *Time It Never Rained, The* (1973); *Wag-ontongue* (1972); *Wolf and the Buffalo, The* (1980)

As Tom Early:

Sons of Texas: The Danger, the Daring (1989); *Sons of Texas: The Raiders* (1989); *Sons of Texas: The Rebels* (1990)

As Lee McElroy:

Eyes of the Hawk (1981); *Joe Peppes* (1975); *Long Way to Texas* (1976)

Kenton, Maxwell (Terry Southern [1924–1995] and Mason Hoffenberg [1922–1986])

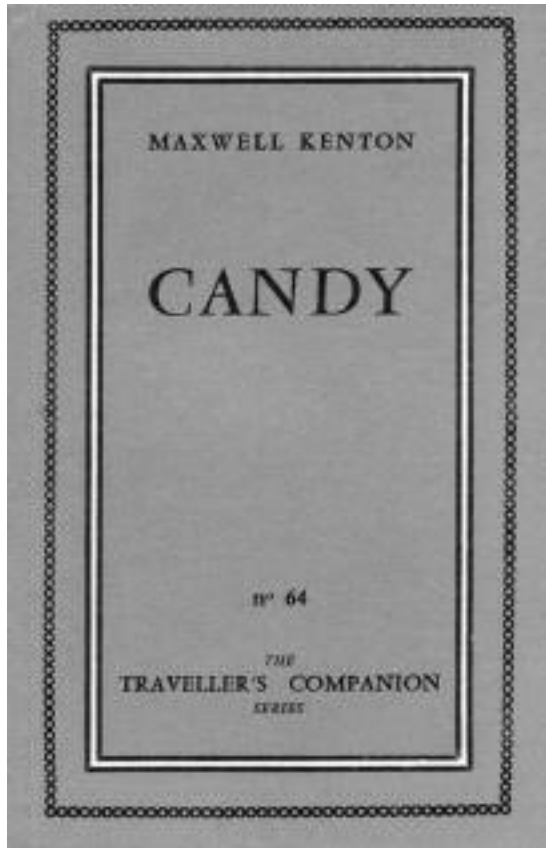
In the late 1950s and early 1960s, *Candy* by Maxwell Kenton took its place among such "notorious" works as *Naked Lunch*, *Lolita*, and *Tropic of Cancer* in breaking down the barricades of censorship in American publishing. A decidedly less serious work than the others, *Candy* was a whimsically erotic, updated, New World take on the classic *Candide*. Voltaire's naive protagonist was now embodied by a young, wide-eyed and alluring suburban American woman, her globe-trotting misadventures centering on her eminent desirability to a series of weird and lecherous men—yogis,

hunchbacks, barroom gynecologists—and her comic obliviousness to their lust. The novel managed to have its cake and eat it too, readable as both a cheesy porn novel or as a hip spoof of a cheesy porn novel. “Maxwell Kenton,” like the bylines of so much “erotica,” was a pseudonym, in this case belonging to two men, Terry Southern and Mason Hoffenberg, two U.S. expatriates living, in the late ’50s, a hand-to-mouth good life in Europe. Hoffenberg had seen Paris as a soldier during World War II and decided that was the place for him. He moved back permanently in 1948, worked for a news agency, married a French woman, and lived near Montparnasse. Southern was a Texan at loose ends who had sold some short stories and poems to literary magazines and wanted to write

novels. Struggling along, the friends gladly agreed to supply a so-called dirty book for the Paris-based English-language publisher Olympia Press.

Run by a colorful and enterprising man named Maurice Girodias, Olympia Press produced a line of paperbacks with erotic and otherwise outré subject matter, fiction and nonfiction that contained words and situations considered censorably obscene and pornographic in English-speaking countries. His buyers were mostly mail-order subscribers, English and American tourists, and U.S. military personnel visiting Paris and French seaports. The Traveller’s Companion series of Olympia publications was packaged in the discreet style of all French paperbacks, without illustration, in plain, dull green jackets and tasteful lettering (though to some American buyers these almost blank covers made the Traveller’s Companions even more enticing, like a plain window shade covering something incredibly wicked within). The books were bought and read as forbidden fruit, some smuggled back to the United States and United Kingdom as contraband from the eternally wicked Continent.

Girodias’s line included both highly literary and esoteric works like Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita* and Samuel Beckett’s *Watt*, as well as those with titles like *White Thighs* and *Roman Orgy*, clearly intended only to entertain and to titillate. In some instances, Girodias came into possession of manuscripts that had been turned down as dangerous by all the mainstream publishers in the United States and United Kingdom (as was the case with J. P. Donleavy’s *The Ginger Man* and Nabokov’s *Lolita*, the tale of Humbert Humbert and his beloved “nymphet”). More often the Olympia titles were made-to-order erotica, cleverly written in many cases but intended mainly to deliver to the reader a steady glow of arousal. Girodias’s usual technique was to come up with a seasonal series of titles and made-up bylines (for example, *I’ve Got a Whip in My Suitcase* by Beauregard de Farniente) and perhaps a short précis of the subject matter, put these into a catalog for subscribers, and then wait for orders to come in. He would then seek out some of the beatniks and expatriates lying about in the Left Bank hotels and flophouses and offer the assignments. Writers of Olympia Press books in



This subdued Olympia Press cover of *Candy* (1958) contrasts with the book’s notoriously lascivious content.

Paris included Chester HIMES, Iris Owens, Alexander Trocchi, Patrick Bowles, and Norman Rubington. Mason Hoffenberg had written a couple of Olympia titles on his own, *Sin for Breakfast* (under the name Hamilton Drake) and *Until She Screams* (supposedly the work of “Faustino Perez”). Most Olympia Press authors were paid from \$500 to an occasional \$1,500 for all rights, but actually getting the money could be a problem—many were paid in handfuls of francs at a time, cash taken straight from Girodias’s pocket.

Southern had moved from Paris to Geneva but had returned to the French capital for a visit in December 1956. Eager to drum up some income, he agreed with his friend Mason Hoffenberg’s suggestion that they pay a visit to publisher Girodias at his office on the rue de Nesle. They talked up a salable-sounding story line for the series, one about a young, high-minded American girl. “A sensitive, progressive-school humanist,” Southern said, “who comes from Wisconsin to New York’s lower East Side to be an art student, social worker, etc., and to find ‘beauty in mean places’ . . . her feeling of ‘being needed’ sustains her for quite a while, through a devouring gauntlet of freaks, faggots, psychiatrists and aesthetic cults . . .”

Girodias had asked to have the book completed in time for his upcoming spring releases, but the two expatriate authors did not turn in the manuscript for nearly a year. Girodias found it to be hilarious, much better than he had expected, and even asked the writers if they wanted to use their own names instead of a pseudonym. Southern begged off, claiming he was just then trying to sell a children’s book and did not think the appearance of *Candy* would work to his favor in this regard. Instead, he sent Girodias an “About the Author” squib, which the publisher included in his new catalog: “Maxwell Kenton is . . . an American nuclear physicist, formerly prominent in atomic research and development who, in February 1957, resigned his post ‘because I found the work becoming more and more philosophically untenable’ and has since devoted himself fully to creative writing. . . . Perhaps it may be said that Mr. Kenton has brought to bear on his new vocation the same creative talent and originality which

so distinguished him in the field he deserted. And surely here is an instance where Science’s loss is Art’s gain.”

Southern and Hoffenberg’s combination of the hilarious and the lascivious, their slashes of social satire and their affable outrageousness, made *Candy* a cult hit and—in the wake of the successful stateside publication of two other outré Olympia Press titles, Nabokov’s *Lolita* and John Cleland’s *Fanny Hill*—it found a home at Putnam, a major New York publisher. Unfortunately, Maurice Girodias’s sometimes chaotic business practices left *Candy* without a proper copyright registration at the time, and so Putnam had to vie for readers with an assortment of fly-by-night U.S. publishers issuing pirated editions of the hip hit.

Candy’s fame helped to establish Terry Southern’s reputation as a daring new literary talent and wicked satirist and open doors that eventually led to Hollywood and screenwriting jobs, including the 1964 film masterpiece, *Dr. Strangelove*. From Maxwell Kenton, the tweedy-sounding atomic scientist and lecherous chronicler of Miss Candy Christian, no more has been heard.

Works

Candy (1958)

Kersh, Gerald

(1911–1968)

If compelled to make comparisons, one might call Gerald Kersh Britain’s Charles WILLEFORD or Jim THOMPSON, or to get very grand, a modern Edgar Allan Poe, for his originality, mordant humor, vibrant sense of the awful, and talent for evoking the world’s seediest corners and humanity’s least likable specimens. Whoever one ranks as his peers, Kersh certainly has his place among pulp lit’s great oddballs, surrealists, and genre experimenters. Although many of the author’s works were published in conventional categories—thriller, horror, ghost story—Kersh was seldom constrained by such labels, and his typical work shifted about in the most unexpected directions. The Kershian world was a bizarre place filled with a flotsam

and jetsam of freaks and lowlifes—wrestlers, ventriloquists, gangsters, hustlers, chess masters, cannibals, famous authors, and Siamese twins.

Kersh's most famous work (due in part to a famous film adaptation) was one of his earliest, a novel, *Night and the City* (1938), the story of a hustling loser looking for success in the corrupt wrestling business run by the London underworld. The novel's grubby antiheroics and dark worldview anticipated the burgeoning style of crime fiction and film known as noir. His first of many short story collections, *I Got References* (1939), featured a selection of weird tales with sharp psychological insight. His most famous short story—again, due to a subsequent transfer to the screen—first collected in 1942, was "The Extraordinarily Horrible Dummy," the tale of a tawdry ventriloquist's unsettling relationship with his evil wooden partner (the unforgettable segment in the 1945 film *Dead of Night*). Other great, unusual short works include the time-traveling fantasy "The Brighton Monster" and "The Queen of Pig Island," a grotesque love story of shipwrecked sideshow attractions, with ardent midgets fighting over a beautiful multiple amputee. Kersh's great novels include the offbeat murder mystery *Prelude to a Certain Midnight* (1947) and his epic account of London, *Fowlers End* (1957). But it is likely the reader will find something of interest in almost anything Kersh wrote.

Immigrating to the United States in the 1940s, Kersh became an American citizen for the final 10 years of his life.

Works

An Ape, a Dog, and a Serpent (1945); *Angel and the Cuckoo, The* (1966); *Brazen Bull, The* (1952); *Brighton Monster and Others, The* (1953); *Clock Without Hands* (1949); *Dead Look On, The* (1943); *Faces in a Dusty Picture* (1944); *Fowlers End* (1957); *Guttersnipe: Little Novels* (1954); *I Got References* (1939); *Implacable Hunter, The* (1961); *Jews Without Jehovah* (1934); *Long Cool Day in Hell, A* (1965); *Men Are So Ardent* (1935); *Neight Man Nor Dog* (1946); *Night and the City* (1938); *Nine Lives of Bill Nelson* (1943); *On an Odd Note* (1958); *Prelude to a Certain Midnight* (1947); *Sad Road to the Sea* (1947); *Secret Masters, The* (1953); *Selected Stories* (1943); *Sergeant Nelson of the Guards* (1945); *Son of the Flea, The* (1948); *Terribly Wild Flowers, The* (1962); *They*

Die with Their Boots Clean (1941); *Thousand Deaths of Mr. Small, The* (1950); *Ugly Face of Love and Other Stories, The* (1960); *Weak and the Strong, The* (1945)

Knox, John H.

(1905–1983)

Born in New Mexico, Knox grew up in Abilene, Texas, where his father was the Reverend Dr. T. S. Knox, the pastor at the First Presbyterian Church. His father read Shakespeare to him as a boy and he grew up with a love of poetry and great books. In his late teens, under the spell of popular writer Jim Tully and other chroniclers of the hobo life, Knox left home to ride the rails and see the country from a "side-door Pullman." He spent two years on the road, taking every sort of odd job, including a term as an assistant cameraman at a Hollywood movie studio. Returned to Texas, Knox attended McMurry College, worked on a student publication there, and wrote his first poems and stories. His first professional sale was a poem to *Brief Stories* magazine. After completing a term at McMurry he took a job as a shoe salesman and, in his room behind his father's church house, he devoted his nights to writing. Although Knox was obsessed with modern and recent writers of serious literature, and especially the weighty Europeans Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust, and Knut Hamsun, he aimed his own fiction at the frivolous pulp magazines that had entered their golden and gaudiest age at the dawn of the 1930s.

A tall, big-shouldered man who crouched over an old portable typewriter, hunting and pecking for each letter, Knox began producing pulp stories, and the pulp publishers in New York City began buying them. He wrote stories in various genres, and when an editor of a certain pulp sent encouragement—or paid promptly—he would for a time direct particular attention to the needs of that magazine. This was made clear when Popular Publications introduced a new style of terror fiction magazines—often called "weird menace"—in *Dime Mystery* magazine in 1933. These were horror stories that (with few exceptions) excluded the supernatural, and featured elaborate scenes of sadistic and bizarre torture. Beginning with his

contribution of the story “Frozen Energy” to the December 1933 issue, Knox published a story nearly every month in either *Dime Mystery* or *Popular’s* two follow-up weird-menace titles, *Horror Stories* and *Terror Tales*, right up until the genre was effectively shut down under pressure from moral watchdogs and politicians in the early 1940s.

Knox, who held his attendance at a lecture once given by novelist Thomas Wolfe as one of the great moments in his life, was probably not artistically fulfilled by the writing of stories with titles like “Dance of the Beast People” or “Brides for Satan’s Pupils,” but he did not let this get in the way of his delivering what readers of *Horror Stories* and the others were expecting, as in these savory sentences from “The Buyer of Souls”:

“Brand him with the sign of the unutterable and secret name of Satan!” the guttural voice of the witch intoned out of the smoke. . . . Then the iron struck, sizzling. The smell of burning flesh was in my nostrils, choking me, and a blinding flash of pain struck my skull like a lightning bolt. . . . There was an awful burning above my ribs; stinking smoke still rose from the blackened ridges of flesh. The girl was laughing, her lips quivering insanely as she wallowed in the spectacle of my pain.”

In Abilene in the ’30s, Knox was at the center of a small literary/intellectual community of writers and would-be writers including Edward ANDERSON (future author of *Thieves Like Us*), the historian William Curry Holden, and Files Bledsoe (future *Daily Worker* writer and coauthor of the choreographer Ruth St. Denis’s autobiography). In this high-minded atmosphere Knox would seldom feel comfortable talking about his latest horror or detective story sale. By the end of the decade his first marriage had ended. He married again in 1941 and had children with his second wife, at which point he moved in search of steady, good-paying work, ending up at a steelworks in California. He moved

back to Texas after World War II, buying a farm near the small town of Devine, and he tried to revive his dormant pulp fiction career, selling crime stories to *Black Mask* and *Dime Detective*, among other magazines. But the pulps were dying, and his attempts to find new markets were not very successful. A novel he had spent a long time completing was lost in a fire that burned down his farm. He relocated to Alabama, and started a new life as a newspaper writer and local history author, earning part of his income as a real estate developer. By the time of his death Knox had long ceased to think about his days as a busy pulpster, although he had written more than 1 million words for the old magazines, and many—particularly the weird-menace titles for which he had produced 39 stories under his own name and perhaps many more under pseudonyms—were now hotly collected items selling for hundreds of times their cover price.

Works

“Blood Moon” (1935); “Brides for Satan’s Pupils” (1937); “Bright Rose of Death” (1934); “Buyer of Souls, The” (1936); “Children of the Black God” (1936); “Coffin for the Living” (1936); “Corpse Queen’s Lovers, The” (1936); “Court of the Grave Creatures” (1935); “Dance of the Beast People” (1940); “Dead Demand Tribute, The” (1935); “Dead Man’s Shadow” (1934); “Flame Maiden, The” (1936); “Frozen Energy” (1933); “Gallery of the Damned” (1936); “Girl into Mummy” (1935); “Girls for the Gods of Fire” (1938); “His Bodiless Twins” (1935); “Ice Maiden, The” (1935); “Kiss Me and Die” (1937); “Little Beasts of Death” (1934); “Master of Monsters” (1935); “Mates for the Murder Girls” (1937); “Men Without Blood” (1935); “Music from Hell” (1935); “Nightmare” (1934); “Now I Lay Me Down to Die” (1937); “Pain People, The” (1937); “Playground of the Tiny Killers” (1940); “Reunion in Hell” (1936); “Soul Eaters, The” (1934); “Tenement of the Damned” (1937); “Those Who Dwell in Coffins” (1934); “Village Cursed by God, The” (1937); “When the Blood-God Ruled” (1935); “Witch’s Handmaiden” (1935)

L

L'Amour, Louis

(1908–1988) *Also wrote as: Tex Burns*

L'Amour was touted by his publisher as the world's best-selling author, and there can be no argument that he was very, popular until the day he died and continues to have a large readership. Even as the western genre in books, magazines, films, and television faded far from its previous position at the center of the popular culture, and the other late-20th-century practitioners of the form eked out their careers in bottom-list anonymity, L'Amour maintained his status as a major brand-name author. Through his grand storytelling talent, his ability to create full-blooded characters who transcended the easy clichés of other writers, his vast knowledge of history, and his longtime publisher's marketing skills, L'Amour came to represent the West and the western as *the* chronicler of America's western frontier days, as no other writer—not even the iconic Zane GREY or Max BRAND—ever had. L'Amour's literary Americana was so venerated in his later years that he received the Congressional Gold Medal and the Medal of Freedom, the only genre star and former pulp magazine writer to achieve such distinction.

L'Amour—the original family spelling was “LaMoore”—was born in South Dakota, the last of his parents' seven children. In the early 1900s the Dakotas were not far from their own Wild West days, and the older neighbors of Louis's youth had vivid memories of early struggles and Indian wars. At 15 he moved with the family to Oklahoma,

soaking up more of the lore and feel of the West. His parents were learned and had encouraged his education, but L'Amour wanted adventure and left home as a teenager, wandering the country and then the world, taking up odd and exotic jobs from ditchdigger to elephant walker. For many years he sustained himself as a tank town boxer. The rough-neck work coexisted with a literary urge and a sensitivity that led L'Amour to write and self-publish romantic poems. World War II took up his time for several years—he saw extensive combat in Europe—and then, finally, nearing 40, L'Amour devoted himself to writing.

L'Amour began selling to the pulp magazines, writing everything from boxing and exotic adventure stories based on his own experiences to detective mysteries and, of course, westerns. Once he began selling he never stopped. Western magazines were still in abundance in those postwar days even as the other pulp titles began to disappear. L'Amour's first published novels were pseudonymous assignments, adventures of the long-established Hopalong Cassidy character created by Clarence Mulford. But soon L'Amour would establish his own name as a novelist. In 1953 Gold Medal books published *Hondo*, L'Amour's expanded short story of a rugged cavalry scout, his relationship with a widow and her child, and their battle against the elements and marauding Indians. L'Amour's popularity as a paperback writer was immediate (the simultaneous hit movie version of *Hondo*, starring John Wayne, did not hurt the author's growing reputation). Once estab-

lished, he would produce three or more books a year for decades.

While many of L'Amour's novels were simple action stories that demonstrated his training in the pulps, as the years went on his depiction of the West would grow larger in scope and depth: an epic vision of a nation's expansion, the vast and varied landscape (from Arizona to Alaska), the anthropology of the frontier emigrants and the native populace, and an almost political endorsement of white Americans' manifest destiny. With *The Daybreakers*, published in 1960, L'Amour began the Sackett family saga, his immensely popular series of loosely connected books that followed the adventures of various and succeeding generations of a frontier family whose stories would encompass all the great themes—and great clichés—of the genre.

At his death in 1988, L'Amour had left many uncollected stories and some unpublished manuscripts, which his heirs have gradually brought into print. Some of these posthumous releases, like the short story collection *May There Be a Road* (2001), include an element of surprise for longtime fans, with the inclusion of unknown and unexpected L'Amour tales of tough, urban private eyes in the Dashiell HAMMETT tradition.

Works

Bendigo Shafter (1978); *Beyond the Great Snow Mountains* (2000); *Bowdrie* (1983); *Bowdrie's Law* (1984); *Brionne* (1971); *Broken Gun, The* (1966); *Burning Hills, The* (1956); *Californios* (1974); *Callaghan* (1972); *Catlow* (1963); *Chancy* (1968); *Cherokee Trail, The* (1982); *Comstock Lode* (1981); *Conagher* (1969); *Crossfire Trail* (1954); *Dark Canyon* (1963); *Daybreakers* (1960); *Down the Long Hills* (1968); *Dutchman's Flat* (1986); *Empty Land, The* (1969); *End of the Drive* (1997); *Fallon* (1963); *First Fast Draw, The* (1959); *Flint* (1960); *Galloway* (1970); *Guns of the Timberlands* (1955); *Hanging Woman Creek* (1964); *Haunted Mesa, The* (1987); *Heller with a Gun* (1954); *High Graders, The* (1965); *High Lonesome* (1962); *Hills of Homicide, The* (1984); *Hondo* (1953); *How the West Was Won* (1963); *Iron Marshall, The* (1979); *Jubal Sackett* (1985); *Key Lock Man, The* (1965); *Kid Rodelo* (1966); *Kilkenny* (1954); *Killoe* (1962); *Kilrone* (1966); *Kiowa Trail* (1965); *Lando* (1962); *Last of the Breed* (1986); *Last Stand at Papago Wells* (1957); *Law*

of the Desert Born (1983); *Lonely Men, The* (1969); *Lonely on the Mountain* (1980); *Lonesome Gods, The* (1983); *Long Ride Home* (1989); *Lonigan* (1988); *Man Called Noon, The* (1970); *Man from Shibbereen* (1973); *Matagorda* (1967); *May There Be a Road* (2001); *Mojave Crossing* (1964); *Mountain Valley War, The* (1978); *Mustang Man* (1966); *Night over the Solomons* (1986); *Outlaws of Mesquite* (1991); *Passin' Through* (1985); *Proving Trail, The* (1979); *Quick and the Dead, The* (1973); *Radi-gan* (1958); *Reilly's Luck* (1970); *Rider of Lost Creek, The* (1976); *Rider of the Ruby Hills, The* (1986); *Ride the Dark Trail* (1972); *Ride the River* (1983); *Riding for the Brand* (1986); *Sackett* (1961); *Sackett Brand, The* (1965); *Sackett's Gold* (1977); *Sackett's Land* (1974); *Shadow Riders, The* (1982); *Shalako* (1962); *Silver Canyon* (1956); *Sitka* (1957); *Sky Liners, The* (1967); *Son of a Wanted Man* (1984); *Strong Shall Live, The* (1980); *Taggart* (1959); *Tall Stranger, The* (1957); *To Tame a Land* (1955); *To the Far Blue Mountains* (1976); *Trail to Crazy Man, The* (1986); *Trail to the West, A* (1986); *Treasure Mountain* (1972); *Tucker* (1971); *Under the Sweetwater Rim* (1971); *Walking Drum, The* (1984); *War Party* (1975); *Warrior's Path, The* (1980); *West from Singapore* (1987); *West of the Pilot Range* (1986); *Westward the Tide* (1950); *Where the Long Grass Blows* (1976); *Yondering* (1980)

As Tex Burns

Hopalong Cassidy and the Riders of High Rock (1951); *Hopalong Cassidy and the Rustlers of West Fork* (1951); *Hopalong Cassidy, Trouble Shooter* (1952)

La Spina, Greye (1889–1969)

La Spina's significance is more historical than artistic. She was one of the few women to write regularly for the leading fantasy/horror pulps, and was a contributor to the very first issue of the first American pulp magazine devoted exclusively to tales of horror and the fantastic.

Born in Wakefield, Massachusetts, the daughter of a Methodist minister, she was a precocious child, publishing her own "small press" newspaper at the age of 10, with pages of poems and local gossip. She peddled copies to the neighbors, taking anything from pennies to pins as payment. As a teenager, she won a literary contest and had a story

published in *Connecticut Magazine*. La Spina gave up writing to attend to her marriage and the raising of a daughter, but in her early thirties she was drawn back to it. She thought up a scary story of an evil werewolf, which she called "Wolf of the Steppes." She gave to the story a complex epistolary structure, the narrative carried on in a series of different characters' letters. Here is the gist of it: elderly Dr. Greeley rescues a terrified young Russian woman, Vera. The woman has escaped from her nemesis, the thick-eyebrowed, sharp-taloned Serge Vassilovich, a magician-werewolf, an evil creature who has caused the death of her parents and was about to ravage the young woman when she got away. Old Dr. Greeley and a friend, Dr. Connors, lay a trap for Serge, killing him and turning his corpse back into a wolf to avoid any trouble with the authorities.

She sent her lurid story to *Popular Magazine*, Street & Smith's general interest pulp. It lay in the slush pile until the publisher introduced a new, innovative pulp called *The Thrill Book*. This new magazine was looking for "strange, bizarre, occult, mysterious tales . . . containing mystic happenings, weird adventures, feats of leger-de-main, spiritualism . . ." La Spina's tale seemed more than appropriate and thus became the landmark publication's first lead story when *The Thrill Book* made its debut with a cover date of March 15, 1919 (and a rather bland come-on atop the title: "A Delightful Number of a New Type of Magazine").

La Spina had at least three more stories published in the innovative magazine before its abrupt demise (she claimed to have written other stories for *The Thrill Book* under a pen name). "From Over the Border," "The Haunted Landscape," and "The Ultimate Ingredient" were printed in the May 15, June 1, and October 15 issues respectively. Her work was thus represented in the very last issue as well as the first. Before the writer had much time to suffer over the end of her regular market, she won a \$2,500 short story contest run by *Photoplay* magazine. Soon there would be another magazine devoted to the macabre—an altogether superior and long-lasting publication—called *Weird Tales*, and La Spina began writing for it soon after Farnsworth Wright took over the job of editor. Her long association

with the magazine began with a tale of voodoo, "The Tortoise Shell Cat." In April 1925, *Weird Tales* began publishing her first novel-length work, *Invaders from the Dark*. This suspenseful werewolf story caused quite a stir. Another werewolf tale, "The Devil's Pool," became the cover story for the June 1932 issue.

In the 1920s and 1930s, LaSpina worked as a journalist, and she was said to have been the first female newspaper photographer. Following the death of her husband, La Spina married again, to a deposed Italian baron.

Works

"Dead Wagon" (Sept. 1927); "Devil's Pool" (June 1932); "Fettered" (July-Oct. 1926); "From Over the Border" (May 15, 1919); "Gargoyle" (Sept.-Nov. 1925); "Great Pan Is Here" (Nov. 1943); "Haunted Landscape, The" (June 1, 1919); "Invaders from the Dark" (Apr.-June 1925; 1960); "Last Cigarette" (Mar. 1925); "Old Mr. Wiley" (Mar. 1951); "Rat Master, The" (Mar. 1942); "Scarf of the Beloved" (Feb. 1925); "Suitor from the Shades" (June 1927); "Tortoise Shell Cat" (Nov. 1924); "Ultimate Ingredient, The" (Oct. 15, 1919); "Wolf of the Steppes" (Mar. 1, 1919)

Lengel, Frances (Alexander Trocchi) (1925–1984)

The erudite erotica writer Frances Lengel, author of a series of shocking novels that titillated the adventurous subscribers to the Olympia Press in the 1950s, was in reality the brilliant Scottish writer and heroin addict Alexander Trocchi. Early in the decade, Trocchi had left his studies at Glasgow University armed with the seed money of a scholarship to study European cultures. He settled in Paris. A terribly unworldly fellow in the beginning, he soon fell in with the Left Bank bohemian and expatriate crowd in the years after World War II. Trocchi founded what would become a legendary literary journal, *Merlin*, a launching pad for many of the interesting British and U.S. writers of the 1950s.

Like most of the foreign layabouts and would-be artists around the Saint-Germain-des-Près, Trocchi was ever short of cash. He found a source

of occasional income in Maurice Girodias, the owner of the controversial Olympia Press (see KENTON, Maxwell), a small Parisian publishing company that specialized in unusual English-language paperback editions, both avant-garde and daring literary properties and semi-explicit erotica intended for subscribers and Anglo-American tourists, printed in what was known as the Traveller's Companion series. Girodias was impressed by Trocchi: "Alex was always busy cultivating extreme attitudes, extravagant styles and wild dreams with great gusto and appetite." Girodias offered Trocchi the opportunity to write some of the sex novels on Olympia's seasonal lists (the lurid titles were heralded in Girodias's catalogs long before the books were ever written). The pay was minimal—something in the neighborhood of a few hundred dollars—but Trocchi, already under the allure of heroin and eager for funding, grabbed the assignments. He returned value for money in a series of elegant, shocking, and arousing novels that included such cult classics as *Helen and Desire*, a coming-of-age story in the form of a diary of a young Australian woman prone to erotic hallucinations; *School for Sin*, about a young Irish country lass en route to Dublin who falls into the clutches of an irresistible seducer and finds herself receiving an unsentimental education at the institution of the title; and *Thongs*, following yet another female's downward path, this time from Glasgow to Paris and London, as she becomes initiated into the world of bondage and discipline, ultimately becoming London's legendary "Painmistress."

Trocchi's Olympia dirty books were concerned with spoiled innocence and the darker side of human nature and relationships, based on subjugation and pain. They were highlighted by bouts of sadomasochistic sex. Girodias would call Lengel/Trocchi "the first of Olympia's all-out literary stallions." So pleased was he with Trocchi's pseudonymous porn that he handed him the prestige assignment of writing volume 5 of *My Life and Loves* by Frank Harris, the legendary Edwardian rakehell and erotic memoirist. While the late Harris himself had written the first four volumes, the fifth, which Girodias had arranged to publish through license with Harris's widow, turned out not to exist. The publisher, ever resourceful, hired

Trocchi, who was pleased to pretend to be Harris and created from scratch a work that was a brilliant imitation, every bit as boastful and orgiastic as volumes 1 through 4.

Trocchi later moved on to New York and Canada, and produced *Cain's Book* (1960), a masterful, autobiographical novel of a drug addict, one of the key works in the Beat canon of the '50s and '60s. Trocchi often was trumpeted by fans as the British William Burroughs after the controversial American author and drug addict. Indeed, the two men were longtime friends ("He used to help me shoot up," Burroughs recalled. "Old Alex could find a vein in a mummy.") Unlike the American writer, Trocchi's addictions destroyed his ability to go on writing, and although he was busy in the '60s and '70s with various revolutionary and artistic causes, he produced no other significant literary work. His last years were depleted by the ravages of addiction.

Works

Carnal Days of Helen Sefereris (1954); *Helen and Desire* (1954); *School for Sin* (1955); *White Thighs* (1955); *Young Adam* (1954)

Leroux, Gaston

(1868–1927)

A figure of great imagination and irrefutable cool, Gaston Leroux stands among the masters and chief architects of modern pulp fiction. Leroux, in a series of mysteries and thrillers, variously filled his fiction with clever puzzles, narrative surprises, bizarre sensationalism, and frightening thrills. He could be equally dazzling in the Sherlock Holmes tradition of brainy mystery or with the sort of surreal horror practiced by H. P. LOVECRAFT and Bram Stoker, and on at least one occasion he would create a story that would rank among the great mythic tales of romantic literature.

A journalist before turning to fiction, Leroux was born in Paris in 1868. He grew up to become an adventurous news gatherer, roaming the danger zones of Europe and Africa. Within the circles of European journalism in the late 1890s his exploits and scoops were legend. In 1907 he published his

first novel, *The Mystery of the Yellow Room*, considered by critics to be the most ingenious of the “locked room” mysteries, and a direct influence on the many variations to come (John Dickson Carr, in particular, owed a large portion of his oeuvre to this work of Leroux’s). The book introduced the character of Rouletabille, Leroux’s young, bullet-headed, rule-breaking journalist hero, and his Watson-like sidekick, Sainclair, both of whom returned in a less perfect but still intriguing second mystery with a most memorable title, *The Perfume of the Lady in Black*. Five more Rouletabille novels would follow.

Leroux’s second series character was a more original and subversive creation, the extraordinary and mysterious outlaw/magician/detective Cheri-Bibi, his life “a secret whose depths no one had ever plumbed but himself. What did anyone know of him?” The Cheri-Bibi adventures, like those of Marcel ALLAIN and Pierre Souvestre’s *Fantomas*, have a delirious, dreamlike quality—the reader drifts along with the odd, sometimes inexplicable yet pleasing narratives, ingesting Leroux’s deadpan surrealism like draws on a pipe of opium.

In 1911 Gaston Leroux published what would become by far his most famous work, *The Phantom of the Opera*. This romantic and horrific tale of a masked creature haunting the Paris Opera House is too well known to describe its memorable plot-line further, but Leroux’s original novel remains the greatest version of a frequently filmed and staged story, a richly atmospheric and grandly imagined work.

Works

Adventures of a Coquette, The (1926); *Amazing Adventures of Carolus Herbert, The* (1922); *Baloo* (1913); *Bride of the Sun, The* (1915); *Burgled Heart, The* (1926) also published as *The New Terror*; *Cheri-Bibi and Cecily* (1923) also published as *Missing Men*; *Cheri-Bibi, Mystery Man* (1924) also published as *The Dark Road*; *Dancing Girl, The* (1925) also published as *Nomads of the night*; *Double Life, The* (1909); *Floating Prison, The* (1922); *Haunted Chair, The* (1931); *Kiss That Killed, The* (1934); *Lady Helena* (1931); *Machine to Kill, The* (1935); *Man of a Hundred Masks, The* (1930); *Man Who Came Back from the Dead, The* (1916); *Man with the Black Feather, The* (1912); *Masked Man, The* (1927); *Midnight*

Lady, The (1930); *Missing Archduke, The* (1931); *Mystery of the Yellow Room, The* (1908); *New Idol, The* (1928); *Perfume of the Lady in Black, The* (1909); *Phantom of the Opera, The* (1911); *Secret of the Night, The* (1914); *Slave Bangle, The* (1926) also published as *The Phantom Clue*; *Sleuth Hound, The* (1927) also published as *The Octopus of Paris*; *Son of Three Fathers, The* (1927); *Veiled Prisoner, The* (1923)

Levinson, Leonard

(1935–) *Also wrote as: Frank Burleson, Gordon Davis, John Mackie*

Levinson was one of the small, shrinking corps of pulp writers who, at the close of the 20th century, were still working in the old Grub Street tradition of low pay, vast output, and complete anonymity, supplying undemanding action/genre fiction for a small, shrinking audience. In his first 25 years in print he published dozens of novels under an assortment of names, none of them his own. The books, nearly all of them westerns and war stories, were written largely for the last of the low-rung paperback houses, including Belmont Tower, Midwood, Manor, and Charter Diamond, publishers who paid from \$800 to a few thousand for a novel, usually for all rights, and could almost guarantee limited distribution and no reviews or publicity for the finished product. In this uncelebrated corner of the popular fiction business, things remained much as they had been in the days of the story papers and pulps: concepts and plots and house names often determined by committee; a series “bible” sometimes created to establish style, situations, and taboos; writers chosen more for their speed and affordability than for their artistry.

Despite the lack of fame or fortune, Levinson remained dedicated to his craft, churning out the series books and occasional stand-alone titles, year after year until the publishing industry’s disdain for projects with small profit potential made it difficult to continue. When Levinson’s last known paperback series, the Apache Wars Saga, was canceled in the late 1990s, the author, perhaps sensing a death knell for his sort of pulp work, took a job as a New York City social services caseworker.

Levinson's 1980 paperback original, *The Last Buffoon* (published under the name Leonard Jordan) was a rare nongenre work and perhaps a more revealing one, a comic novel that must have contained some of the author's hard-won experiences in a story about a desperate, bottom-dwelling novelist.

Works

As Nicholas Brady:

Shark Fighter (1975)

As Frank Burleson:

Desert Hawks (1994); *Devil Dance* (1997); *Night of the Cougar* (1997); *Savage Frontier* (1995); *War Eagles* (1994); *White Apache* (1996)

As Glen Chase:

Where the Action Is (1977)

As Gordon Davis:

Bloody Bastogne (1981); *Death Train* (1980); *Goering Treasure, The* (1981); *Hammerhead* (1981); *Hell Harbor* (1980); *Slaughter City* (1981)

As Josh Edwards:

Barbary Coast (1993); *Bloody Sunday* (1993); *Reckless Guns* (1992)

As Richard Gallagher:

Doom Platoon (1978)

As March Hastings:

Private Sessions (1974)

As Leonard Jordan:

Cabby (1980); *Last Buffoon, The* (1980)

As John Mackie:

Go Down Fighting (1985); *Green Hell* (1984); *Hot Lead and Cold Steel* (1984); *Meat Grinder Hill* (1984); *Nightmare Alley* (1985); *Satan's Cage* (1985)

As Phillip Rawls:

Streets of Blood (1975)

As Bruno Rossi:

Headcrusher (1974); *Night of the Assassins* (1974)

As Cynthia Wilkerson:

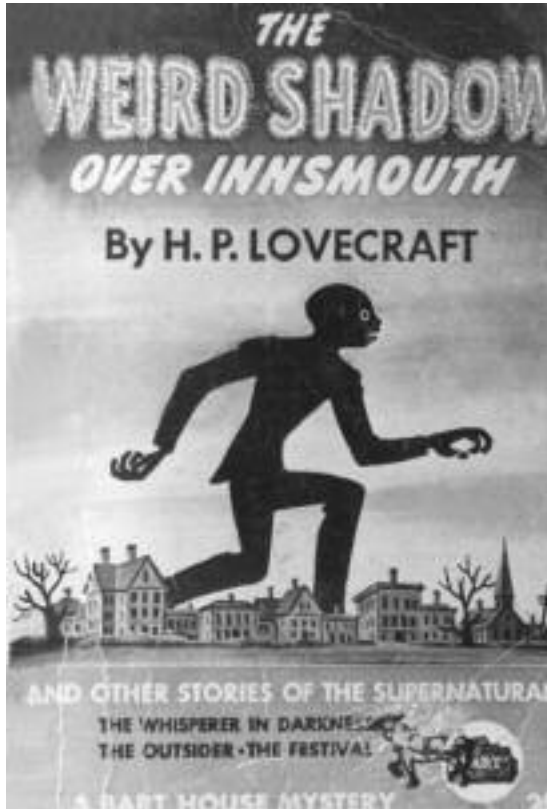
Fast Life, The (1979)

Lovecraft, H. P. (Howard Phillips Lovecraft) (1890–1937)

H. P. Lovecraft was born on August 20, 1890, in Providence, Rhode Island. The Lovecrafts were an Usher-like clan of crumbling aristocrats, touched by madness and consumed by eccentricity. H. P.'s father was institutionalized and his mother was neurotically obsessed with keeping her son from contact with the outside world. "I was very peculiar," he wrote of his younger self. The isolated child became a precocious reader in his grandfather's old library, soaking up the lore in musty volumes on Greek and Roman mythology, the mysterious East, and colonial New England. He adored the stories of Edgar Allan Poe, Jules Verne, and later, Lord Dunsany, the British peer and fantasist who wrote of imaginary worlds, complete with their own gods and myths.

In his late twenties, still reclusive and by conventional standards "peculiar," Lovecraft began writing fantasy stories and sketches for amateur publications. These came to the attention of Jacob Clark Henneberger, publisher of *Weird Tales* magazine, the unique pulp devoted to occult and fantastic fiction. Henneberger solicited submissions from the Rhode Island hermit with the strange imagination. The handwritten manuscripts Lovecraft sent in were dismissed by the editor, Edwin Baird, but the publisher overruled him. The Lovecraft byline appeared in *Weird Tales* for the first time in the October 1923 issue, accompanying a short story titled "Dagon."

Henneberger continued to be taken by Lovecraft's talent for this sort of literature. He bought everything Lovecraft sent in and turned to him when he needed a ghostwriter to do something for the magazine's most famous "contributor," Harry Houdini. For the legendary magician and escape artist, Lovecraft ghostwrote "Imprisoned with the Pharaohs." Lovecraft wrote the story, lost the manuscript, and then wrote it again from scratch on his own wedding night. "When I buckled down to the under-the-pyramid stuff," he



The Weird Shadow over Innsmouth (1936) is an early paperback collection of stories by H. P. Lovecraft.

wrote to an acquaintance, “I let myself loose and coughed up some of the most nameless, slithering, unmentionable HORROR that ever stalked cloven-hoofed through the tenebrous and necrophagous abysses of elder night.” Such wedding-night activities were not the sort to please any new bride, and Lovecraft’s marriage did not last long.

He hit his stride in the March 1924 issue with “The Rats in the Walls,” the first of his now-classic tales of skin-crawling horror. The final, metrical sentence was a clear echo of Lovecraft’s forefather, Poe:

They must know it was the rats; the slithering scurrying rats whose scampering will never let me sleep; the daemon rats that

race behind the padding in this room and beckon me down to greater horrors than I have ever known; the rats they can never hear; the rats, the rats in the walls.

Lovecraft’s greatest work belonged to an unofficial story cycle that has come to be known as the Cthulhu Mythos. Reshaping and expanding on ideas culled from the writings of Dunsany and other fantasy writers, Lovecraft created a series of fictions that, he wrote, “are based on the fundamental lore or legend that this world was inhabited at one time by another race who, in practicing black magic, lost their foothold and were expelled, yet live on outside ever ready to take possession of this earth again.”

Lovecraft’s exiled beings, the Ancient Ones, with such names as Cthulhu, Nyarlathotep, Yog-Sothoth, continually and horrifically returned to Earth with the assistance of ignorant or evil mortals. Their biographies and the secrets of the planet’s dread early history are contained in the mouldering pages of the few remaining copies of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred’s ancient volume, *The Necronomicon*. The first installment in the Mythos, “The Call of Cthulhu,” was printed in the February 1928 issue of *Weird Tales*. “The Dunwich Horror,” published in April 1929, had a direct, visceral impact, with its rampaging, “teratologically fabulous” monsters. The story was inspired in part by a trip Lovecraft took to western Massachusetts in the area of Athol, which his imagination transformed into the infernal Cold Spring Glen, home to the “repellently decadent” Whateleys. The theme of death and rebirth, the nasty nativity and crucifixion of the Yog-Sothoth-fathered creature, can be read as an outrageous remake of Christian myth. The story cycle continued with “The Whisperer in Darkness,” “The Shadow over Innsmouth,” “At the Mountains of Madness,” “The Haunter of the Dark,” and a half-dozen other loosely connected nightmares.

Lovecraft affected a dispassionate attitude toward the supernatural, denying any personal, psychological impulse for his work. To be sure, much of the terrifying effectiveness of his fiction comes from adept storytelling, however bizarre the content. Some of Lovecraft’s most effective elements

were the result of skilled forethought and craftsmanship. He cleverly gave the godawful events verisimilitude by making many of his narrators or protagonists sober rationalists—professional men or academics from distinguished Miskatonic University, home to one of those hideous, revelatory, extant Necronomicons. When such rational folk as these were telling the tale the reader was more likely to accept as real the terribly strange events. One of the clever effects of the stories in the Mythos series was the way they left a disturbing afterglow—whatever the conclusion of an individual story, the reader realizes that the foul Ancient Ones are still out there somewhere, waiting to return.

Professionalism and talent as an entertainer aside, however, Lovecraft's art clearly drew from deeper sources, the strange psyche and hidden fears of the unusual man himself. Many of the horrific concepts and the grotesque imagery in the stories Lovecraft admitted to having witnessed in his dreams, and the continuing themes of madness and familial decay were obviously matters of personal concern for the writer who carried a history of insanity in his blood.

After the end of his brief marriage and "period of exile" (the less than romantic way he referred to his time with his wife in Brooklyn, New York), Lovecraft returned to his family home in Providence. He had come back for good. He resided with two elderly aunts, his living expenses barely met by a small inheritance and the pittance he made from the sale of his pulp stories. He had few acquaintances in his hometown, and no further intimate contacts with women. But Lovecraft did not cut himself off from the outside world entirely. He was a prodigious letter writer, and cultivated an epistolary relationship with a large network of weird-fiction readers and fellow writers. Most of these were devoted fans of Lovecraft's work—August Derleth, E. Hoffmann PRICE, Henry WHITEHEAD, Clark Ashton SMITH, Robert HOWARD, J. Vernon Shea—and came to be known as the Lovecraft Circle. The surviving correspondence is fascinating reading. Depending on the correspondent, Lovecraft could be acidulous or sweet. He encouraged many an

aspiring writer and helped the talented ones to break into print, including the teenaged Robert Bloch (soon another star in the pages of *Weird Tales* and later the source of Alfred Hitchcock's film *Psycho*).

On March 15, 1937, the 46-year-old Lovecraft died of intestinal cancer and Bright's disease. At the time of his death, Lovecraft was little known beyond the readership of *Weird Tales*, a magazine widely considered tasteless and unhealthy by many in the mainstream of pulp publishing. His passing went unnoticed by the literary establishment, but Lovecraft's cult of admirers would not permit him to go unrecognized. Friends were determined to keep his work in print and to spread the word of this distinctive American writer. The writers August Derleth and Donald Wandrei established a notable small press called Arkham House in order to publish Lovecraft's work in hardcover volumes. It took some time, but eventually Lovecraft indeed took his place in the forefront of popular fiction and became widely regarded as the greatest writer of horror stories in America since Edgar Allan Poe.

Works

STORIES

"Call of Cthulhu, The" (1928); "Dagon" (1923); "Dreams in the Witch-House, The" (1933); "Festival, The" (1925); "Haunter of the Dark, The" (1936); "Hound, The" (1924); "Hypnos" (1924); "Outsider, The" (1926); "Pickman's Model" (1927); "Picture in the House, The" (1924); "Rats in the Walls, The" (1924); "Shunned House, The" (1937); "Silver Key, The" (1929); "Statement of Randolph Carter, The" (1925); "Terrible Old Man, The" (1926); "Through the Gates of the Silver Key" (with E. Hoffmann Price) (1934); "Whisperer in Darkness, The" (1931); "White Ape, The" (1924)

BOOKS

At the Mountains of Madness and Other Novels (1964); *Beyond the Wall of Sleep* (1943); *Case of Charles Dexter Ward, The* (1965); *Colour Out of Space and Others* (1967); *Dagon and Other Macabre Tales* (1965); *Dark Brotherhood and Other Pieces, The* (1966); *Doom That Came to Samath, The* (1971); *Dream Quest of Unknown*

Kadath, The (1955); *Dreams and Fancies* (1962); *Dunwich Horror, The* (1945); *Haunter of the Dark and Other Tales of Horror* (1967); *Lurker at the Threshold, The* (with August Derleth) (1945); *Lurking Fear and Other Stories, The* (1948); *Outsider and Others, The* (1939); *Shattered*

Room and Other Pieces, The (1959); *Tom and Other Tales, The* (1970); *Weird Shadow over Innsmouth, The* (1936)

As *Harry Houdini*:

“Imprisoned with the Pharaohs” (1924)

M

McCoy, Horace (1897–1955)

One of the original “Black Mask Boys” nurtured by Joseph Shaw, editor of *Black Mask* magazine, Horace McCoy never achieved the fame of Raymond CHANDLER or Dashiell HAMMETT, but his talent was very likely the equal of theirs. His career was studded with highlights in several fields and contained several singular and extraordinary works.

He was born in Pegram, Tennessee, and grew up in Nashville. Early on he showed a talent for writing and a taste for adventure. He dropped out of high school and drove a taxi on the graveyard shift in the red-light district of New Orleans. During World War I he went overseas with a unit of the Texas National Guard and saw combat as a bombardier. In a DeHavilland bomber that was attacked by German Fokkers, McCoy was peppered with machine gun bullets but managed to guide the craft to safety after the pilot was killed. He was awarded a Croix de Guerre for heroism by the government of France. Back in the states he worked for newspapers in Texas, doing sportswriting and general reporting. In a pattern he would follow his entire life, McCoy’s creative urges went in different directions at once. He worked as a reporter, dabbled in local theater productions as an actor, and began writing fiction. *Black Mask* bought the first story he sent them, “The Devil Man,” set in the South Seas, and published it in the December 1927 issue.

With McCoy’s second sale to *Black Mask* he was on more familiar and resonant ground. “Dirty

Work” was about a flying Texas Ranger named Jerry Frost, one of “Hell’s Stepsons” assigned to patrol the state’s rugged border country. The Frost stories combined the landscapes and character types of the western with the detached tone and bloody violence of the new style of hard-boiled detective story. They were tough, lively pieces, written to the Joe Shaw standard, with paragraphs and sentences so spare and direct as printed that no blue pencil could remove so much as a comma. McCoy wrote another 15 stories for *Black Mask* in the next few years, all but one of them featuring Jerry Frost.

About this time McCoy took a job as an editor at a high-minded, muckraking journal called *The Dallasite*. McCoy edited, reported, wrote, proofread, and did everything else but deliver the copies to doorsteps, but the magazine soon folded. At loose ends, McCoy began writing more pulp, selling to a variety of masculine-interest magazines like *Action Stories*, *Battle Aces*, and *Western Trails*, along with his original market at *Black Mask*. With the depression on and no prospects in Texas, McCoy moved to Los Angeles with hopes of breaking into the movies as an actor. He hit bottom, sleeping in alleyways and on park benches. At the Santa Monica pier he found a job as a bouncer at a marathon dance contest, one of those tawdry spectacles that had become the depression equivalent of bear-baiting: desperate people willing to dance till they dropped from exhaustion and fever in the hope of winning a cash prize. From this experience, and writing in the same hard, brittle style

that was well known to *Black Mask* readers, McCoy fashioned a short novel, *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, a haunting, nihilistic masterpiece, one of the great literary documents of the Great Depression.

McCoy wrote two more novels in the '30s, both of them also based on personal experience and observation: *No Pockets in a Shroud*, about a doomed muckraker, and *I Should Have Stayed Home*, a sleazy Hollywood story centering on the lowlife fringes of the movie business. *No Pockets in a Shroud* was published in Britain: it did not find an American publisher for another 11 years, and that American paperback edition suffered from severe political censorship. The editors eliminated any "leftist-sounding" rhetoric and changed one female character from a communist to a nymphomaniac. By the mid-1930s, McCoy was no longer sleeping in alleys but was a solid fixture in Hollywood, a hack screenwriter working for Columbia Pictures, then Paramount, Warner Bros., Republic, and other studios big and small. Most of his screen work, he would be the first to admit, was unmemorable, but some was outstanding, especially *Gentleman Jim* (1942), McCoy's adaptation of the life of boxer Gentleman Jim Corbett, and *The Lusty Men* (1952), a poignant, demystifying look at the seedy lives of nomadic rodeo cowboys.

McCoy had one more great piece of fiction in him, *Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye* (1948). McCoy's earlier work, particularly *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, had garnered him a strong and growing reputation in postwar France. He was lauded by intellectuals and critics as a master of modern fiction, comparable to William Faulkner. Unknown in his own country, McCoy was moved by this applause from abroad and inspired to write a new novel. The story of a psychotic criminal genius, told by the man himself, Ralph Cotter, *Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye* was a stunning, nasty, and pitiless piece of work, arguably McCoy's masterpiece. The book was translated into a not-bad movie, with James Cagney as the fiendish Cotter. But McCoy did not find the literary acceptance he hoped for, at least not in his own country. A heart ailment plagued him in his last years, and he died in Hollywood at age 58.

Works

STORIES (ALL PUBLISHED IN *BLACK MASK*)

"Devil Man, The" (1929); "Dirty Work" (1929); "Flight at Sunrise" (1934); "Frost Rides Alone" (1930); "Golden Rule, The" (1932); "Gun Runners, The" (1930); "Head-first into Hell" (1931); "Hell's Stepson" (1929); "Little Black Book, The" (1930); "Mailed Fist, The" (1930); "Mopper-Up, The" (1931); "Murder in Error" (1932); "Renegades of the Rio" (1929); "Somebody Must Die" (1934); "Somewhere in Mexico" (1930); "Trail to the Tropics, The" (1932); "Wings over Texas" (1932)

BOOKS

Corruption City (1959); *I Should Have Stayed Home* (1938); *Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye* (1948); *No Pockets in a Shroud* (1937); *Scalpel* (1952); *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (1935)

McCulley, Johnston

(1883–1958)

Illinois-born McCulley was a newspaperman who worked for the *Police Gazette* and other popular journals before trying his hand at fiction. His one great creative success came early in his career. Looking at the pulp markets to which he hoped to contribute, McCulley saw the growing popular appeal of westerns and historical adventure fiction. He fashioned a combination of the two genres in a novel he sold to *All-Story Weekly* and which that periodical printed in five issues between August 9 and September 6, 1919. Titled *The Curse of Capistrano*, the serial introduced the world to the masked swordsman and defender of the defenseless, Zorro—the Fox. Set in the Spanish colonial era of 19th-century California, *Capistrano* told of a brutal regime that made life miserable for the peasants and innocents of the region until the arrival of a remarkable, mysterious avenging figure in black, who meted out swift, unexpected justice with a deadly blade. Zorro, beneath his disguise, was Don Diego Vega, the son of a wealthy and liberal landowner, and, to most who knew him, considered something of a useless, poetry-reading fop. If the concept of the vain dandy transformed into a ruthless nocturnal hero reminded some of Baroness ORCZY'S

popular character, the Scarlet Pimpernel, it was likely not coincidence. McCulley had cleverly grafted the Pimpernel's shtick onto a vague version of the legend of Joaquin Murieta, the rebellious Spanish avenger of Old California. McCulley was no great writer, but *Capistrano*, and the Zorro tales that followed—*The Further Adventures of Zorro*, published in *Argosy* throughout May and June of 1922, *Zorro Rides Again* in that same magazine late in 1931, and various other sequels over more than three decades—were fast flavorful, and fun. Like many another storyteller in this period and after, McCulley benefited from a highly successful film adaptation of his work, *The Mark of Zorro*, with Douglas Fairbanks in the lead (McCulley sensibly retained the film's title for the eventual book publication of his serial). The character remained among the best-known and most popular of any pulp-derived character, a figure to rank beside Tarzan in name recognition value, and his adventures were dramatized over and over in the movies and on television, in America and abroad.

McCulley tried again and again to make lightning strike twice, but his many and varied subsequent masked avengers and swashbuckling heroes, including the Avenging Twins, the Thunderbolt, and the Man in Purple, failed to match his early success.

Works

Alias the Thunderbolt (1927); *Black Grandee* (1955); *Black Star, The* (1921); *Black Star's Campaign* (1924); *Black Star's Return* (1926); *Black Star's Revenge* (1934); *Blocked Trail, The* (1933); *Blood on the Saddle* (1957); *Broadway Bab* (1919); *Caballero, The* (1947); *Canyon of Peril* (1935); *Crimson Clown Again, The* (1928); *Demon, The* (1925); *Devil's Doubloons, The* (1955); *Flaming Stallion, The* (1932); *Further Adventures of Zorro* (1926); *Ghost Bullet Range* (1945); *Gold of Smoky Mesa* (1942); *Gunsight Showdown* (1956); *Gunsmoke Vengeance* (1957); *Holsters in Jeopardy* (1939); *Iron Horse Town* (1952); *John Standon of Texas* (1924); *Mark of Zorro, The* (1924), also published as *The Curse of Capistrano*; *Masked Woman, The* (1920); *Range Cavalier, The* (1933); *Range Lawyer* (1932); *Rangers' Code, The* (1924); *Riders Against the Moon* (1935); *Senor Avalanche* (1946); *Sign of Zorro, The* (1941); *Spider's Debt, The* (1930); *Spider's Den, The* (1925);

Spider's Fury, The (1930); *Tenderfoot, The* (1957); *Texas Showdown* (1953); *Trusted Outlaw, The* (1934); *White Man's Chance, A* (1927); *Zorro Rides Again* (1931)

Macdonald, Ross (Kenneth Millar)

(1915–1983) *Also wrote as: John MacDonald, John Ross MacDonald*

The beautifully written, haunting, psychologically dense detective novels by Ross Macdonald are among the most highly acclaimed works in modern American popular literature. Macdonald's serious fiction, embraced in critical communities usually averse to the mystery genre, represents perhaps the most successful example of an author transcending his pulp origins while remaining essentially a part of that original pulp tradition, in this case the hard-boiled detective story. In his novels about the Southern California private eye Lew Archer, Macdonald adapted elements introduced into private eye fiction by Raymond CHANDLER, namely the self-conscious attention to prose style, the compassionate and philosophical (as opposed to merely two-fisted) hard-boiled hero, and the use of the Southern California milieu for symbolic and psychological resonance. As the Archer series continued, Macdonald personalized his approach to the detective story, adding his own experiences and fears to the stories, and making the storytelling itself more intellectually complex.

Born in Los Gatos, California, Kenneth Millar (Macdonald's real name) spent most of his early years in Canada. After his father abandoned the family, young Ken was reared by his mother and an assortment of female relatives. He grew up troubled and conflicted, feeling out of place among the surrounding women, longing to be with his wandering dad. His twin nationalities also left him emotionally askew, with the feeling that no matter where he was, he was, "on the alien side of some border."

Millar went on to academic studies in Canada and later in Ann Arbor, Michigan. In 1938 he married another young academic and an aspiring writer, Margaret Sturm, who would later



Ross Macdonald (Kenneth Millar) with his wife and daughter, circa 1958 (*Kitchener-Waterloo Record Collection, University of Waterloo*)

find a degree of fame (predating her husband's) as the mystery novelist Margaret Millar. He remained in the academic world, taking low-paying teaching jobs. When his wife became pregnant, and after he won a typewriter on a radio quiz show, Millar turned to writing to make some money. He sold stories and sketches to the Toronto newspapers, but not much more until the publication of his first novel in 1944, *The Dark Tunnel*, an espionage thriller about an American college professor who foils a Nazi spy ring. After service in the U.S. Naval Reserve, Millar and his family settled in his native California. With Margaret by now established as a mystery novelist, Millar set about to join her ranks. "I was writing in reaction against a number of things," Millar wrote of his decision to become a crime genre writer, "among them my strict academic background. The world of gamblers and gunmen and

crooked politicians and their floozies seemed realer somehow, more central to experience, than the cool university life I knew."

His first novel about private detective Lew Archer, a divorced Hollywood detective and former Long Beach policeman, was *The Moving Target*, published in 1949 under the name John MacDon-ald. After six books as "John" and after years of complaints by a struggling new crime novelist named John D. MacDonald, Millar changed his nom de plume permanently to Ross Macdonald.

The first books were good, literate detective novels, but Millar considered them relatively ordinary and impersonal. It was not until 1957, after becoming immersed in memories of his childhood and developing a story around the theme of a lost father, that Millar was able to write what he termed his "breakthrough novel," *The Galton Case*. Inspired equally by the Oedipus

myth and by his own memories (“feelings and forces like spawning salmon working their way back up the stream of time”), Millar found that with *The Galton Case* he had at last mastered his materials and was now “a writer who would do anything within his power to make his stories true in essence, and his own.”

The subsequent works of Ross Macdonald would show the flowering of a unique talent in the mystery field. He established a continuing obsession with the dysfunctional family unit and missing family members, incorporating the theme of the problems of the past visited upon the present with shattering results. The focus turned from the old following of clues, intermittent violent encounters, and shootouts known to hard-boiled detective stories. As Macdonald’s characters talked and ruminated and revealed their past sins, the detective story became a kind of psychoanalytic session and Lew Archer the inquiring shrink. To some readers, Macdonald’s obsessions eventually made the novels become monotonous variations on the same story again and again, and the rising intellectual quality of the books drained them of excitement or suspense. To his true believers, however, Macdonald’s repeated motifs were the great themes of modern American life and their personal resonance with the author (due to his emotional agonies as a child, as well as more recent problems with his own daughter) the key to his literary achievement.

Works

Barbarous Coast, The (1956); *Black Money* (1966); *Chill, The* (1964); *Doomsters, The* (1958); *Far Side of the Dollar, The* (1965); *Ferguson Affair, The* (1960); *Galton Case, The* (1959); *Goodbye Look, The* (1969); *Instant Enemy, The* (1968); *Sleeping Beauty* (1973); *Underground Man, The* (1971); *Wycherly Woman, The* (1961); *Zebra-Striped Hearse, The* (1962)

As Kenneth Millar:

Blue City (1947); *Dark Tunnel, The* (1944); *Three Roads, The* (1948); *Trouble Follows Me* (1946)

As John MacDonald:

Moving Target, The (1949)

As John Ross MacDonald:

Drowning Pool, The (1950); *Find a Victim* (1954); *Ivory Grin, The* (1952); *Meet Me at the Morgue* (1953); *Name Is Archer, The* (1955); *Way Some People Die, The* (1951)

McKnight, Bob

(1906–?)

McKnight was a chronic gambler and racetrack denizen, and a notable handicapper in his day who wrote for racing papers and magazines. Little more is known about his personal life. In his fifties, coming to the conclusion that his pen was a surer bet than the nags, he set up shop with Ace Books and started turning out paperback mysteries. Ace published all 11 of McKnight’s crime novels, about half of them set around the sleazy milieu of the racetrack, making amateur sleuths out of a horse trainer (*Murder Mutuel*), a track security consultant (*A Slice of Death*), and, of course, a handicapper (*Drop Dead, Please*). The books were caustic and amusing, and the inside info came straight from the horse’s mouth.

Works

Bikini Bombshell, The (1959); *Downwind* (1957); *Drop Dead, Please* (1961); *Flying Eye, The* (1961); *Homicide Handicap* (1963); *Kiss the Babe Goodbye* (1960); *Murder Mutuel* (1958); *Running Scared* (1960); *Slice of Death, A* (1960); *Stone Around Her Neck, A* (1962); *Swamp Sanctuary* (1959)

McPartland, John

(1911–1959)

John McPartland, like William ARD, was a 1950s paperback author and a strong, distinctive talent whose promising career was ended by an early death. Nearly all of McPartland’s novels were Fawcett Gold Medal originals: international thrillers, crime stories, and a couple of erotic melodramas. Two of the books were set in postwar Japan—a setting the author seems to have experienced firsthand—specifically in the sleazy, vice-ridden, post-Occupation Tokyo, “city of delicate cruelty . . . smiling, bowing treacherous town” (*Tokyo Doll*, 1953).

McPartland's one mainstream and high-profile work was an anomaly. *No Down Payment* was published in hardcover by Simon & Schuster. Conceived with one eye on the recent great success of *Peyton Place* by Grace METALIOUS, it was an intimate (read: sexy) dramatic exploration of burgeoning suburbia, following the lives of assorted couples who have moved into one of America's typically soulless subdivisions. The book was actually conceived by longtime Hollywood screenwriter Phil Yordan, who had seen a *Life* magazine spread on the postwar prefab communities; he decided it was a good subject for a movie, and that the property would be more valuable if it was derived from a blockbuster novel. Yordan found McPartland and paid him to write the book to Yordan's outline, then found a publisher for it. McPartland kept the book royalties, Yordan held the lucrative film rights and made the movie at Twentieth Century-Fox.

McPartland's best novel was probably his last one, *The Kingdom of Johnny Cool*. Written with a controlled, icy brilliance, the novel detailed the rise and fall of a young man, Giuliano. A fearless, primitive bandit out of the rural Mafia fiefdoms of Sicily, the young man is plucked by an aging mob leader to be groomed as his heir, the potential future "Johnny Cool" who will one day rule a vast kingdom of crime. The Sicilian, now Johnny, rigorously trained, arrives in America with a postgraduate degree in gangsterism and seems at first the perfect choice for the royal succession—sharp, fearless, a brutally efficient killer and conspirator—until he gets too big too fast, makes business personal, tries to anoint himself, and loses his chance at the throne for good. *The Kingdom of Johnny Cool* was one of the first and best fictional treatments of the postwar face of organized crime, out of the back alleys and Little Italys and into giant corporate entities with vast national holdings. McPartland describes modern gangsters with cashmere sweaters and a jet set life that whisks them from Rome to New York to Lake Tahoe and Las Vegas. The memorable climax avoids a conclusive, clichéd end for the defeated gangster anti-hero—instead, the author leaves Johnny, after countless days of ritualistic torture, dumped on the Bowery amid the terminal alcoholics, to live the rest of his life a gibbering, penniless lunatic.

Works

Affair in Tokyo (1954); *Big Red's Daughter* (1953); *Danger for Breakfast* (1956); *Face of Evil* (1954); *I'll See You in Hell* (1956); *Kingdom of Johnny Cool, The* (1959); *Last Night, The* (1959); *Love Me Now* (1952); *No Down Payment* (1957); *Ripe Fruit* (1958); *Tokyo Doll* (1953); *Wild Party, The* (1956)

Mardaan, Ataullah

(unknown)

Among the devotees of the Olympia Press line of paperback DBs ("dirty books") published in Paris in the 1950s, (see KENTON, Maxwell) few volumes could match the humidifying effects of the two novels written by a mysterious Pakistani woman who went by the pseudonym of Ataullah Mardaan. Her first, *Kama Houri*, published in 1956, concerned a beautiful European girl's experiences as a sex slave in a remote village somewhere within stroking distance of the Hindu Kush. It was unrelentingly erotic in content, with a strongly sado-masochistic motif. *Deva-Dasi*, which arrived in Parisian bookstalls in the following year, followed along similar lines and was equally effective in its intent.

Ataullah was supposedly the daughter of a renowned Pakistani doctor, now married to a Dutch photographer and living in Paris, eager to sell Olympia her sumptuous smut in return for some needed pin money. She delivered her work in installments, a few chapters at a time, waiting for a check while Olympia Press owner Maurice Girodias and his assistants read the arousing pages. According to Girodias, Ms. Mardaan was a beautiful and alluring figure with long, braided black hair and always clad in flowing silk saris. A mysterious figure in Olympia's colorful history, she disappeared from Paris after the second book and her actual identity and subsequent activities remain unknown despite the efforts of literary investigators. Was she real or merely the imaginary incarnation of one of Olympia's assorted house names? Girodias swore to Ataullah's existence and recalled her with fondness. "She was, in every way," he would write, "what my father and I had dreamed a pornographer should be."

Works

Deva-Dasi (1957); *Kama Hourī* (1956)

Marlowe, Dan J.

(1914–1987)

Dan J. Marlowe was a middle-aged businessman who, in the personal turmoil after the death of his wife of many years, decided to abandon his old life. He started writing, and his first novel was published when he was 45. *Doorway to Death* was a rock-hard thriller about Johnny Killain, a New York tough guy for hire with a background in government and wartime secret service. Marlowe wrote five Killain novels in all. There was nothing in them that had not been done hundreds of times before, but Marlowe could write tough dialogue and scenes of tension and action with the best of them. The Killains were all good, and the best one was the last, *Shake a Crooked Town* (1961), in which Johnny leaves Times Square to settle accounts with the vicious racketeers running an upstate city.

Marlowe's most famous book and his best-known character arrived from Fawcett Gold Medal Books in 1962. *The Name of the Game Is Death* (1962) introduced Earl Drake, an ice-blooded, sociopathic safecracker and stickup man ("You're amoral," a prison psychiatrist tells him. "You have no respect for authority. Your values are not civilized values."). In one of the most ruthless, self-justifying first-person narratives in pop fiction, Drake recounts his curriculum vitae, the grim, disappointing events that led to his life of crime and vengeful murder (basically, society made him do it).

Other first-rate crime novels followed, including *Strongarm* (1963) and *The Vengeance Man* (1966). Marlowe revived Earl Drake in 1969, and with Fawcett's encouragement turned him into a slightly less sociopathic series hero and rather unlikely government operative. Falling in line with Fawcett's other spy series—Edward Aarons's Sam Durrell "Assignment" and Philip Allee's Joe Gall "Contract" books—the subsequent Earl Drakes were all titled "Operation" Something, including a revised version of *Name of the Game*, now called

Operation Overkill. The books were fun but more conventional, and some readers believe Marlowe would have had a more memorable series if Drake had remained an underworld sociopath.

Marlowe's scenes of robbery and safecracking were given a scrupulous authenticity after he became close friends with a real-life crook, Albert F. Nussbaum, then serving a long prison term. Later, Marlowe helped Nussbaum get paroled and begin his own career as a crime writer.

Works

Backfire (1961); *Death Deep Down* (1965); *Doom Service* (1960); *Doorway to Death* (1959); *Fatal Frails* (1960); *Flashpoint* (1970); *Four for the Money* (1966); *Killer with a Key* (1959); *Name of the Game Is Death, The* (1962); *Never Live Twice* (1964); *One Endless Hour* (1969); *Operation Breakthrough* (1971); *Operation Checkmate* (1972); *Operation Deathmaker* (1975); *Operation Drumfire* (1972); *Operation Fireball* (1969); *Operation Hammerlock* (1974); *Operation Stranglehold* (1973); *Operation Whiplash* (1973); *Route of the Red Gold* (1967); *Shake a Crooked Town* (1961); *Strongarm* (1963); *Vengeance Man, The* (1966)

Merritt, A. (Abraham Merritt)

(1884–1943)

Fantasy fiction attained new heights of popular acclaim in the work of the best-selling novelist A. Merritt. An influential creative figure, he wrote imaginative tales that bridged the gap between the romantic adventure/fantasy stories of the late Victorian period and the modern era in which he wrote. Merritt's tales were once almost universally beloved by readers of the genre; in his lifetime and for some years after he was the leading figure in imaginative literature, a lofty stature he has not managed to preserve.

Born in Beverly, New Jersey, to poor Quaker parents, Merritt could not afford to continue studies for his intended career in the law. At 18 he dropped out of school and took a job in the editorial department of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. After a mysterious incident involving the young cub reporter—something to do with crime, politics, and an impending trial—the paper sent Merritt into

hiding for a year. His subsequent explorations in the jungles and lost cities of Mexico and Central America would provide him with material he would one day use in many of his colorful works of fiction. Returned to the United States, Merritt began a steady climb through the ranks at newspapers in Philadelphia and then New York City. Beginning in 1912, Merritt helped to make a spectacular success out of William Randolph Hearst's Sunday tabloid, the *American Weekly*.

Merritt's work schedule was demanding, but he found spare time to begin a fiction-writing sideline. Some critics speculate that Merritt, in fact, turned to fantasy writing as a release from the distasteful aspects of his weekly exposure to the corrupt and the sensational. His fiction, set in fantastic and gothic territories, had little to do with the everyday grime of the real world. His first short story was printed in November 1917 by *All-Story* magazine, the pulp that had done much to make a literary star out of Edgar Rice BURROUGHS. "Through the Dragon Glass" was a haunting tale of a man who discovers a passage through an ancient Chinese mirror into a bizarre alternative world of both beauty and horror. In the following year, *All-Story* published what would become part of Merritt's first novel-length work, *The Moon Pool*, an eerie, exotic horror adventure about a mysterious pool discovered in the jungles of a Pacific island. The novelette was so well received that Merritt quickly constructed a sequel, *Conquest of the Moon Pool*, the first of what would become Merritt's signature story line of a lost civilization, patterned after H. Rider HAGGARD's fantastic adventure novel, *She*. Merritt's explorer/scientist heroes, roaming the Himalayas, the South Pacific, Latin America, and other tropic, exotic regions, would typically happen upon a colony of survivors of an ancient or unknown society, whereupon many strange and breathless adventures would invariably take place. Merritt found this premise so congenial that he would use it in all but two of his eight novels.

Merritt's second novel, *The Metal Monster*, serialized in 1920, was another lost-civilization story, with the American heroes in the Himalayas battling the remains of an ancient Persian tribe. Merritt gives the Haggard premise a startling SF twist

this time—the discovery of yet another civilization behind the scenes, an alien outpost manned by metallic soldiers from outer space. Merritt followed this with the high adventure novella *The Face in the Abyss* and the delirious time-traveling fantasy *The Ship of Ishtar*. His next was a change of pace, *Seven Footprints to Satan*, a bizarre mystery story of decadent game-playing, devil worship, and psychological torture. The novel was given a brilliant transfer to the screen in the 1920s, by director Benjamin Christensen. In 1932 Merritt published his masterpiece, *Dwellers in the Mirage*, another lost-civilization story that brilliantly crystallized all the elements Merritt's style, combining scenes of spectacular adventure with psychological portraiture in richly descriptive prose. *Dwellers* was a hard act to top, but Merritt came close with his next work, *Burn, Witch, Burn*, a brilliant tale of modern-day necromancy, murder, and revenge (loosely adapted to film by Tod Browning as *The Devil Doll*, in 1936). *Creep, Shadow, Creep*, which carried over some of the characters from *Burn*, was another modern gothic, an eerily effective and suspenseful tale of witches and warlocks, who attempt to restore a long-abandoned rite of human blood sacrifice.

After the publication of *Creep, Shadow, Creep*, Merritt seemed to abandon his successful fiction writing career. He continued with his hectic day job as an important Hearst editor, but produced no other substantial works of fiction (a few stories and possible fragments of novels were later found and published). In 1943, while on a business trip to Florida, Merritt died of a heart attack at 59.

For all of his emphasis on outlandish plot turns and eye-popping action, Merritt was a skilled writer with a distinctive, almost lyrical style. His stories had the compulsive readability of Edgar Rice Burroughs but with additional layers of poetic reflection and philosophical intent. Merritt made creative use of the then-new concepts of psychology—regression, repressed memories, and so on—introduced by Sigmund Freud. In his heyday between the world wars, Merritt was not only popular but also beloved. He affected readers deeply—readers commonly rated his stories among their all-time favorites for decades, and many contemporary science fiction

and fantasy writers would hold A. Merritt as a favorite and an inspiration.

Works

Burn, Witch, Burn! (1933); *Creep, Shadow, Creep!* (1933); *Dwellers in the Mirage* (1932); *Face in the Abyss, The* (1931); *Fox Woman and Other Stories, The* (1949); *Metal Monster, The* (serialized 1920; first book publication 1946); *Moon Pool, The* (1920); *Seven Footprints to Satan* (1928); *Ship of Ishtar, The* (1926)

Metalious, Grace (Marie Grace De Repentigny) (1924–1964)

Born in Manchester, New Hampshire, Grace Metalious grew up fatherless in the city's squalid French-Canadian ghetto. The future author of one of the biggest-selling books in history entered adulthood with few prospects. She married, moved to the New Hampshire town of Gilmanton, and became a mother, but Grace and her family remained at the lowest rung of the social ladder in blue-collar New England. She began working on a novel as a distraction after nearly dying in childbirth. Metalious had always nursed a talent for writing, and as a child had written her own alternative versions of the Nancy Drew stories she took home from the library.

The novel used some of the facts of a real story that had shocked the region a few years back, a 14-year-old girl's murder of her sexually abusive father. Metalious fictionalized this scandalous crime and the girl's murder trial as a startling centerpiece for a broader story line, one that took in Metalious's own background and numerous characters and incidents from a northern New England community not unlike the ones she knew so well. The central female characters reflected different sides of the author's life and personality: Alison, the smart, sensitive girl who dreams of becoming a writer, and Selena, the poor-white-trash girl and victim of parental abuse.

Metalious's literary inspiration was a best-selling novel of two decades earlier, *Kings Row*, by Henry Bellamann. That sprawling story revealed the horrors—sadism, incest, murder—that lay be-

neath the surface of a quiet middle American small town. The New Hampshire housewife's subject was similar: a look behind the picture postcard facade of a small town she called Peyton Place, "like turning over a rock with your foot—all kinds of things crawl out." The things that crawled out of Metalious's *Peyton Place* included corruption, murder, hypocrisy, lust, adultery, and incest. The novel's wide-ranging and relatively detailed concern with the characters' sexual feelings and experiences set the book apart when it was released in the spring of 1956 to a mixture of outrage, disgust, and panting enthusiasm. Metalious's use of language and incident remained well within the legal boundaries of the day (although some communities and many libraries did ban the book), but the relentless and naturalistic detailing of the sexual matters came off as explosive. The shockingly "frank" material combined with the presumed authenticity of the characters and situations made *Peyton Place* one of the most talked-about books of all time.

Metalious's bold attack on hypocritical piety and her uninhibited approach to sex were like a cannon blast across the bows of repressed 1950s America—and the repressed fought back. She was labeled a pornographer and decried as the author of "literary sewage." Back home in New Hampshire, the right-wing publisher of the *Manchester Union Leader*, William Loeb, fulminated against her in his editorials and hoped that she would be "shunned" by all respectable folk in her hometown. Many of Metalious's neighbors—whatever their purported respectability—did indeed treat the author of *Peyton Place* like the carrier of a plague.

Unprepared for the spotlight of fame and the often vicious furor that surrounded her, Grace Metalious did not find happiness with the enormous success of her literary creation. Her personal life disintegrated. She began drinking heavily. Her marriage fell apart as she undertook various sexual affairs. Metalious's own mother sued her for some infraction. Despite enormous royalties, Metalious fell into debt. She grew bloated and ill from alcohol abuse. Her publishers were eager for a follow-up blockbuster to her debut, but the sequel, *Return to Peyton Place*, written in 30 days, was considered so disappointing in manuscript that a ghostwriter

was assigned to rewrite it. Metalious's other published novels, *The Tight White Collar* and *No Adam in Eden*, followed *Peyton Place*'s path with stories about hypocrisy in small New England towns and sexually active young women, but they did not repeat the first book's success.

Metalious's health continued to decline, and in the winter of 1964, suffering from various physical impairments, including cirrhosis of the liver, she died at 39. As her remains lay in a tomb, awaiting the thawing of the frozen New Hampshire cemetery, the funeral home received numerous calls demanding the body be buried somewhere else. Anger over Metalious's shocking book had never gone away in the region she called home. Seven months after her death, the ABC television network began broadcasting a sanitized version of *Peyton Place* as the first nighttime soap opera. The series was a great success and ran for years. In addition, a paperback house published *Peyton Place* sequels, ghostwritten by a man (Don TRACY writing as Roger Fuller).

Remembered primarily as one of the inventors of modern "trash literature," the author of *Peyton Place* has of late undergone revisionist examination. In retrospect, some critics see Metalious as a protofeminist novelist, far ahead of the culture in her novel's treatment of sex, abortion, and wife-beating.

Works

No Adam in Eden (1961); *Peyton Place* (1956); *Return to Peyton Place* (1959); *The Tight White Collar* (1960)

Moore, C. L. (Catherine Lucille Moore) (1911–1987)

"It begins magnificently," H. P. LOVECRAFT wrote of C. L. Moore's first story, after its debut in the pages of *Weird Tales*, "on just the right note of terror and with black intimations of the unknown. It has real atmosphere and tension—rare things amidst the pulp tradition of brisk, cheerful, staccato prose and lifeless stock characters and images." Lovecraft was far from the only fan of the uniquely talented newcomer to the world of strange and fantastic literature.

Born Catherine Lucille Moore in Indianapolis, Indiana, as C. L. Moore she would become a founding mother of the modern "science fantasy" genre. Writing for the science fiction pulps in the 1930s and 1940s, Moore brought emotion, romance, and detailed psychological characterization to a field that was too often dominated by cold-blooded, sexless technospeak. Moore's stories, wrote one of her early fans and most talented followers, Leigh BRACKETT, "are a unique blend of poetry, beauty, terror and the sheerly strange that no one else has ever come close to. But neither are they mere gossamer fabrics of fantasy. They carry a powerful impact—and once read, they are not soon forgotten."

Growing up in Indiana, Moore had been a devoted reader of Edgar Rice BURROUGHS's Martian and Tarzan stories. As a young woman in the early 1930s, working at the local bank, Moore paused at a newsstand one day and saw a copy of a pulp called *Amazing Stories*. She bought it at once—the first magazine she had seen entirely devoted to the sort of imaginative and unearthly fiction she had had to find piecemeal in the past. She later remembered having to hide the magazine and its lurid cover out of sight of her employers at the bank. She would have to be even more careful with the even more lurid-looking *Weird Tales*, the contents of which she found equally inspiring. When the 21-year-old Moore set out to write her own "bizarre and unusual" story of outer space, strange adventure, and horror, "Shambleau," she sent it to *Weird Tales*. Her hero, an outlaw spaceman named Northwest Smith, rescues a beautiful girl from a Martian mob, but soon discovers that she is not a girl at all but a Shambleau, a bizarre female monster.

The writer E. Hoffmann PRICE was in the Chicago office of *Weird Tales* editor Farnsworth Wright when Wright discovered Moore's story in the slush pile. Wright was so pleased he closed shop and declared it "C. L. Moore Day."

The writer of the strange and unusual story was equally thrilled by Wright's decision, remembering how she screamed with joy when the *Weird Tales* acceptance letter arrived. Her initial story became one of the legendary high points—one of the many—of *Weird Tales*' golden era.

Moore's writing was richly atmospheric, full of surreal imagery and a bracing nihilism. The Smith stories took the Burroughsian vision of interplanetary adventure—spaceships and swords and strange creatures—and added in-depth characterization and dark poetry. It was an astonishing series. Nearly as good were Moore's six tales of Jirel of Joiry, a swashbuckling swordswoman in an imaginary medieval world of black magic. Both Smith and Jirel were so popular that readers demanded the characters meet. Moore obliged with "Quest of the Starstone" in the November 1937 *Weird Tales*. Moore was also a regular contributor to *Astounding* and other science fiction pulps.

Although Moore claimed to have used her initials only to disguise her moonlighting from her bosses at the bank, her publishers kept C. L. Moore's gender something of a secret from their mostly male readership. Fan letters were addressed to "Mr. Moore." One of these came from a fellow pulpster, Henry Kuttner. The authors finally met in person and straightened out the confusion. Then the two were married.

On her own, Moore had been a rather slow, careful writer. After her marriage she began to work more often in collaboration with her husband. Kuttner was a talented but more professionally driven writer—by some calculations, a hack. Their work together was written with alacrity and the best, fastest-paying markets in mind. Still, they did much good work in those years and complemented each other's strengths—Kuttner specializing in plots, Moore in characters and psychological and thematic development. Most of their work was in the science fiction and fantasy fields, but in the '50s they also worked together on some detective novels. Based in California, the two also did some television scripting, and after Kuttner's unexpected death from a heart attack in 1958, Moore virtually ceased writing fiction and became a full-time television writer.

Works

Doomsday Morning (1957); *Jirel of Joiry* (1969); *Judgment Night* (1952); *Northwest of Earth* (1954); *Northwest Smith* (1982); *Shambleau* (1957); *Shambleau and Others* (1953)

With Henry Kuttner:

Chessboard Planet and Other Stories (1983); *Dark World, The* (1965); *Day He Died, The* (1947); *Earth's Last Citadel* (1964); *Fury* (1950); *Line to Tomorrow* (1954); *Mask of Circe, The* (1971); *Murder in Brass* (1947); *Mutant* (1953); *No Boundaries* (1955); *Robots Have No Tails* (1952); *Time Axis, The* (1965); *Under Earth's Gates* (1954); *Valley of the Flame* (1964); *Well of the World* (1953)

Mundy, Talbot (William Lancaster Gribbon)

(1879–1940)

The author of richly entertaining and imaginative adventure fiction, Talbot Mundy came relatively late in life to the storytelling trade, after many years as a globe-wandering drifter and reprobate. He was born in London, England, named William Lancaster Gribbon. From birth, he would claim, he had a "thirst for adventure." His parents, he recalled, "destined me for the church or the law, I forget which, but I know they gave me the choice of two evils and that I chose a third that they never even dreamed of." He drifted and took odd jobs in England and Germany as a teenager and then, some time around his 21st birthday, he secured passage to India and worked as a colonial merchant. Years of exotic experiences followed, in India and then Africa, which Mundy would subsequently write about with exuberant enthusiasm—and practiced mendacity, describing his lordly life as a warrior and big-game sportsman. In fact, his life abroad was anything but regal. He was in this period a con man, town clerk, bigamist, exposed adulterer, and jailbird. In British East Africa the local natives, annoyed by his shifty antics and his sexual alliances with tribesmen's wives, gave him a Swahili nickname, *Makundu Viazi*—White Arse. An English police superintendent in the port of Kisumu wrote to one of the magazines that featured Talbot Mundy's work and recalled his knowledge of the man: "I first met him at Kisumu in 1904 when he had been posing as Sir Rupert Harvey, Baronet, and had stung a lot of business firms! I arrested him on a warrant from the High Court and he was given six months with hard labor."

Eventually, with a new wife and a new name—Talbot Mundy—he arrived on American shores. In New York he immediately fell in with a rough crowd and was beaten and robbed by thugs. While recovering from the skull fracture he received, Mundy tried his hand at writing. He sold some articles to English and American magazines and then sold a sketch about hunting boar in India to the popular pulp magazine *Adventure* for its February 1911 issue. This was to be the beginning of a long and glorious relationship between the prestigious pulp and the colorful writer. Although Mundy had had more than his share of adventures in real life, most were of such

a sordid nature that he cleaned them up for the pages of *Adventure*, so that editor Arthur Hoffman's introduction of Mundy was filled with half-truths and lies:

Shake hands with Mr. Mundy—there is only time for me to whisper these words in your ear. An Englishman, India, China, the Himalayas, Persian Gulf, the Boer War . . . elephant hunting, pigsticking, single-handed yachting, two campaigns against African tribes . . .

Mundy pursued his new profession, and sold more stories. By 1912 he had published his first novel, *Rung Ho!*, an adventure story of India. In 1914 the Bobbs-Merrill Company published perhaps his most successful and most famous novel, *King—Of the Khyber Rifles*, a tale of adventure and intrigue on the Raj's troubled northwest frontier. More than 40 books, novellas, and serials followed. Mundy worked in what was then a thriving area of popular literature, exotic adventures of a sort H. Rider HAGGARD had pioneered, and British colonial and regimental settings like those by Rudyard Kipling. Mundy's best novels in this vein—*King, Om, The Devil's Guard* (Ramsden in magazine form)—were exhilarating tales with fascinating characters and vivid word pictures of the exotic East. His work was further distinguished by its lack of colonial conformism, the sort of cant and racism endemic to British Empire stories of the time. Mundy's recurring cast of Orientals—the crafty babu Chullunder Ghose, the Mata Hari-like Spy Yashmini, the fearless warrior Narayan Singh, among them—are at least as fully and sympathetically drawn as his assorted European Secret Service aces, regimental commanders, and great white hunters.

In the mid-'20s, Mundy began writing more expansive historical fiction, the saga of Tros of Samothrace, a Greek adventurer and the nemesis of Julius Caesar, who sailed the seas of the ancient world in a magnificent super-galley called the *Lifafail*. The original account, serialized in the pages of *Adventure*, totaled half a million words, and was as pleasurable a reading experience as any the



The 1917 edition of *The Winds of the World* by Talbot Mundy, known for his exotic, adventurous tales

pulps ever offered. Mundy's characterization of Caesar as "a liar, a brute, a treacherous humbug" brought forth a deluge of angry letters from those who disagreed with the writer's interpretation of history. Mundy wrote back with thousands of words of rebuttal, fanning the flames of this controversy even more. Tros's exploits were read by such fledgling adventure and fantasy writers as Robert E. HOWARD and Fritz Leiber and would greatly influence the development of the sword-and-sorcery genre. Tros returned in Mundy's excellent *Queen Cleopatra* (which, in book form, preceded publication of *Tros of Samothrace*), and then in another thunderous adventure epic, *The Purple Pirate*.

Mundy in later life settled in California and became a devoted adherent of the Theosophist sect. He had been working in radio, writing scripts for the children's radio series *Jack Armstrong, All-American Boy*, at the time of his death in 1940.

Works

STORIES

"Across the Color Line" (1912); "America Horns In" (1919) "Arabian Night, An" (1913); "At Maneuvers" (1913); "Babu, The" (1931); "Bengal Rebellion" (1935); "Big League Miracle, The" (1928); "Billy Blain Eats Biscuits" (1916); "Black Flag" (1931); "Bucket of Drums, A" (1929); "Camera" (1934); "Case 13" (1933); "Chaplain of the Mullingars, The" (1912) "Chullunder Ghose the Guileless" (1932); "Companions in Arms" (1937) "Consistent Anyhow" (1930); "Cornelia's Englishman" (1911); "Cowards, The" (1912); "Damned Old Nigger, The" (1917); "Disowned" (1915); "Dorg's Luck" (1912); "Dove with a Broken Wing, The" (1915); "Drop or Two of White, A" (1916); "Elephant Hunting for a Living" (1912); "Elephant Waits, The" (1937); "Eye Teeth of O'Hara, The" (1931); "For the Salt Which He Had Eaten" (1913); "For Valor" (1912); "From Hell Hull and Halifax" (1913); "Galbaz and the Game" (1914); "Gentility of Ikey Blumendall, The" (1914); "Golden River" (1929); "Goner, The" (1912); "Go, Tell the Czar!" (1914); "Heinie Horns into the Game" (1919); "Honor" (1912); "In Old Narada Fort" (1929); "In Winter Quarters" (1912); "Jackson Tactics" (1919); "Kitty and Cupid" (1911); "Lancing of the Whale, The" (1914); "Love and War" (1912); "MacHas-

san Ah" (1915); "Man from Poonch, The" (1933); "Man on the Mat, The" (1931); "Man Who Saw, The" (1912); "Milk of the Moon" (1938); "Night the Clocks Stopped, The" (1941); "No Name" (1915); "Nothing Doing" (1914); "Oakes Respects an Adversary" (1918); "Odds on the Prophet" (1941); "One Year Later" (1913); "On Terms" (1915); "On the Road to Allah's Heaven" (1928); "Payment of Quinn's Debt, The" (1912); "Phantom Battery, The" (1911); "Pig Sticking in India" (1911); "Private Murdoch's G. C. M." (1913); "Rabbit" (1912); "Red Sea Cargo" (1933); "Return of Billy Blain" (1915); "Second Rung, The" (1912); "Shriek of Dum, The" (1919); "Single-Handed Yachting" (1911); "Soul of a Regiment, The" (1912) (1916); "The Queen, God Bless Her" (1912); "Temporary Trade in Titles, A" (1915); "Three Helios" (1913); "Top of the Ladder, The" (1912); "Wheel of Destiny, The" (1928)

BOOKS

Black Light (1930); *Caesar Dies* (1934); *Caves of Terror, The* (1924); *C.I.D.* (1932); *Cock o' the North* (1929); *Devil's Guard, The* (1926); *East and West* (1937); *Eye of Zeitoon* (1920); *Full Moon* (1935); *Gunga Sahib, The* (1934); *Guns of the Gods* (1921); *Her Reputation* (1923); *Hira Singh's Tale* (1918); *Hundred Days, The* (1930); *I Say Sunrise* (1947); *Ivory Trail, The* (1919); *Jimgrim* (1931); *Jimgrim and Allah's Peace* (1933); *Jungle Jest* (1931); *King in Check, The* (1933); *King of the Khyber Rifles* (1916); *Lost Trooper, The* (1931); *Marriage of Meldrum Strange, The* (1930); *Mystery of Khufu's Tomb, The* (1933); *Nine Unknown, The* (1924); *Old Ugly Face* (1940); *Om: The Secret of Ahbor Valley* (1924); *Purple Pirate*; (1935); *Queen Cleopatra* (1929); *Red Flame of Erinpura, The* (1934); *Rung Ho!* (1914); *Seventeen Thieves of El-Kalil, The* (1935); *Soul of a Regiment, The* (1924); *Thunder Dragon Gate, The* (1937); *Told in the East* (1920); *Tros of Samothrace* (1934); *Valiant View, The* (1939); *When Trails Were New* (1932); *Winds of the World, The* (1916); *Woman Ayisha, The* (1930)

Munn, H. Warner (1903–1981)

Munn was one of the strange crew of uniquely talented writers whose entire creative career virtually began, thrived, and ended within the pages

of a single magazine, *Weird Tales*. An only child, Munn claimed a growing library of books as his only youthful companions, and he grew up as extremely introverted chronic daydreamer. Joining that group of fantasy and horror writers discovered and nurtured by the editor Farnsworth Wright, Munn made his debut in *Weird Tales* in July 1925 with a story Wright found so impressive he made it the lead story for the month. Munn credited H. P. LOVECRAFT with inspiring “The Werewolf of Ponkert,” a grueling narrative that put the reader inside the skin of the suffering monster. Munn had read in the letters page of *Weird Tales* a missive from Lovecraft that asked, “Why has no one ever written a werewolf story, as told from the viewpoint of the werewolf?” Why indeed! Munn asked himself, and in his spare time at the factory where he worked he began what would be the first of his acclaimed werewolf stories. What distinguished Munn’s lycanthropic saga was the degree to which he identified with his protagonist. Munn eventually wrote a series of linked stories, *Tales of the Werewolf Clan*, each set in a different time in history, each with another descendant of his original cursed hero. Other memorable stories followed through the years, including two vicious tales of torture and revenge, “The Chain” and “The Wheel.”

As the depression hit, and with a wife and young children to feed, Munn found it difficult to keep writing. He turned out only the occasional story but remained friendly with Lovecraft and others from the *Weird Tales* roster. Lovecraft visited Munn in Athol, where he got the inspiration for *The Dunwich Horror*, turning the Massachusetts town into the infernal Cold Spring Glen. Munn also claimed to have given Lovecraft the story for *At the Mountains of Madness*.

Munn made a last hurrah in *Weird Tales* with a serialized novel of fantasy adventure, *King of the*

World’s Edge. Told by Ventidius Varro, a Roman centurion of ancient Britain, the story related a journey by a band of warriors loyal to King Arthur and the druid sorcerer Myrdhinn—better known as Merlin—across the ocean to an unknown continent, the future North America.

Munn gave up writing altogether when World War II began and, like so many of his peers at *Weird Tales*, was not heard from for many years. He moved to Tacoma, Washington, after the war. In the ’60s, the rising interest in pulp-era fantasy and horror fiction brought many of the old *Weird Tales* authors back into print in anthologies, paperbacks, and republications by specialty presses. Munn’s *Werewolf of Ponkert* and *King of the World’s Edge* were published for the first time in book form and received a very positive reaction. Paperback blurbs compared him to Edgar Rice BURROUGHS and A. MERRITT. Pleased to find a new generation of readers, Munn was encouraged to write again and published two sequels to his *World’s Edge* saga. *Merlin’s Ring*, published in 1974, was his last and most ambitious effort, a sprawling epic of the adventures in time and space of Merlin’s godson, Gwalchmai, and his passionate love for Corenice, a sorceress of High Atlantis.

Works

STORIES

“Dreams May Come” (1939); “Master Has a Narrow Escape” (1931); “Return of the Master” (1927); “Tales of the Werewolf Clan” (1930)

BOOKS

King of the World’s Edge (1939, 1966); *Merlin’s Godson* (combining *King of the World’s Edge* and *Ship from Atlantis* into one book) (1974); *Merlin’s Ring* (1974); *Ship from Atlantis, The* (1967); *Werewolf of Ponkert* (containing the 1925 title story and sequel, *The Werewolf’s Daughter*) (1958)

N

Nebel, Frederick (1903–1966)

Nebel took the phrase “born writer” almost literally, selling stories while still a schoolboy. At 16 he was already a regular contributor to the pulp magazines and by age 23 he made his debut in the March 1926 issue of *Black Mask* with his story “The Breaks of the Game,” about a crook named “Shrimp” Darcy. It marked the beginning of an extraordinary relationship with *Black Mask* that lasted more than 10 years. During the magazine’s greatest era, Nebel was among those instrumental in creating a new form of popular literature. He would write 67 stories in all for *Black Mask*; only the unstoppable Erle Stanley GARDNER would contribute more. In the same period Nebel wrote for various other pulps: western fiction for magazines like *Lariat*, tales of the northwest Mounties for *Northwest Stories*, and aviation adventures for *Air Stories*.

Nebel wrote a few stand-alone crime stories, mostly in the early years, but the majority of his work for *Black Mask*, and for his subsequent regular market, *Dime Detective*, belonged to one of several series, each one about super-tough detectives and all featuring clean, hard prose in the Dashiell HAMMETT tradition. The McBride/Kennedy series was about McBride, a taciturn old-school police captain and a devoted family man, and his irrepressible, alcoholic newshawk pal Kennedy of the *Free Press*, set in Richmond City, a perpetually corrupt and crime-ridden metropolis. This series was

adapted for the movies in the late 1930s, starring Barton MacLane as McBride and, with a gender change, Glenda Farrell as Kennedy. Even more hard-boiled were the “Tough Dick Donahue” stories about an operative for the Interstate Detective Agency. Both series represented the preferred style of *Black Mask* editor Joseph Shaw, who demanded cool, taciturn prose and not a trace of sentiment. “It keeps me in butts and I see the country and I don’t have to slave over a desk,” Dick Donahue says, by way of explaining the appeal of his job. “It’s not a pretty game and no guy ever wrote a poem about it. But it’s the only hole I fit in.”

For *Dime Detective* Nebel wrote almost exclusively about yet another rock-hard private eye, the single-named Cardigan of the St. Louis branch of the Cosmos Detective Agency. There were 44 Cardigan stories published between November 1931 (the magazine’s first issue) and May 1937.

Nebel’s first novel *Sleepers East* (1933), a crime thriller set entirely aboard a passenger train racing for New York, was published in this period and written in the same hard, fast style.

The Cardigan stories were such a hit in *Dime Detective* that the magazine raised Nebel’s pay to an impressive four cents a word, far above the norm for the pulps at the time. But this money was nothing compared to the “slick” magazines like *Collier’s* and *Cosmopolitan*, which paid their writers not in the hundreds but in the thousands. To many writers, the slick magazines offered not only better pay but also considerably more prestige. Nebel was eager to move into this more respectable and re-

munerative marketplace, and when he did, he gave up his pulp work forever.

Nebel seems to have looked back on his popular detective stories with embarrassment, even shame, as if they were a skeleton in the writer's closet. When Joe Shaw, his old *Black Mask* editor, asked for permission to print one of Nebel's old stories in a hard-boiled collection, he refused. "I honestly cannot see what purpose it would serve now. . . . I can work up no enthusiasm," Nebel told him.

But Nebel's later novels and love stories for *Good Housekeeping* and the other respectable publications are now long forgotten, while the hard-boiled work he disdained is all anyone remembers of his writing career.

Works

STORIES

In Black Mask:

"Alley Rat" (Feb. 1930); "Backwash" (May 1932); "Bad News" (Mar. 1934); "Be Your Age" (Aug. 1934); "Beat the Rap" (May 1931); "Breaks of the Game, The" (Mar. 1936); "Champions Also Die" (Aug. 1933); "China Silk" (Mar. 1927); "Crack Down" (Apr. 1936); "Death for a Dago" (July 1931); "Death's Not Enough" (Oct. 1931); "Deep Red" (Aug. 1936); "Die Hard" (Aug. 1935); "Dog Eat Dog" (Oct. 1928); "Doors in the Dark" (Mar. 1933); "Dumb Luck" (Jan. 1927); "Emeralds of Shade" (Aug. 1927); "Fan Dance" (Jan. 1936); "Farewell to Crime" (Apr. 1933); "Get a Load of This" (Feb. 1931); "Ghost of a Chance" (Mar. 1935); "Graft" (May 1929); "Grain to Grain" (Nov. 1926); "Grudge Is a Grudge, A" (Sept. 1927); "Gun in the Dark, A" (June 1928); "Guns Down" (Sept. 1933); "Gun Thunder" (Jan. 1931); "Hard to Take" (June 1936); "He Could Take It" (Sept. 1932); "He Was a Swell Guy" (Jan. 1935); "Hell to Pay" (Aug. 1928); "Hounds of Darkness" (Apr. 1927); "It's a Gag" (Feb. 1935); "It's the Live Ones That Talk" (Nov. 1931); "Junk" (Mar. 1931); "Law Laughs Last" (Nov. 1928); "Law Without Law" (Apr. 1929); "Lay Down the Law" (Nov. 1933); "Man with Sand" (July 1927); "New Guns for Old" (Sept. 1929); "No Hard Feelings" (Feb. 1936); "Pearls Are Tears" (Sept. 1931); "Penalty of the Code, The" (Jan. 1928); "Quick or the Dead, The" (Mar. 1932); "Raw Law" (Sept. 1928); "Red Hots" (Dec. 1930); "Red Pavement" (Dec. 1932); "Rough Justice" (Nov. 1930); "Rough Reform" (Mar. 1933); "Shakedown" (Sept. 1930); "Shakeup" (Aug.

1932); "Some Die Young" (Dec. 1931); "Song and Dance" (July 1933); "Spare the Rod" (Aug. 1931); "Street Wolf" (May 1930); "Take It and Like It" (June 1934); "Ten Men from Chicago" (Aug. 1930); "That's Kennedy" (May 1935); "Too Young to Die" (Feb. 1934); "Tough Treatment" (Jan. 1930); "Winter Kill" (Nov. 1935); "Wise Guy" (Apr. 1930); "With Benefit of Law" (Nov. 1927)

In Dime Detective:

"And There Was Murder" (Feb. 1932); "Behind the 8-Ball" (Mar. 1937); "Blood in the Dark" (Jan. 1936); "Candy Killer, The" (Nov. 1932); "Chains of Darkness" (June 15, 1933); "Couple of Quick Ones, A" (June 1, 1935); "Curse of Cardigan, The" (Dec. 1935); "Dead Die Twice, The" (Aug. 1935); "Dead Don't Die, The" (Oct. 1932); "Dead Man's Folly" (May 1, 1933); "Death After Murder" (July 15, 1933); "Death Alley" (Nov. 1931); "Doorway to Danger" (Mar. 1933); "Heir to Murder" (Apr. 1933); "Hell Couldn't Stop Him" (Apr. 15, 1935); "Hell's Pay Check" (Dec. 1931); "Hot Spot" (Mar. 1, 1934); "Kickback" (Apr. 1, 1934); "Lead Pearls" (Sept. 1932); "Lead Poison" (Apr. 1936); "Leave It to Cardigan" (Dec. 15, 1934); "Make Mine Murder" (Nov. 1936); "Me-Cardigan" (Feb. 1933); "Murder à la Carte" (Nov. 15, 1933); "Murder and Co." (Sept. 15, 1933); "Murder by Mail" (June 1936); "Murder Cure" (Jan. 1933); "Murder on the Loose" (Apr. 1932); "No Time to Kill" (May 1937); "Not So Tough" (Aug. 15, 1934); "Pardon My Murder" (Nov. 15, 1934); "Phantom Fingers" (Mar. 1932); "Read em and Weep" (May 1, 1934); "Rogues' Ransom" (Aug. 1932); "Scrambled Murder" (July 15, 1933); "Sign of Murder, The" (Mar. 1936); "Six Diamonds and a Dick" (Jan. 1932); "Spades Are Spades" (Jan. 1, 1934); "Too Hot to Handle" (Sept. 15, 1934); "Truckload of Diamonds" (Dec. 1932)

BOOKS

Fifty Roads to Town (1936); *Six Deadly Dames* (1950); *Sleepers East* (1933)

Norman, Earl (Norman Thomson) (1915–2000)

Norman is known for his Kill Me In series of paperback novels, all concerning the case files of Burns Bannion, a "great big six-foot, slightly overweight bastard" American private eye based in Japan. As the corny, alliterative name of his hero suggests,

Norman's approach to the tough-guy thriller was sometimes straight out of the old pulp magazines like *Spicy Detective*, circa Robert Leslie BELLEM's heyday. Indeed, the books were not expected to do more than grab some of Shell Scott's or Sam Durrell's readers and give them a few hours of light entertainment. However, the all-Asian settings and accoutrements, a combination of exoticism and matter-of-fact authenticity, gave the Bannion books their edge over the typical paperback intrigues. The author was himself an old Japan hand, having been a longtime resident of the country and well-connected member of the post-World War II American occupation and the international community. Norman's expatriate adventures included periods as liaison for Hollywood productions shooting in Japan, including *The Barbarian and the Geisha*. He was reported to have become a steady drinking partner of that film's star, John Wayne.

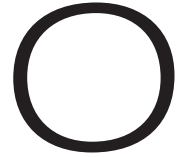
Burns Bannion is no unabashed Japanophile, however. The books are filled with stereotypes and

caricatures, and the Japanese women are treated with an outlandish chauvinism, as if the country were one giant geisha house. Thomson's most thrilling use of "local color"—aside from the descriptions of the hero's rampant sexual conquest of Japanese females—is in the many scenes of hand-to-hand combat. Bannion is an advanced student of karate. Before the spy craze of the '60s made martial arts and fistfights a cliché, the karate displays and the inevitable bone-crunching fights that ensued were most enlightening and fun to read.

In later years Norman returned to the United States. He died in California.

Works

Kill Me in Atami (1962); *Kill Me in Hong Kong* (1976); *Kill Me in Roppongi* (1967); *Kill Me in Shimbashi* (1959); *Kill Me in Shinjuku* (1961); *Kill Me in Tokyo* (1958); *Kill Me in Yokohama* (1960); *Kill Me in Yokosuka* (1966); *Kill Me on the Ginza* (1962)



O'Donnell, Peter

(1920–) *Also wrote as: Madeleine Brent*

On May 13, 1963, the luckier readers of the daily newspapers in Great Britain were treated to the debut appearance of a remarkable new comic strip character, the luscious, lethal, seductive superspy Modesty Blaise. London-born Peter O'Donnell had been writing Fleet Street strip cartoons (“Garth,” “Tug Transom,” “Romeo Brown,” and others) for more than a decade when he began chronicling the adventures of the “female James Bond.” Of mysterious origins, traceable only to a displaced persons camp in the Middle East, Modesty’s backstory includes her youthful takeover of a Tangier-based international criminal organization known as the Network, which specializes in high-ticket theft, smuggling, and espionage-for-hire but pointedly abstains from dealings in drugs and vice, and never works against Her Majesty’s government (Miss Blaise’s adopted nationality after a brief marriage to a derelict Englishman). A freelance operative for British Intelligence, hooked on danger, working in close alliance with her platonic soulmate and fellow adventure junkie Willie Garvin, Modesty takes on the hopeless cases and deadly threats that conventional law enforcement and bureaucratic espionage agencies are too hamstrung to tackle. She is beautiful and stimulating in appearance, cold ferocity joined to an inflexible will. Battling plots against humanity and various colorful villains, Blaise is a brilliant tactician and a hands-on opponent with an expertise in arcane,

acrobatic martial arts and some devastating battle tactics of her own devising, including the Nailer—her technique for momentarily disabling the bad guys by suddenly stripping to the waist.

O'Donnell’s comic strip heroine was a tremendous hit. Modesty rode the James Bond bandwagon of the mid-'60s, but she had an independent appeal as well. Her arresting sexiness attracted male readers and her cool, powerful persona made her a favorite with women as well. Her popularity continued long after the superspy craze, for 38 years, in fact, until the strip folded on April 11, O'Donnell’s 81st birthday.

Within a year of the strip’s debut, O'Donnell was asked to write a screenplay for a Modesty Blaise motion picture. He then turned the script into a novel, which appeared to great success in 1965. The assigned director, Joseph Losey, had the original screenplay rewritten to the extent that O'Donnell would claim only one of his original lines remained in the finished film—a controversial (some loved it, some hated it) Pop Art spoof with Monica Vitti as the title character and Terence Stamp as Willie.

Having found it satisfying to flesh out his characters and expand on his plotlines in a way not possible in the daily strips, O'Donnell happily continued Modesty’s adventures in the novel form. Twelve books were published between 1965 and 1985. After a 16-year hiatus, O'Donnell and his legendary heroine returned for a predetermined finale, *Cobra Trap*, a story collection that firmly and movingly concluded the long and

beloved series. “I think the final story showed them up in their best colors,” O’Donnell said of Modesty and Willie’s farewell. “They’re still ingenious in what they did, still have a great rapport with each other, and I brought in characters readers have met over the years in various books. I don’t have a regret at all.”

During the Modesty Blaise years O’Donnell maintained a second, pseudonymous career as romance novelist Madeleine Brent, the author of 10 highly acclaimed works (one of which, *Merlin’s Keep*, was named Romantic Novel of the Year in 1978). Although the milieu and style were light-years away from the espionage adventures of his other series, there was more than a touch of Modesty Blaise discernible in the spirited, independent heroines of O’Donnell’s romance fiction.

O’Donnell worked for the movies from time to time. His screenplays include the delirious *Vengeance of She* (1968) for Hammer Films.

Works

Cobra Trap (2001); *Dead Man’s Handle* (1985); *Dragon’s Claw* (1978); *I, Lucifer* (1967); *Impossible Virgin, The* (1971); *Last Day in Limbo* (1976); *Modesty Blaise* (1965); *Night of Morningstar, The* (1982); *Pieces of Modesty* (1972); *Sabre-Tooth* (1966); *Silver Mistress* (1973); *Taste for Death, A* (1969); *Xanadu Talisman* (1981)

As Madeleine Brent:

Capricorn Stone (1977); *Golden Urchin* (1986); *Heritage of Shadows* (1983); *Kirkby’s Changeling* (1975); *Long Masquerade* (1981); *Merlin’s Keep* (1977); *Moonraker’s Bride* (1973); *Stormswift* (1984); *Stranger at Wildings* (1975); *Tregaron’s Daughter* (1971)

Oppenheim, E. Phillips (Edward Phillips Oppenheim) (1866–1946)

E. Phillips Oppenheim wrote most famously of secret agents and duplicitous diplomats, secret treaties and international conspiracies, moonlit Riviera casinos, Swiss hotel suites, perilous yacht trips, and glamorous trans-European express trains. Known in his time as “the Prince of Storytellers,” Oppenheim, like the brand names of today’s best-

seller lists, offered readers in the first half of the 20th century a steady, predictable, and entertaining supply of pop fiction. His name on a book jacket guaranteed a certain type of escapism—all thrilling situations, bright dialogue, and glitzy settings. Oppenheim’s work included mysteries, detective stories, and science fiction, but he was most closely identified with the spy story, a genre he virtually invented.

English-born Oppenheim was the son of a leather goods merchant, with little formal education before he joined the family business. The job took him all over Europe, giving him a chance to observe the grand settings and mysterious continentals with which his writing would be filled. He self-published a novel, *Expiation*, when he was just out of his teens, then became a regular contributor to the weekly story papers. His novel *The Mysterious Mr. Sabin* (1898), about a man’s meddling in international affairs, with the future of Britain at stake, has been called the first “modern” spy novel. He continued to work in this field the rest of his life, sometimes writing of professional spies, but more often of adventurous amateurs—or “accidental spies”—caught up in the sweep of international intrigue. A recurring motif was the discovery of a plot or a document revealing a plan—usually German-backed—to start a war or overthrow the British government. The books often played with elements from current affairs, including Britain’s festering fears of Germany (which World War I would prove to have been well-founded), but the realistic was always overlaid with the far-fetched.

Oppenheim’s most famous work was *The Great Impersonation* (1920), a lively thriller that was a kind of inversion of Anthony Hope’s doppelgänger adventure, *The Prisoner of Zenda*. In this case, the hero is impersonated by a German agent trying to subvert the English establishment. His most unusual novels were the futuristic tales *The Wrath to Come* (1924) and *The Dumb Gods Speak* (1937), which featured intriguing premonitions as well as the usual forewarnings against the United Kingdom’s foreign enemies.

Oppenheim’s success as a novelist allowed him to sever his ties with the family business and move to what would be his favorite setting on and off the page, the French Riviera. He life became

further interwoven with his fiction when he served as an intelligence operative during World War I.

His appeal evaporated with the arrival of World War II, and later readers were more likely to find his work creaky and underwritten. Oppenheim's vision of sophisticated spies and international conspiracies was nevertheless a primary influence on the modern espionage novel beginning with Eric AMBLER and especially in the novels and movies about Ian FLEMING's, jet-setting super-spy James Bond.

Works

Aaron Rodd, *Diviner* (1920); *Adventures of Mr. Joseph P. Cray, The* (1925); *Advice Limited* (1935); *Amazing Judgment, The* (1897); *Amazing Partnership, The* (1914); *Amazing Quest of Mr. Ernest Bliss* (1922); *Ambrose Lavendale, Diplomat* (1920); *And Still I Cheat the Gallows* (1938); *Anna, the Adventuress* (1904); *As a Man Lives* (1898); *Ask Miss Mott* (1936); *Bank Manager, The* (1934); *Battle of Basinghall Street* (1935); *Berenice* (1910); *Betrayal, The* (1904); *Bird of Paradise, The* (U.S. title: *The Floating Peril*) (1936); *Black Box, The* (1915); *Channay Syndicate, The* (1927); *Chronicles of Melhampton* (1928); *Cinema Murder, The* (1917); *Colossus of Arcadia, The* (1938); *Conspirators* (1907); *Crooks in the Sunshine* (1932); *Curious Happenings to the Rooke Legatees* (1937); *Daughter of Astrea, A* (1898); *Daughter of the Marionis, A* (1895); *Devil's Paw, The* (1921); *Double Four, The* (1911); *Double Life of Mr. Alfred Burton, The* (1914); *Double Traitor, The* (1918); *Dumb Gods Speak, The* (1937); *Envoy Extraordinary* (1937); *Evil Shepherd, The* (1923); *Ex-Detective, The* (1933); *Ex-Duke, The* (U.S. title: *The Interloper*) (1927); *Exit a Dictator* (1939); *Expiation* (1887); *Exploits of Pudgy Pete and Co.* (1928); *Falling Star* (U.S. title: *The Moving Finger*) (1911); *False Evidence* (1896); *For the Queen* (1912); *Fortunate Wayfarer, The* (1928); *Gabriel Samara, Peacemaker* (1925); *Gallows of Chance, The* (1934); *Game of Liberty, The* (1915); *General Besserley's Puzzle Box* (1935); *Golden Beast, The* (1926); *Grassleyes Mystery, The* (1940); *Great Awakening, The* (U.S. title: *A Sleeping Memory*) (1902); *Great Impersonation, The* (1920); *Great Prince Shan, The* (1922); *Harvey Garrard's Crime* (1926); *Illustrious Prince, The* (1910); *Inevitable Millionaires, The* (1923); *Inspector Dickens Retires* (U.S. title: *Gangsters' Glory*) (1931); *Jacob's Ladder* (1921); *Jeanne of the Marshes* (1909); *Jeremiah and the Princess* (1933); *Kingdom of the Blind,*



Illustration from a scene in E. Phillips Oppenheim's *The Profiteers* (1921): "Wingate's pistol had stolen from his pocket. Rees glared at it for a moment and then went on."

The (1916); *Last Train Out* (1941); *Light Beyond, The* (1928); *Lion and the Lamb, The* (1930); *Lost Leader, A* (1906); *Madame* (U.S. title: *Madame and Her Twelve Virgins*) (1927); *Maker of History, A* (1905); *Man and His Kingdom, The* (1899); *Man Who Changed His Plea, The* (1942); *Master Mummer, The* (1905); *Master of Men* (1901); *Michael's Evil Deeds* (1924); *Milan Grill Room, The* (1940); *Millionaire of Yesterday* (1900); *Million Pound Deposit, The* (1930); *Mischief-Maker, The* (1912); *Miss Brown of X.Y.O.* (1927); *Missing Delora, The* (U.S. title: *The Lost Ambassador*) (1910); *Mr. Bingham, the Marquis and Madelon* (1927); *Mr. Grex of Monte Carlo* (1915); *Mr. Mirakel* (1943); *Noran Chambers Smiled* (U.S. title: *The Man from Sing Sing*) (1932); *Murder at*

Monte Carlo (1933); *Mysterious Mr. Sabin Ward* (1898); *Mystery of Mr. Bernard Brown* (1896); *Mystery Road, The* (1923); *Nicholas Goode, Detective* (1927); *Nobody's Man* (1922); *Ostrekoff Jewels, The* (1932); *Passionate Quest, The* (1924); *Pawns Count, The* (1918); *Peer and the Woman, The* (1892); *Postmaster of Market Deighton* (1897); *Prince of Sinners, A* (1903); *Prodigals of Monte Carlo* (1926); *Profiteers, The* (1921); *Secret, The* (1907); *Shy Plutocrat, The* (1941); *Simple Peter Cradd* (1931); *Sinners Beware* (1932); *Sir Adam Disappeared* (1939); *Slane's Long Shots* (1930); *Spymaster, The* (1938); *Stolen Idols* (1925); *Spy Paramount, The* (1935); *Strange Boarders of Palace Crescent* (1934); *Stranger's Gate* (1939); *Survivor, The* (1901); *Temptation of Tavernake* (1913); *Those Other Days* (1912); *Traitors, The* (1902); *Up the Ladder of Gold* (1931); *Vanished Messenger, The* (1916); *Vindicator, The* (1907); *Way of These Women, The* (1913); *What Happened to Forester?* (1929); *Wicked Marquis, The* (1919); *World's Great Snare, The* (1896); *Wrath to Come, The* (1924); *Yellow Crayon, The* (1903); *Zeppelin's Passenger, The* (1918)

Orczy, Baroness Emmuska (1865–1947)

The daughter of Hungarian gentry chased from their land by a peasant uprising, Orczy came to England with her family when she was a teenager. Her writing career began with translations of Hungarian folktales, illustrated by her artist husband. In the wake of Arthur Conan Doyle's great success with the Sherlock Holmes stories, she turned to detective fiction. The stories about the "Old Man in the Corner" concern a brilliant amateur sleuth who solves the crimes of the day without stirring from his seat at a café; he shares his ingenious findings with his amanuensis Polly Burton, a journalist. The 38 stories in the series, originally published in a London magazine, were collected in three volumes. Some readers see an embryonic version of Rex Stout's sleuth Nero Wolfe in Orczy's sedentary detective. Of greater historical interest, perhaps, are the stories of Lady Molly of Scotland Yard, which brought a feminist slant to fanciful tales of a Scotland Yard investigator and her female sidekick.

Orczy's one lasting creation was a character who lays claim to being the forefather of all the masked superheroes to come, from Zorro to Batman. Set at the time of the French Revolution, *The Scarlet Pimpernel* concerns the daring adventures of a league of English aristocrats led by Sir Percy Blakeney; Sir Percy presents himself to the public as an effete popinjay but is in fact the notorious Pimpernel, a disguised avenger and rescuer of hapless French aristocrats, the supposedly innocent victims of the Reign of Terror. As long as one could accept its fervently pro-aristocracy politics, *The Scarlet Pimpernel* was dandy entertainment, filled with suspenseful confrontations, thrilling swordsmanship (and one-upmanship against the dastardly French democrats), and hair's-breadth escapes. The book's success (with popular adaptation to the stage and screen) led Orczy to write 10 more novels, sequels, and prequels, and an assortment of short stories about Sir Percy and his well-born league.

Works

Adventures of the Scarlet Pimpernel (1929); *Beau Brocade* (1907); *Case of Miss Elliott* (1905); *Child of the Revolution, A* (1932); *Divine Folly, The* (1937); *Eldorado: A Story of the Scarlet Pimpernel* (1913); *Elusive Pimpernel, The* (1908); *Emperor's Candlesticks* (1899); *Fire in the Stubble* (1912); *First Sir Percy: An Adventure of the Laughing Cavalier* (1920); *Lady Molly of Scotland Yard* (1910); *Laughing Cavalier, The* (1914); *League of the Scarlet Pimpernel* (1919); *Leatherface: A Tale of Old Flanders* (1916); *Lord Tony's Wife: A Story of the Scarlet Pimpernel* (1913); *Maiser of Maida Vale* (1925); *Mam'zelle Guillotine: An Adventure of the Scarlet Pimpernel* (1940); *Man in Grey, The* (1918); *Nest of the Sparrowhawk* (1909); *No Greater Love* (1938); *Old Man in the Corner, The* (1909); *Pimpernel and Rosemary* (1924); *Pride of Race* (1942); *Scarlet Pimpernel* (1905); *Sir Percy Hits Back: An Adventure of the Scarlet Pimpernel* (1927); *Sir Percy Leads the Band* (1936); *Skin o' My Tooth* (1926); *Spy of Napoleon, A* (1934); *Triumph of the Scarlet Pimpernel* (1922); *Uncrowned King, The* (1935); *Unravelled Knots* (1926); *Way of the Scarlet Pimpernel* (1933); *Will o' the Wisp* (1947)

P

Packer, Vin (Marijane Meaker)
(1927–) *Also wrote as: Ann Aldrich*

Behind the pen name of Vin Packer lies a greatly talented writer whose work has followed a bumpy but fascinating course, from paperback erotica to tough crime fiction to novels for teenagers, with significant and often startling works in every stage of her varied career. Unjustly neglected, Packer is an important figure not merely as one of the few women to make her way in the boys' club of '50s paperback writers but also as one of the best and most original American novelists of that era.

She was born Marijane Meaker in Auburn, New York, in 1927. An imaginative, sensitive child, Meaker wanted to be a writer from an early age, and by her early twenties, fresh out of the University of Missouri, she sold a short story to the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Hoping for more sales to pile up, Meaker took a series of jobs at magazine and book publishers in New York City (including one, she claimed, at *The Proctological Review*), eventually getting hired as a reader at Fawcett for Gold Medal Books. During one of their regular after-work staff meetings at the bar of the Algonquin Hotel, Meaker got to talking with Gold Medal's editor, Dick Carroll, "a colorful Irishman who'd come East from Hollywood," she recalled, "with a history of screenwriting and drinking." Meaker was telling him about some of her published work, including a "fey little story" she had written about boarding school girls. Over his cocktail glass, Carroll asked if there had been any homosexuality at

the school. "I said, 'Sure, and a lot more of it at my sorority in college.'"

One of Gold Medal's biggest hits had been a reprinting of a book called *Women's Barracks* by Tereska TORRES, a wartime story with a lesbian subtext. Carroll thought readers might like something more in that line, only this time in a girls' school setting, and he offered Meaker the assignment. "The only restriction he gave me was that it couldn't have a happy ending and he suggested it end with the lesbian going crazy. Otherwise the post office might seize the books as obscene," she recalled. (Censorship bodies at that time generally insisted that "deviant" behavior had to be punished.)

Meaker wrote the story of two Cranston University sorority sisters: naive, earnest Mitch, and Leda, worldly queen of the campus. Leda leads the life of a freewheeling bisexual and soon seduces the vulnerable Mitch, who promptly falls in love with her. But Leda, concerned with her high-profile status in the college community, will have none of that. She explains to Mitch the shallow facts of campus life:

"You better get to know men too, kid. I mean that. There are a lot of people who love both and no one gives a damn, and they just say you're oversexed and they don't care. But they start getting interested when you stick to one sex. Like you've been doing, Mitch. I couldn't love you if you were a lesbian."

"I'm not," Mitch said, wondering what the word meant. "I'm not. I—I just haven't met a man yet who makes me feel the way you do."

"Maybe you don't give them a chance," Leda answered.

But in the end it is Leda who can't cope: her desperate attempt to save her reputation drives her crazy, leaving her confined to a "nut house" as her Tri Epsilon sisters wonder "if insane people can read mail."

Meaker titled the novel *Sorority Girl*, but Dick Carroll changed it to the more enigmatic *Spring Fire*, piggybacking on an unrelated James Michener best-seller called *Fires of Spring*. Meaker's book was a huge hit, with many copies sold to a segment of the population the macho Gold Medal line had seldom attracted. For all its frank talk and calculated shocks about lesbian sex, *Spring Fire* also presented a realistic inside view of what was then a very underground community. "I think Dick Carroll figured the story would have prurient appeal to men," Meaker told this author, "but when it came out I got just hundreds of letters, boxes of them, all from women, gay women. It took them all by surprise, this big audience out there." Meaker remembered being given a rare audience with chief executive Roger Fawcett himself, who wanted to shake the hand of the writer who had "outsold *God's Little Acre*" (Erskine Caldwell's 1933 novel, the yardstick for paperback achievement in that era).

The success of *Spring Fire* led to the publication of other lesbian-themed fiction. Within a few years such stories were practically a staple at every publisher of paperback originals. Gold Medal, the pioneer, naturally published several more of its own in this vein, releasing the work of Ann BANNON (who wrote exclusively on this subject) and another specialist, Ann Aldrich—which turned out to be another of Marijane Meaker's pen names. Under the new byline ("Dick said to pick something All-American-sounding, like 'Henry Aldrich,' the kid on the radio show"), she published *We Walk Alone* ("Through Lesbos' Lonely Groves"), *We, Too, Must Love*, *Carol in a Thousand Cities*, and *We Two Won't Last*.

She continued to write novels for Gold Medal under the Vin Packer name as well. These would be mostly tales of crime, murder, and tawdry behavior, many of them brilliant and original works. They were tough books, not in the pulp-derived, rough-neck style of Mickey SPILLANE and his followers, but still ruthless and unsentimental, presenting aberrant and psychotic behavior with the cold, sharp touch of a surgeon's scalpel. Packer did not play the moralist (and to hell with what the post office thought). Her crime stories were not conventionally action packed, but were insidious and psychologically dense, establishing a subversively suspenseful atmosphere. Looking forward to her future as a young-adult author under another name (M. E. Kerr), Meaker as Packer was often concerned with the mishaps of troubled youth (*Come Destroy Me*, *The Thrill Kids*, *The Young and the Violent*). She continued to explore the controversial subject of homosexuality (*Whisper His Sin*) while adding another, even more inflammatory subject—racial relations—in two tales of sex and racism in the South (*Dark Don't Catch Me* and *3 Day Terror*). Several of Packer's novels were based on real-life crime cases (a subject that fascinated her), such as the racially charged murder of Emmett Till inspiring *Dark Don't Catch Me* and a notorious matricide case doing the same for *Whisper His Sin*. It was the *New York Times* legendary crime fiction critic Anthony Boucher who suggested she fictionalize the notorious Parker-Hulme case—about a pair of New Zealand teenage girls (the "lesbian Leopold-Loeb") who conspire to kill the mother of one. Packer did just that, calling it *The Evil Friendship*, one of her best works, and Boucher in turn gave it a rave.

Meaker wrote her last Vin Packer novel for Gold Medal in 1963, *Alone at Night*, a relatively conventional suspense story. Signet would publish the next Packer paperback, *The Hare in March*, once again set among troubled and troublemaking youths on a college campus, with LSD now added to the mix. The last Packer, *Don't Rely on Gemini*, was a decidedly atypical comic novel about astrology. Packer went out of print—forever. Meaker soon inaugurated a new byline—Kerr—and started producing a well-received series of young adult novels, including *The Son of Someone Famous* and *Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack*.

Works

Come Destroy Me (1954); *Damnation of Adam Blessing, The* (1961); *Dark Don't Catch Me* (1956); *Dark Intruder* (1952); *Evil Friendship, The* (1958); *5:45 to Suburbia* (1960); *Girl on the Best Seller List, The* (1960); *Intimate Victims* (1962); *Look Back to Love* (1953); *Something in the Shadows* (1961); *Spring Fire* (1952); *3-Day Terror* (1957); *Thrill Kids, The* (1955); *Twisted Ones, The* (1959); *Whisper His Sin* (1954)

As Ann Aldrich:

Carol in a Thousand Cities (1960); *We Too, Must Love* (1958); *We Walk Alone* (1958)

Page, Norvell

(1904–1961) *Also wrote as: Randolph Craig, N. Wooten Poge, Grant Stockbridge*

In the 1930s, the golden decade of the American pulp magazines, Norvell Page wrote some of the most entertaining, outlandish, wildest, *pulpiest* pulp fiction ever committed to two-column type and rough-wood paper. Though his most enduring and acclaimed writings would disguise his authorship with a house name, Page has long been properly credited for his amazing contribution to popular fiction, and his place in the pulp Valhalla is secure.

Page's first career was as a newspaperman. Hailing from Richmond, Virginia, he came to New York City as a young reporter and found work at several of the numerous Manhattan dailies, including the *Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, and the *World-Telegram*. His first pulp sale is thought to have been sometime in 1930. By the end of that year he had begun a long-lasting relationship with *Detective-Dragnet Magazine*, a freewheeling crime pulp. His byline appeared, here and there, with increasing frequency over the next 12 months, and by 1933 he was an established presence in the New York pulp community.

Page wrote a little of everything in his amazing and productive single decade as a pulpster. Early in his career, in 1933, he wrote a trio of memorable crime stories set in Little Italy for *Black Mask* magazine. He wrote more than a dozen tales of the grotesque and the terrifying in the "weird menace" magazines of the early to mid-'30s (*Dime Mystery*,

Terror Tales, *Horror Stories*). He wrote numerous risqué detective mysteries for the notorious *Spicy Detective Stories*, and he wrote the cult classics *The City Condemned to Hell* and *Satan's Incubators*, in the first and only issues of *The Octopus* and *The Scorpion*, respectively. For John W. Campbell's *Unknown* magazine he wrote three extraordinary novel-length works—two Robert E. HOWARD-like fantasy adventures of a wandering evangelical Christian warrior (*Flame Winds* and *Sons of the Bear God*) and the haunting *But Without Horns*, the investigation of a destructive, superpowerful mutant human whose racist views and devastating plans for humanity are eerily reminiscent of Adolf Hitler's. But for all these goodies on Norvell Page's résumé, his everlasting enshrinement among pulp fans is primarily for the nearly 100 book-length adventures he wrote about a mysterious crime-fighter, that "Master of Men" known as the Spider.

The first of the so-called hero pulps had been established with great success by the publisher Street & Smith. "We saw how very successful *The Shadow* was," recalled Henry Steeger, the head of the rival pulp house Popular Publications, "and we wanted to do something like it. And I think we improved on it." Richard Wentworth was the actual identity of the Spider, a ruthless crime fighter who stamps the corpses of his numerous criminal victims with a vermilion, spider-shaped seal. The first two issues were pseudonymously and stodgily written by R. T. M. Scott, an old Canadian army major. Page replaced him for issue three. With the new author in charge, *The Spider* took on a startling intensity: it became sexier and more violent by far, written in compulsive, explosive prose. The plots were now mad, outlandish, disturbing, apocalyptic. In *Wings of the Black Death*, for instance, Page's debut, Richard Wentworth battles a cruel, black-mailing criminal who threatens New York with bubonic plague, the effects of which are described in sickening detail:

He belched. Blood poured from his jaws. It tore a muffled scream of agony from him. . . . The purple lips opened, suffocation blackened his face. Blood gushed out. Sound issued from that ghastly mouth. But it was

sound that was translatable into no word. It was the death rattle . . .

In *The Spider*, for once, the viciousness of the criminals was matched by the hero. There would be none of Doc Savage's mercy bullets (*see* DENT, Lester) or reprogramming seminars for the opponents of Richard Wentworth. Justice for them is sudden and final ("In the end, the Black Death was a coward and died a coward's death, with terror in his eyes, with the Spider's fingers crushing the life slowly out of him."). As for sex, both Wentworth and his girlfriend Nina Van Sloan continually encountered the sort of lasciviousness that would have sent Doc Savage fleeing to his Fortress of Solitude and bolting the door. There are orgies, threats of rape, and sexual torture. Page also wrote some of the more sadistic and frightening of the notorious "shudder pulp stories," (*see* FISCHER, Bruno) and no doubt some of the bloodthirsty mindset of the shudders blended almost too smoothly into the psychotic villainy and rampant cruelty of so many of his Spider adventures. It was a phenomenal achievement, great entertainment, and hugely successful for Popular Publications. Page churned out 35 of the novel-length stories, one a month, before he took a breather, then returned after some months to write most of the Spider novels until World War II took him away from the pulps for good.

Page himself was said to have been something of a mysterious, eccentric figure, wrapped up in his stories and his characters, particularly the Spider. His boss Henry Steeger recalled that Page would wear a wide-brimmed black hat and black cape and may have come to believe he was his famous superhero. Others remembered Page in the same outfit, roaming up and down the sunny beaches of Ana Maria, a resort and pulp writer colony on Florida's Gulf Coast. During World War II Page worked for the U.S. government in Washington, writing government reports. He remained in government service after the war, becoming a publicity writer for the Atomic Energy Commission, a job he retained until his death from a heart attack at 57.

Works

"Accursed Thirst" (Sept. 1935); "Black Harvest," *Black Mask* (Apr. 1933); "Blood on the Moon" (Jan. 1936);

"Bodies in Bronze" (Dec. 1935); "But Without Horns" (June 1940); "Claws of the Golden Dragon" (Jan. 1939); "Confessional, The," *Black Mask* (Mar. 1933); "Dance of the Skeletons" (Oct. 1933); "Death Beast, The" (Dec. 1933); "Devil's Death Dwarfs, The" (Oct. 1936); "Flame Winds" (June 1939); "Gentlemen from Hell" (Mar. 1942); "Legions of the Accursed Light" (Jan. 1938); "Mayor of Hell, The" (Jan. 1936); "Murder Dyed Their Lips" (Sept. 1937); "Music for the Lusting Dead" (July 1936); "Satan's Penthouse Carnival," *Strange Detective Mysteries* (Jan.–Feb. 1939); "Satan's Sideshow," *Dime Detective* (Sept. 1935); "Sons of the Bear God" (Nov. 1939); "They Drink Blood" (Aug. 1934); "Those Catrini," *Black Mask*, (Feb. 1933); "When the Death Bat Flies" (Oct. 1937); "When the Devil Laughed" (May 1935)

As Randolph Craig:

"City Condemned to Hell," *The Octopus* (Feb.–Mar. 1939); "Satan's Incubators," *The Scorpion* (Apr. 1939)

As N. Wooten Page:

"Blackmail Hotel," *Spicy Detective Stories* (Feb. 1937); "Death Makes a Proposition," *Spicy Detective Stories* (Mar. 1938); "Devil Muscles In," *Detective-Dragnet* (Nov. 1930); "Kiss Proof Murder," *Spicy Detective Stories* (Aug. 1939); "Redheads Always Win," *Spicy Detective Stories* (Aug. 1935); "Senorita Bluebird," *Spicy Detective Stories* (Sept. 1938); "Sinister Alliance," *Detective-Dragnet* (Nov. 1933); "Straight Jacket Solution," *Spicy Detective Stories* (Aug. 1937); "Two Spot," *Detective-Dragnet* (Mar. 1931)

As Grant Stockbridge in The Spider:

"Army of the Damned" (Oct. 1942); "Benevolent Order of Death" (June 1941); "Builders of the Dark Empire" (Oct. 1934); "Cholera King, The" (Apr. 1936); "Citadel of Hell" (Mar. 1934); "City Destroyer, The" (Jan. 1935); "City of Flaming Shadows" (Jan. 1934); "City of Whispering Death" (Apr. 1938); "City That Paid to Die, The" (Sept. 1938); "Coming of the Terror, The" (Sept. 1936); "Corpse Cargo" (July 1934); "Council of Evil" (Oct. 1940); "Crime Laboratory, The" (Dec. 1941); "Criminal Horde, The" (Aug. 1943); "Death and the Spider" (Jan. 1942); "Death Reign of the Vampire King" (Nov. 1935); "Death's Crimson Juggernaut" (Nov. 1934); "Devil's Paymaster, The" (May 1941); "Dragon Lord of the Underworld" (July 1935); "Emperor from Hell, The" (July 1938); "Emperor of the Yellow Death" (Dec. 1935); "Empire of Doom" (Feb. 1934); "Fangs of the Dragon" (Aug. 1942); "Flame Master,

The" (Mar. 1935); "Gray Horde Creeps, The" (Mar. 1938); "Green Globes of Death" (Mar. 1936); "Harbor of Nameless Dead" (Jan. 1941); "Spider and the Slave Doctor" (Feb. 1941); "Hell Rolls on the Highways" (Sept. 1942); "Hell's Sales Manager" (Feb. 1940); "Hordes of the Red Butcher" (June 1935); "Howling Death, The" (Jan. 1943); "Judgment of the Damned" (June 1940); "King of the Fleshless Legion" (May 1939); "King of the Red Killers" (Sept. 1935); "Laboratory of the Damned" (July 1936); "Legions of Madness" (June 1936); "Machine Guns over the White House" (Sept. 1937); "Mad Horde, The" (May 1934); "Man Who Ruled in Hell, The" (July 1937); "Master of Murder" (Nov. 1942); "Master of the Death Madness" (Aug. 1935); "Master of the Flaming Horde" (Nov. 1937); "Murder's Black Prince" (July 1941); "Murder's Legionnaires" (Feb. 1942); "Overlord of the Damned" (Oct. 1935); "Pain Emperor, The" (Feb. 1935); "Pirates from Hell, The" (Aug. 1940); "Prince of the Red Looters" (Aug. 1934); "Rat Trap" (Aug. 1931); "Recruit for the Spider Legion" (Mar. 1943); "Red Death Rain, The" (Dec. 1934); "Reign of the Death Fiddler" (May 1935); "Reign of the Silver Terror" (Sept. 1934); "Return of the Racket Kings" (July 1942); "Revolt of the Underworld" (June 1942); "Rule of the Monster Men" (June 1939); "Satan's Death Blast" (June 1934); "Satan's Murder Machines" (Dec. 1939); "Satan's Seven Swordsmen" (Oct. 1941); "Satan's Sightless Legion" (Aug. 1936); "Scourge of the Black Legions" (Nov. 1938); "Secret City of Crime" (Feb. 1942); "Serpent of Destruction" (Apr. 1934); "Silver Death Rain, The" (Mar. 1939); "Slaves of the Burning Blade" (Apr. 1941); "Slaves of the Crime Master" (Apr. 1935); "Slaves of the Dragon" (May 1936); "Slaves of the Laughing Death" (Mar. 1940); "Slaves of the Murder Syndicate" (Feb. 1936); "Slaves of the Ring" (Apr. 1942); "Spider and Hell's Factory, The" (Oct. 1943); "Spider and His Hobo Army, The" (Nov. 1940); "Spider and the Death Piper, The" (May 1942); "Spider and the Deathless One, The" (Sept. 1941); "Spider and the Eyeless Legion, The" (Oct. 1939); "Spider and the Faceless One, The" (Nov. 1939); "Spider and the Fire God, The" (Aug. 1939); "Spider and the Flame King, The" (Dec. 1942); "Spider and the Jewels of Hell, The" (Dec. 1940); "Spider and the Man from Hell, The" (June 1943); "Spider and the Scarlet Surgeon, The" (Aug. 1941); "Spider and the Slaves of Hell, The" (July 1939); "Spider and the Sons of Satan, The" (Mar. 1941); "Spider and the War Emperor" (May 1940); "Volunteer Corpse Brigade" (Nov. 1941); "Wings of the Black Death" (Dec. 1933)

Palmer, Stuart (1905–1968)

Palmer made his name in mystery fiction with his second novel, *The Penguin Pool Murders* (1931), which introduced the fierce crime-solving spinster Hildegard Withers, who stumbles upon a crime scene at a museum aquarium. The strong-willed, decidedly unhandsome schoolteacher who dabbles in detecting bore more than a few traces of Anna Katherine GREEN's Amelia Butterworth, and Palmer paired his character with a veteran, the sorely tried New York police detective Oscar Piper, much as Miss Butterworth had her Ebenezer Gryce of the NYPD. A second Hildegard Withers novel, *Murder on Wheels*, was published that same year, and many sequels and a series of film versions would follow. The novels varied in quality, with some plots that rivaled Erle Stanley GARDNER's Ellery Queen and other puzzle masters for their ingenious twists, and others that seemed shaggy-dog exercises in pointlessness. But Palmer was for the most part an amusing storyteller with a brisk, up-to-date style and a terrific sense of humor, and if the central relationship of the books was not original, the adorably irascible, bickering Withers and Piper were in fact a superior version of the Green models.

With each murder case underway, the bossy and sharp-tongued Withers quickly assumes her position as a thorn in the side of the police investigation team led by Inspector Piper. Much of the pleasure in Palmer's work lies in the sparring between the two, anticipating the sort of wisecracking couple-detectives of Dashiell HAMMETT's *The Thin Man* and others to come, though a homelier and less sexually active version of Nick and Nora Charles, to be sure. A recurring subtext of the series is a running debate about male-female superiority and Withers's disgust with gender stereotyping (a political liberal, Palmer would sprinkle his work with his views on prejudice, race, and other concerns). Palmer followed *Penguin* with other New York-set books, including *Murder on the Blackboard*, a takeoff on the "old dark house" motif set in Hildegard's creepy Manhattan school. Later books branched out, with *The Puzzle of the Silver Persian* set on board a transatlantic liner and in

London, and *The Puzzle of the Happy Hooligan* in and around the Hollywood movie colony (where *Penguin Pool's* success took Palmer, and where he worked as a screenwriter for many years, primarily on mystery series like *Bulldog Drummond* and *The Falcon*). In the 1930s RKO produced a series of movie adaptations from the books, all of them pleasant time-wasters; several actresses played the female lead in the series, but the first, the horse-faced Edna May Oliver, became the embodiment of Miss Hildegarde Withers forever after.

Works

Ace of Jades (1931); *Before It's Too Late* (1950); *Cold Poison* (1954); *Four Lost Ladies* (1949); *Green Ace, The* (1950); *Hildegarde Withers Makes the Scene* (1969); *Miss Withers Regrets* (1947); *Murder on the Blackboard* (1932); *Murder on Wheels* (1932); *Nipped in the Bud* (1951); *Omit Flowers* (1937); *Penguin Pool Murders, The* (1931); *People versus Withers and Malone* (with Craig Rice) (1963); *Puzzle of the Blue Banderilla* (1937); *Puzzle of the Happy Hooligan* (1941); *Puzzle of the Pepper Tree, The* (1933); *Puzzle of the Red Stallion, The* (1936); *Puzzle of the Silver Persian, The* (1934); *Rook Takes Knight* (1968); *Unhappy Hooligan* (1956)

Payton, Barbara (1927–1967)

Barbara Payton's *I Am Not Ashamed*, a sordid autobiography of lurid self-revelation, a warts-and-all (and then more warts) exposé of the starlet's rise and fall, is one of the eternal classics of pulp Hollywoodiana. Payton, a statuesque blonde from Cloquet, Minnesota, was discovered by studio talent scouts in the late 1940s, and by 1950 she was acting opposite such stars as Gary Cooper (*Dallas*) and James Cagney (*Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye*). Payton looked great on screen, but she got more attention from her famous suitors than she did from moviegoers. She found herself in a tempestuous love triangle with two actor beaus, the sophisticated leading man Franchot Tone and burly B-picture lead Tom Neal (best known as the star of the 1945 film *Detour*). The men fought over her, and Tone ended up in the hospital with a brain concussion. She later married him, briefly. She then went

back to Tom Neal, but this relationship did not last, either. Whether because of the bad publicity she had received, her lack of magic on the screen, her penchant for self-destruction, or just bad luck, her career jumped off the tracks. Unemployable, a boozier, money gone, looks gone, Payton's life spun out of control with surprising rapidity and she landed in the gutter as a street prostitute, turning tricks for a couple of dollars or free drinks.

It happened that one of Payton's regular watering holes was a dive not far from the offices of a low-budget paperback publisher named Holloway House. Not yet having begun to specialize in the "Black Experience" novels of ICEBERG SLIM, Donald GOINES, and other writers, the owners of Holloway House were then in the market for exposés and exploitable showbiz stories. Payton, who had already told many of the lurid details of her life in a notorious article in *Confidential* magazine, now agreed to tell even more of them in a paperback book.

Working by dictation, Payton spewed her story, from the first days in the movie capital, dating the likes of Gregory Peck and other big stars, through each stage of her decline and fall: the casting-couch incidents, producers peddling her sexual favors to get funding for a sinking B-picture, and the final slide into Skid Row alcoholism and hooking. Payton's story was so sordid and her viewpoint so distorted by booze and bad luck by the time of the book's creation that her idea of a ray of hope in her life is the time a john helped her find a pimp:

One night I realized I was in bed with a Negro. He was gentle and kind to me. "You aren't capable of running this kind of operation. You need a protector, a pimp. Someone who watches out for you, pays your rent, collects money for you." He gave me five dollars. Five dollars! Then he gave me a name he suggested I call . . .

The pimp does right by her, at least by Payton's diluted reasoning: "I never saw any money but he kept me eating and drinking. I was grateful for that. When I had time I would write poetry and my pimp liked it. He was proud of my writing. I

had crying spells though and once a John knifed me because I wouldn't do what he wanted. Thirty-eight stitches from my fleshy belly down . . .”

I Am Not Ashamed was released in 1963. The book apparently sold reasonably well, perhaps nowhere better than in the movie capital itself, where, for a time, Payton's outrageous revelations enlivened the chitchat on the Hollywood party circuit. The actress/memoirist wandered down to Mexico, where the effects of alcoholism and other ailments took their toll. She died at the age of 40.

Works

I Am Not Ashamed (1963)

Pendleton, Don

(1927–1995)

Don Pendleton had the rare distinction of single-handedly creating a genre—the super-violent action-adventure series—that was not well-respected but that had a tremendous impact on American publishing in the 1970s and beyond. Pendleton's *War Against the Mafia* (1969) was the story of Mack Bolan, a tough Vietnam vet whose stateside family is brutally wiped out by the Mob. Bolan then dedicates his life to extracting revenge on the entire Mafia. His all-or-nothing approach and devastating weaponry lead to scenes of spectacular bloodletting and high body counts and to Bolan's well-deserved nickname, “the Executioner.” Pendleton's books were crude, with mundane characterization and formulaic plotting, but the scenes of action and violence were startlingly detailed and lengthy. Another Bolan adventure, *Death Squad*, followed that same year, with countless more mobsters biting the dust. Two more followed in 1970, and then, with the Pinnacle Books series selling like gangbusters, from three to five new Executioner titles a year for decades.

Pendleton had come to writing after nearly 30 years of unrelated labor, from an underage enlistment in the U.S. Navy during World War II, to years as telegrapher, air-traffic controller, and engineering administrator. He entered the book-writing business peddling erotica to small paperback publishers such as Brandon House and Greenleaf. The Executioner made Pendleton an unlikely best-

selling novelist and literary archetype. The Mack Bolan books found great acceptance among blue-collar male readers, a segment of the population that had once been crucial to paperback sales but that lately had been allowed to drift away. Pendleton showed publishers how to sell to them again—with no ambiguity about the bad guys, simple prose, plenty of bloody action, tough, lone-wolf heroes, and often a paramilitary concern for weaponry and strategy. Throughout the '70s and '80s Bolan wandered the country unleashing hell on mafiosi from Arizona to New Jersey, and later he ventured across the borders to Canada, South America, and elsewhere.

Pendleton left the series to other writers after the 38th volume, climaxing Bolan's war with the Mafia in the apocalyptic *Satan's Sabbath*, published in March 1980. In the late '80s, Pendleton came up with a new series, the gritty adventures of urban private eye “Joe Copp.” The books were punchy and entertaining, but they did not have the success of the Executioner series.

Works

All Lovers Accepted (1968); *All the Trimmings* (1966); *Ashes to Ashes* (1986); *Color Her Adulteress* (1967); *Copp for Hire* (1987); *Copp in Deep* (1989); *Copp in Shock* (1992); *Copp in the Dark* (1990); *Copp on Fire* (1988); *Copp on Ice* (1991); *Eye to Eye* (1986); *Hot One, The* (1967); *Huntress, The* (1966); *Insatiabes, The* (1967); *Life to Life* (1987); *Mind to Mind* (1987); *Olympians, The* (1969); *Sex Goddess, The* (1967); *Sexy Saints, The* (1967); *Time to Time* (1988); *Truth About Sex, The* (1969); *Vegas Vendetta* (1971)

“EXECUTIONER” NOVELS

Acapulco Rampage (1976); *Arizona Ambush* (1977); *Assault on Soho* (1971); *Battle Mask* (1970); *Boston Blitz* (1972); *California Hit* (1972); *Canadian Crisis* (1975); *Caribbean Kill* (1972); *Chicago Wipe-Out* (1971); *Cleveland Pipeline* (1977); *Colorado Kill-Zone* (1976); *Command Strike* (1977); *Continental Contract* (1971); *Death Squad* (1969); *Detroit Deathwatch* (1974); *Dixie Convoy* (1976); *Firebase Seattle* (1975); *Friday's Feast* (1979); *Hawaiian Hellground* (1975); *Jersey Guns* (1974); *Miami Massacre* (1970); *Monday's Mob* (1978); *New Orleans Knockout* (1974); *Nightmare in New York* (1971); *Panic in Philly* (1973); *San Diego Siege* (1972); *Satan's Sabbath*

(1980); *Savage Fire* (1977); *St. Louis Showdown* (1975); *Tennessee Smash* (1978); *Terrible Tuesday* (1979); *Texas Storm* (1974); *Thermal Thursday* (1979); *Vegas Vendetta* (1971); *War Against the Mafia* (1969); *Washington IOU* (1972); *Wednesday's Wrath* (1979)

Phillips, James Atlee

(1915–1991) *Also wrote as: Philip Atlee*

Under his real name or paperback pseudonym (Philip Atlee), James Atlee Phillips never found the level of success that his writing talent, imagination, experience, and exploitably colorful background warranted. Phillips is one of the great overlooked postwar genre writers. In his own day, he was regularly in print for three decades and sustained a long and popular paperback series, but never broke through to the front ranks in sales or name recognition. With all the books long out of print and likely to stay that way, Phillips/Atlee under any name is remembered only by a corps of old paperback enthusiasts and those who memorize the small print credits of a certain Robert Mitchum moonshine movie. The resurrection of some obscure names and the elevation of many reputations from the 1940s to 1960s is due in part to latter-day enthusiasms for certain genres, atmospheres, and attitudes then in vogue—hard-boiled detective and murder stories, urban American settings, the general sordidness, pessimism, and nihilism of noir. Phillips, on the other hand, worked in areas that were every bit as popular in their time, but have not so readily tickled the zeitgeist of a later generation—colorful, sophisticated adventure fiction, exotic, authentically detailed foreign settings, and tough, inventive spy fiction that flourished in the era of James Bond mania.

Phillips had a varied and colorful background that made perfect “About the Author” copy. Born in Fort Worth, Texas, to a prominent family—his father was a well-known lawyer—Phillips was educated at Texas Christian University and the University of Texas. In his free time he became a pilot and self-published two books of poetry as a teenager, then found more prosaic work as a publicist, drifting to New York for the 1939 *World's Fair*, writing press releases for Billy Rose's Aqua-

cade, the popular synchronized-swimming show. Hoping to catch the ear of newspaper columnists Walter Winchell or Ed Sullivan, he hung out in the world of cynical publicity flacks and ruthless columnists immortalized in the 1957 film *Sweet Smell of Success*. While in New York Phillips wrote his first novel, an acidic look at the Texas country club set called *The Inheritors*. It was said to have caused a great deal of anger back in his hometown. Phillips wrote his first mystery novel in 1942, the delightfully titled *The Case of the Shivering Chorus Girls*.

With a desire for adventure and an itch to see the world, Phillips took a job with an overseas airline operating between India and China. When the United States entered World War II, Phillips went into the service, spending much of his time attached to various operations in India and Southeast Asia, working with many of the fearless personnel from General Chennault's Flying Tigers elite pilots' squadron. After the war he became a journalist and worked for several years as the editor of the U.S. Marines' publication *Leatherneck*. He moved to an expatriate colony in Mexico for a year or two, then took another airline job, having been recruited to run Amphibian Airways in Burma.

Wandering in Asia and then in the Caribbean, Tahiti, and the Canary Islands, Phillips eventually came back to writing fiction with a library's worth of wild experiences and colorful characters to document. His first new work was an excellent mystery thriller, *Suitable for Framing*, about a footloose American adventurer wandering from Paris to Villefranche to Mexico City to the Mexican wilderness in a chase after a valuable painting. The opening chapter, an account of the assassination of a Mexican wrestler in the middle of a match, is especially memorable. Macmillan brought it out in hardcover and Pocket Books published the paperback with bloody, fist-flying cover art and frenetic blurb (“A fast buck brought him a murder-package of dames, derelicts . . . and DEATH!”). In 1951 Phillips published *Pagoda*, which drew on his experience in Burma. In 1954 he published the first of his paperback originals—a Dell First Edition—*The Deadly Mermaid*. A spy story about an American operative sent to Haiti to disrupt an imminent

revolution, the novel beautifully evoked the lush Caribbean setting and its knowing manner sounded authentic (in addition to James's own experiences, his brother David Atlee Phillips had become a rising star in the CIA, coordinating numerous Latin American and Caribbean operations). Anticipating Len Deighton's anonymous agents, Phillips's hero remains unnamed except for the fake identity he assumes at the beginning of his dangerous new mission.

In the mid-'50s Phillips worked in Hollywood. The big-shouldered, hard-drinking author hit it off with John Wayne, and for a time he was on staff with Wayne's production company (doing some uncredited rewriting on Wayne's anticommunist spy thriller, *Big Jim McLain*). While with Wayne's company, Phillips met Robert Mitchum and the two got together to do a screenplay from a story of Mitchum's about transporters of illegal alcohol—moonshine—in the deep South. Phillips went to North Carolina with Mitchum, cast, and crew, and rewrote the script in an Asheville hotel room, day by day, finishing some scenes only minutes before they were filmed. *Thunder Road* became a cult hit, playing the theaters and drive-ins of the South for decades to come.

Phillips's abuse of various substances landed him in a veterans' hospital. Afterward, he settled down in Arkansas, where he married for the third time and went back to writing. In 1963 he wrote a tough thriller, *The Green Wound*, and sold it to a paperback house, Fawcett. Perhaps deciding to give himself a new start, Phillips signed the book with the pen name Philip Atlee. His first-person narrator was Joe Gall, a character who had various things in common with earlier heroes from *Pagoda*—including his name—and *Mermaid*. A cynical, retired CIA veteran who now—like Phillips—lives in Arkansas, and works on freelance commission, Gall is assigned, in *The Green Wound*, to troubleshoot a volatile racial situation in Texas. The complex and gritty adventure, with its vengeful blacks, race riots, and wealthy white racists, was controversial, not exactly escapist entertainment. But Gold Medal liked the Joe Gall character and Phillips's tough style and encouraged him to do a series, making Gall a freelance assassin roaming the world's trouble spots. Joe Gall reappeared in 1964—the real

start of the series as such—and then once or more a year until Gall retired in 1976 in *The Last Domino Contract* (“Contract” became the permanent series identifier beginning with *The Death Bird Contract* in 1966; Gall himself came to be marketed as “The Nullifier”).

The year of Gall's Gold Medal debut, 1963, was a significant one in the history of espionage fiction. Ian FLEMING's James Bond had been gaining in popularity after an endorsement by President Kennedy, and the release of the first Bond movie, *Doctor No*, signaled the beginning of a phenomenon. Gold Medal was luckily already positioned to exploit the trend with two well-established series, Edward S. AARONS's “Assignment” books and Donald Hamilton's adventures of Matt Helm. Aarons was pure, undemanding Pulp fun. Hamilton had his fans, but it was clearly Phillips who was best equipped to give Fleming a run for his money. Aside from being a more urbane writer, Phillips had the globe-trotting background, a continuing firsthand familiarity with exotic locations, and most crucially the knowledge of how modern American spy operations really worked (from his own experience and that of his brother David).

Many of the Gall novels were crackerjack thrillers, with the expected glamorous/exotic settings, sexy females, and plenty of action. Toward the end of the series' run the stories got darker, perhaps as a result of market trends, as Fleming's style became self-parody and the best-seller lists were turned over to the dark spy novelists like John Le Carré, Adam Hall, and Len Deighton. Or it might have been that Phillips himself changed his own perspective—gossip has it that he had become disenchanted with various American policies of the 1970s (*The Green Wound* certainly shows Phillips's ambivalence toward the establishment). Unlike so many other action series writers, Phillips let his character develop as the years went on, giving Gall a family grown out of players from various far-flung missions, settled down with him in his unlikely headquarters in Arkansas. The series was popular and had some discerning admirers, but James Atlee Phillips/Philip Atlee never found a deserved stature, perhaps because he was an American writing in an Anglophiliac genre, and he was a

paperback writer, thus overlooked by the cultural poo-bahs and the media that exalted Len Deighton, John Le Carré, and others published in hardcover. Phillips himself seems to have had no particular love for the series, seeing the books as simple entertainments.

Works

Case of the Shivering Chorus Girls, The (1942); *Deadly Mermaids, The* (1954); *Inheritors, The* (1940); *Naked Year, The* (1954); *Pagoda* (1951); *Suitable for Framing* (1949)

As Philip Atlee:

Black Venus Contract, The (1975); *Canadian Bomber Contract, The* (1971); *Death Bird Contract, The* (1966); *Fer-de-lance Contract, The* (1970); *Green Wound, The* (1963); *Ill Wind Contract, The* (1969); *Irish Beauty Contract, The* (1966); *Judah Lion Contract, The* (1972); *Kiwi Contract, The* (1972); *Kowloon Contract, The* (1974); *Last Domino Contract, The* (1976); *Paper Pistol Contract, The* (1966); *Rockabye Contract, The* (1968); *Shankill Road Contract, The* (1973); *Silken Baroness, The* (1964); *Skeleton Coast Contract, The* (1973); *Spice Road Contract, The* (1973); *Star Ruby Contract, The* (1967); *Trembling Earth Contract, The* (1969); *Underground Cities Contract, The* (1974); *White Wolverine Contract, The* (1971)

Price, E. Hoffmann

(1898–1988) *Also wrote as: Hamlyn Daly*

A character more likely to be encountered in the pages of *Argosy* or *Magic Carpet* magazine than in real life, Price was a kind of tin-pot Sir Richard Burton—a soldier of fortune, swordsman, linguist, iconoclast, Orientalist, author, astrologer, connoisseur, sensualist. Joining the U.S. Army as a teenager, Price served in the Philippines and along the Mexican border. After America's entry into World War I, he served with Pershing's American Expeditionary Force in France. He attended West Point after the war (and became a championship fencer), but restlessness and the growing desire to get words into print thwarted his plan to become a career soldier.

Price's writing career got underway while he worked days at the Union Carbide factory in

Newark, New Jersey. Determined to become a "fictioneer," Price sat over his typewriter in the evenings after work, slowly working out the dimensions of his first short stories. He sold a short to *Droll Stories* and then, early in 1924, one to *Weird Tales* ("The Rajah's Daughter," published in the January 1925 issue), the Chicago-based pulp magazine that specialized in fantastic fiction. Though he eventually developed a strong relationship with *Weird Tales*, he at first had no luck in selling his subsequent works. Price decided to give himself over to studying the art and business of writing, and then labored over his rejected stories until he felt they had attained a salable standard. Farnsworth Wright, the editor of *Weird Tales*, began to buy these revised and improved stories, and Price soon became a regular contributor to that publication, home to the work of H. P. LOVECRAFT, Robert E. HOWARD, Clark Ashton SMITH, and other specialists in the strange and fantastic. Many of Price's stories were Orientalist, exotic tales of magicians and adventurers and beautiful slave girls set in vaguely unreal-sounding but alluring places like "Feringhistan," stories that might have been lost chapters from an unexpurgated Arabian Nights.

Membership in the group of regular contributors to *Weird Tales* was an honor—there was no more imaginative and uniquely talented group contained within the pages of any single pulp—and an inconvenience, as *Weird Tales* was perpetually broke and paid little and not often. In fact, although it is honored today as one of the small handful of great magazines from the pulp era, *Weird Tales* was considered a fringe publication in its day, and its authors not quite ready to sell to the "real" magazines.

Fired from Union Carbide in 1932, in the midst of the depression, Price pressed on with his writing, finding an agent and finally beginning to land his work at other magazines. He sold mystery stories and westerns to magazines like *Top Notch* and *Complete Stories*, and he became a regular contributor to the risqué "spicy" magazines like *Spicy Adventure Stories* and *Spicy Western Stories* that peddled genre pulp tales with a dollop of sexual content and illustrations featuring bare-breasted females. Eventually Price sold regularly to such top

magazines as *Argosy*, *Short Stories*, and *Adventure*, crashing the last after a dozen years of rejection slips. These publications, Price believed, had the highest standard: they demanded that he produce stories that were well-told, strongly constructed, and properly researched. Despite the greater fame that his weird-fiction output earned, Price was likely proudest of these historicals, such as *Drums of Khartoum*, the account of General Gordon's doomed campaign in the Sudan, published in the pages of *Argosy*.

During these years, the restless and convivial Price motored across the United States and called on many members of the peculiarly close fraternity of *Weird Tales* contributors, including Clark Ashton Smith, Edmond HAMILTON, Seabury QUINN, C. L. MOORE, and Jack WILLIAMSON (who based the hero of his *Golden Blood* adventure on Price's larger-than-life persona).

After World War II and the end of the pulp era, Price's fiction-writing career slowed to a halt, although he would occasionally revive it with a short story and at least one paperback original, *The Case of the Cancelled Redhead* (1952), under the name Hamlyn Daly. He pursued other interests in late middle age, including Oriental carpet dealing and tarot-card reading, and earned "grog, gasoline and groceries" from various ordinary jobs, including wedding photographer. Although by his own reckoning only 10 percent of Price's pulp fiction fell into the fantasy genre, it was for this work that he was known and honored in his later years. In the 1960s, the growing cult of readers interested in weird fiction in general and the heyday of *Weird Tales* in particular gave Price cause to reminisce about these friendships. He wrote a number of memories, forewords, and fanzine articles that would become some of the most vivid and valuable firsthand accounts of that literary subset. In the final flowering of his fiction writing career, he published two novels with Del Rey Books: *The Devil Wives of Li Fong* (1979) and *The Jade Enchantress* (1982), both blithe, "spicy" tales of Oriental fantasy.

Works

Devil Wives of Li Fong, The (1979); *Far Lands, Other Days* (1975); *Jade Enchantress, The* (1982)

As Hamlyn Daly:

Case of the Cancelled Redhead, The (1952)

Puzo, Mario

(1920–1999)

Making an impressive case for imagination over experience, Mario Puzo always claimed he had never met a gangster in his life before he completed the book that became the most famous gangster story of all time. *The Godfather* was written following the publication of two serious, consciously "literary" novels that netted the author barely a few thousand dollars and disappeared without a trace. Puzo then made a vow: to hell with literature, he was going to write something people would actually want to read. An expensive medical emergency—a gallbladder attack—increased his sense of failure and resolve, and he upped the ante: the next book, he decided, was going to make him a million bucks.

A New York City native, child of working-class parents, Puzo wrote stories as a young boy and dreamed of a life as a published author. He served in the army air corps during World War II and saw action in France, for which he won numerous decorations (although Puzo would always scoff at any notion of his wartime heroism). His first novel, *The Dark Arena*, was published in 1955, with the aforementioned results. He went to work as an editor and staff writer at a company that published a line of men's interest magazines, from second-string versions of *Playboy* to the sort of "true adventure" titles that featured material about crime, race cars, hunting, call girls, and lots of war stories about U.S. Marines and curvy nurses trapped on Pacific islands.

Puzo's years in pulp journalism gave him a vast mental storehouse of sensational material, including numerous juicy stories about the gangster families of New York. His resolve to write something commercial coincided with a book editor's interest in some of his Mafia anecdotes. Puzo began to research the subject, looking at books and old newspapers, tracing the makeup and doings of the big gangland families that had ruled the East Coast branches of the Cosa Nostra. He

mapped out a story line, fictional but with clear ties to the historical events—a big canvas centered on the doings of an old-school Mafia family, the Corleones, and their aged patriarch, Don Vito. The story would be loaded with strong characters, violent set pieces, sex scenes, romance, tragedy, titillating references to real-life events and persons, and dramatic use of juicy urban folklore, like the mobster influence in Hollywood and in the career of a crooner suspiciously similar to Frank Sinatra.

The Godfather was published to mostly good reviews, and even those who derided it as pulp fiction acknowledged its narrative force and its compulsive readability. The book soon topped the best-seller lists, selling millions. Puzo found the fame and wealth he desired, and then some (though it was not without its down side: Puzo would forever have to deny that he or his family had any actual mob connections, and an irate Frank Sinatra once verbally attacked him in a restaurant, calling him a whore). In 1972, the release of the legendary movie version starring Marlon Brando increased the sales of Puzo's novel but also overshadowed it. The critical consensus was that the book was a potboiler, the film was art.

Puzo's next novel was understandably the focus of great expectation. It was to be an even thicker book, with lots of violence, sex, and tawdry settings in Hollywood, Las Vegas, and elsewhere. In concept, the book had all the earmarks of another blockbuster, but *Fools Die* would not find *The Godfather's* enthusiastic audience. Many readers found Puzo's lengthy account of the tortured life of his angst- and vice-sodden hero less than compelling, and considered the plot aimless and pretentious, the writing repetitive and dull.

Six years would pass before Puzo published another novel. *The Sicilian* returned to sure commercial ground with a story that many would inaccurately label a *Godfather* "prequel." Set in the post-World War II era on the island where the Mafia supposedly originated, *The Sicilian* fictional-

ized the life story of a real and very well-known local hero, Salvatore Giuliano, the so-called Robin Hood of Sicily. Puzo entertainingly recounted the dramatic and bloody conflict between Giuliano's bandit gang, the Mafia, and the government forces struggling to control them both.

Puzo's next book, *The Fourth K*, was pure hokum, a schlocky thriller with a White House setting about a new president (modeled on John F. Kennedy) whose vengeful reaction to a family crisis threatens to plunge the world into chaos and destruction. With *The Last Don*, published 27 years after *The Godfather*, Puzo returned to the scene of his greatest success. Not a sequel, but instead a conscious re-juggling of elements that had worked so well in the earlier novel, *The Last Don* dealt with another wise old patriarch, two battling brothers born to the mob, and a return journey to Puzo's favorite, familiar settings: New York, Hollywood, and Las Vegas.

The last in what Puzo began calling a "Mafia trilogy," *Omerta* was published posthumously: the author died of a heart attack on July 2, 1999. *Omerta*, one last time, contained the ingredients Puzo had come to accept as mandatory for a book carrying his name: the mob, the code of honor, the coming of age, the battle for domination among violently opposed forces. But the book read at times like a film treatment, the simple prose and shallow character descriptions seemingly intended not as a great read but as the guidelines for a production. Like Margaret Mitchell, Grace METALIOUS, William Peter Blatty, and other authors of seminal, phenomenal best-sellers, Puzo never managed to top or even equal his first great success.

Works

Dark Arena, The (1955); *Fools Die* (1978); *Fortunate Pilgrim, The* (1964); *Fourth K, The* (1991); *Godfather, The* (1969); *Last Don, The* (1996); *Omerta* (2000); *Sicilian, The* (1984)

Q

Quinn, Seabury (1889–1969)

Of the many distinctive writing talents who contributed to *Weird Tales* magazine in its great years, none was more popular or productive than Seabury Quinn; and of those same talents, none has been more retroactively disparaged by latter-day *Weird Tales* fans and scholars. He was not, it was true, a man capable of stylistic wonders like Clark Ashton SMITH, or a vivid storyteller on the level of Robert HOWARD. There was an inevitable similarity to a number of his stories, not unusual when you write nearly so many tales about the same character. But readers loved Quinn's fast, colorful, easily digested fiction, and the magazine was always eager to promote the newest case from the "hellfire files" of Jules de Grandin, occult detective, a Frenchman with grammatical peccadillos in English, his adopted language, needlelike mustaches, and a rational and fearless approach to the worst that "supernature" could fling against him, from ghosts and zombies to mummies and werewolves.

Quinn was a lawyer from Washington, D.C., then a college teacher and a magazine editor—helming the journal of the funeral industry, *Casket and Sunnyside*. He began selling stories to the pulp magazines around the time of World War I. In 1919 Quinn had a story in the first pulp devoted to weird fiction, *The Thrill Book*, and in 1923 his work appeared for the first time in what would be his literary home for the next nearly 30 years. The first appearance of de Grandin came in the *Weird*

Tales issue of October 1925. Quinn's famous hero has come to America after a colorful career as a French intelligence agent; his strange adventures



Detective Classics title page from February 1931, featuring a story by Seabury Quinn

in Africa have led to his special knowledge and pursuit of supernatural evil. As the title of the first story suggested, "The Horror on the Links" dealt with something frightening at a suburban golf course, and it wasn't plaid knickerbockers. De Grandin's unlikely home base is the town of Harrisonville, New Jersey, on the surface a quiet, unexceptional burg, but in fact infested with all sorts of bizarre and terrifying creatures. As the episodes to come revealed, one could hardly enter a basement or attic in the place without interrupting, at the least, a bloody voodoo ceremony. The erudite, fearless Frenchman remains in America and moves in as permanent guest of the admiring Dr. Trowbridge, beginning the series' long-running relationship which echoes Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot and his aide-de-camp Hastings (itself derivative of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes–Watson relationship). Between 1925 and 1951, de Grandin and Trowbridge took on all that the Garden State could throw at them, and solved numerous supernatural and weird mystery cases in the rest of the world as well.

Quinn was not a stylist to rank with *Weird Tales*'s immortals. His writing did not have the rich

verbiage of the magazine's most talented contributors, and he gave short shrift to the sort of voluptuous atmospherics that pleased so many weird fiction cultists, then and now. None of that thesaurus-bound prose and opiated pace for Quinn, who cut to the chase and didn't look back. But Quinn was not without his own distinctive qualities. The writer's work often pushed boundaries with elements of decidedly outré sexuality, including sadomasochism and sexual torture and, in "The Jest of Warburg Tantavul" (September 1934), forced incest.

Quinn wrote little in his later years, returning to practice law full time. In the 1970s, most of Quinn's occult detective tales were reprinted in a series of paperback collections.

Works

Adventures of Jules de Grandin, The (1976); *Alien Flesh* (1977); *Casebook of Jules de Grandin, The* (1976); *Devil's Bride, The* (1976); *Hellfire Files of Jules de Grandin, The* (1976); *Horror Chambers of Jules de Grandin, The* (1977); *Is the Devil a Gentleman?: The Best Fiction of Seabury Quinn* (1970); *Phantom Fighter, The* (1966); *Roads* (1948); *Skeleton Closet of Jules de Grandin, The* (1976)

R

Rawson, Clayton (Stuart Towne) (1906–1971)

The second most notable magician/mystery writer after Walter GIBSON, Clayton Rawson wrote about a prestidigitator named the Great Merlini in a series of novels and stories that first appeared in the pulp magazine *Detective Fiction Weekly* and then between hard covers beginning with *Death from a Top Hat* in 1938. Headquartered in his Times Square magic shop, Merlini solved baffling Manhattan murder cases on the side, his Dr. Watson a New York scribe named Ross Harte. Rawson's stories were filled with inside references to the worlds of the vaudeville magician and the New York publishing business, with which he was intimately familiar. Sticking to what he knew, Rawson created a second magician/detective, Don Diavolo, and wrote several pulp magazine stories about him under the pen name of Stuart Towne. For most of his life Rawson worked in publishing, editing true detective magazines and *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. For many years he also was in charge of the Inner Sanctum line of hardback mysteries at Simon & Schuster.

Death from a Top Hat was filmed as *Miracles for Sale* (1939), the last film directed by horror master Tod Browning.

Works

Death from a Top Hat (1938); *Footprints on the Ceiling* (1939); *Headless Lady, The* (1940); *No Coffin for the Corpse* (1942)

As Stuart Towne:

Death Out of Thin Air (1941)

Réage, Pauline (Dominique Aury) (1907–1998)

From the time of its first appearance in a 600-copy French edition and simultaneous English translation published by the Olympia Press (see KENTON, Maxwell), *The Story of O* was greeted as something extraordinary—a volume of pornography that was also a literary masterpiece. What was more, the book was purportedly the work of a woman, further stirring the controversy surrounding a shocking story of masochism and female enslavement. “O,” the heroine of the dreamlike drama, surrenders herself entirely to the will of her sadistic lover, who is soon sharing the pleasure of her subjugation with like-minded associates, the Englishman Sir Stephen and countless other stern-faced perverts. No one had read anything like it—so shockingly perverse and yet so well written—since the heyday of the Marquis de Sade. In addition to the ordinary fans of forbidden fiction, *The Story of O* became a favorite of the intellectual elite. Cultural critics hailed the book's brilliant depiction of “ascent through degradation,” the stunning exploration of “the demonic forces in human consciousness.” In America, Susan Sontag wrote in her essay “The Pornographic Imagination”: “O is an adept; whatever the cost in pain and fear, she is grateful for

the opportunity to be initiated into a mystery. That mystery is the loss of self.”

There was another mystery at hand: who was the unknown, pseudonymous Pauline Réage? Gossip spread that the notorious Mlle. Réage was in reality a well-established figure on the Paris literary scene. Speculation was rampant: André Malraux and André Gide were among the well-known writers who were accused of writing *Story of O* (since it was smugly asserted that no woman could have written such a book). With “indecent” violations still being prosecuted in France, those who wished to know the author’s identity included the occupants of the Palais de Justice and the Préfecture de Police. Both Jean-Jacques Pauvert, the French-language publisher, and Maurice Girodias, Olympia Press’s head man, were dragged before La Brigade Mondaine for questioning, but were no help. The book was then banned (though the crafty Girodias brought out a new edition with a different title, *The Wisdom of the Lash*). Translated widely, provoking controversy everywhere, *The Story of O* took its place among the classics of erotic literature, but its author remained a mystery for 40 years. In 1994 it was finally revealed that Pauline Réage was in reality a notable Parisienne named Dominique Aury, a highly regarded editor, translator, and poet. The story behind *Story*, it turned out, was not lacking in a certain perverse melodrama—Aury’s married lover, Jean Paulhan, a notable man of letters, seemed ready to end their relationship at the time Aury put her fiery pen to paper. Knowing Paulhan’s secret interests better than most, including his admiration for the works of de Sade, Aury composed *Story of O* in part as a way to impress him and reignite his interest. It was, Paulhan would later boast, “the most ardent love letter that any man has ever received.”

While much of the outré literature of the past has, with the passage of time, lost the ability to shock readers grown comfortable with explicit sexual content in every medium, *The Story of O* has retained its power, as controversial and disturbing as ever.

Works

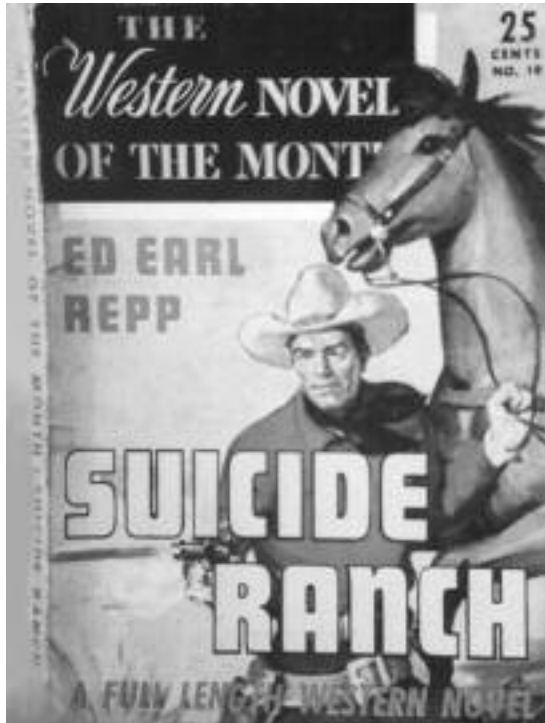
Return to the Chateau (1971); *Story of O* (1954), also published as *The Wisdom of the Lash*

Repp, Ed Earl (1901–1979)

Ed Earl Repp was a writer of science fiction pulp for the early Hugo Gernsback magazines (*Amazing*, *Air Wonder Stories*) in the 1920s and 1930s, and continued to write in the genre while branching out into western pulp and B-movie scripting. He had worked as a reporter and in advertising until the stock market crash of 1929 left him looking for employment. Repp’s early SF material was typical of the literary primitivism of much 1920s Gernsback—stories that read like a cross between an archaic dime novel and a manufacturer’s manual. In the 1929 story “Flight of the Eastern Star,” for instance, set in 1950, the hero books transpacific passage on one of the new ocean-liner-sized airships and spends most of the narrative doing not much more than admiring the imaginary aircraft and pestering the crew for technical details. “Let me show you our electromagnetizing units, sir,” says an officer, many pages along. “They are really interesting to observe; although most everything is housed up in tight compartments. Did you know that the Eastern Star has a surface covering entirely of cobalt-astralium-steel? ‘Cobalt-astralium-steel?’”

Repp wrote for the western pulps beginning in the 1930s. Some of his early sales were nonfiction pieces, including a controversial article in which he claimed to have found the last living member of the Jesse James gang. Repp’s western novels, sold to the bottom-rung lending-library publisher, Godwin, showed a certain lively nontraditionalism, as in the amusingly titled *Suicide Ranch* (1936), which includes scenes of vivid, sadistic violence and torture—at one point the bad guys put a steel cage over the victim’s head and fill it with hungry stable rats.

A resident of Van Nuys, California, Repp found steady work in Hollywood’s B-picture factories from the late 1930s on, churning out “oaters” for such performers as Charles Starrett and the western swing bandleader Spade Cooley. For some of that time he continued writing for the pulps, and between 1938 and 1942 his was a familiar name in *Amazing Stories* and other purveyors of space opera thrills, including *Science Fiction*, *Comet*, and *Planet Stories*. Many of the stories concerned his scientific



Paperback reprint of the unconventional western novel *Suicide Ranch* (1936) by Ed Earl Repp

detective character John Hale. Some of Repp's longer stories from the SF pulps were later collected into the hardcover volumes *The Stellar Missiles* (about space creatures who land in Arizona) and *The Radium Pool*, both published in 1949.

Some science fiction aficionados see Repp as a figure of fun, a kind of Ed WOOD of SF, in part because he specialized in both science fiction and the western genre—an atypical though not unheard-of combination. That some of Repp's stories were very bad did not help his case, nor did his sometime pen name of Bredner Buckner.

In the '50s Repp wrote for television westerns, including *The Lone Ranger* series.

Works

STORIES

"Armageddon 1948" (1941); "Brigade of the Damned" (1939); "City That Walked, The" (1939); "Dwellers of

the Darkness" (1942); "Flight of the Eastern Star" (1929); "Gland Superman, The" (1938); "Martian Terror" (1940); "Planet of Black Terror" (1940); "Rescue from Venus" (1941); "Scientific Ghost, The" (1939); "Secret of Planetoid 88" (1941); "Sphinx of the Spaceways" (1939); "Storm Buster, The" (1930); "Synthetic Man, The" (1930); "When Time Rolled Back" (1941); "World of the Living Dead" (1932)

BOOKS

Cyclone Jim (1935); *Gun Hawk* (1936); *Hell in the Saddle* (1936); *Hell on the Pecos* (1935); *Radium Pool, The* (1949); *Stellar Missiles, The* (1949); *Suicide Ranch* (1936)

Rinehart, Mary Roberts

(1876–1958)

Mary Roberts Rinehart, in her heyday one of the most popular writers in the world, helped to invent what is now called the novel of suspense: the crime story of ordinary people in relatively realistic surroundings, drawn into perilous situations. A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Rinehart worked as a hospital nurse before marrying a local doctor and raising a large family. In her spare time, to raise pin money, she wrote articles and stories, including a few blood-and-thunder tales for the sensational fiction weeklies and early pulp magazines. Encouraged by the editor of *Munsey's* magazine, Bob Davis, Rinehart began writing longer stories for serialization. Her first, *The Man in Lower Ten*, about a murder in a Pullman car, ran in *All-Story* in 1906. It earned the author \$400. She followed with two more long works, *The Circular Staircase* and *The Mystery of 1122*. Rinehart might happily have remained a little-known pulp writer but for the interference of an uncle who read *The Circular Staircase*, loved it, and demanded she offer it to a book publisher.

The story of an eccentric middle-aged woman who takes a country home for the summer, only to find it the setting for five murders and her own close encounter with sudden death, *The Circular Staircase* was published by Bobbs Merrill (the publisher of Anna Katherine GREEN, then the most famous female mystery writer in the world) with spectacular success. The publisher quickly brought

out two more of Rinehart's serials in book form with similar results and signed up her next several efforts as well. Her sales grew and grew, other companies fought for the right to publish her, and Rinehart became one of the best-known writers of her time. In addition to her novels and magazine appearances, Rinehart's stage plays, among them *Seven Days* and *The Bat*, were also great popular hits. She was praised in Hollywood, where her works were adopted and where she collected enormous paychecks as a consultant and as a member of mogul Samuel Goldwyn's "Eminent Authors" group, the literary notables brought west to give the movies class.

As in her first great success, most of Rinehart's subsequent crime fiction dealt not with the police or even private investigators but instead with everyday characters who find themselves thrust by circumstances into confronting and solving the crimes at hand. By avoiding professional sleuths, Rinehart could eliminate the clinical details and scientific principles of crime-solving and depend instead on the lead characters' gut instinct and ingenuity, thus increasing the readers' anxiety and emotional identification. Rinehart's use of female protagonists, perceived as innately more innocent and vulnerable, only increased the suspense—although the author's feistiest heroines, like nurse/amateur detective Miss Pinkerton, were in their way as tough and tough-minded as any man.

Rinehart's work, most turned out at great speed, varied greatly in quality, from the tense and zestily written to the trite and virtually unreadable. Her enormous fame and income helped flame frequent attacks by contemptuous critics. In particular, she was accused of suffering from a risible stylistic tic in which her heroines milk an imminent dangerous situation with clichéd interjections like "Had I but known . . ."—a phrase that would become a derisive symbol of a Rinehart "school" of contrived and old-fashioned suspense writing.

Rinehart's success supported a private life of world travel, meetings with queens and presidents, friendships with Hollywood superstars, reportage from the battlefields of World War I, and generous assistance to noble causes, such as the welfare of the American Indian and the treatment and awareness of breast cancer.

In 1994 a biography of Rinehart, *Had She But Known*, published by the Mysterious Press, was written with warm affection by an acolyte and fellow mystery writer, Charlotte Armstrong.

Works

Truce of God, The (1920); *After House, The* (1914); *Album, The* (1933); *Alibi for Isabel and Other Stories* (1944); *Altar of Freedom, The* (1917); *Amazing Adventures of Letitia Carberry, The* (1911); *Amazing Interlude, The* (1918); *Bab: A Sub-Deb* (1917); *Bat, The* (1926); *Breaking Point, The* (1921); *Case of Jennie Brice, The* (1913); *Circular Staircase, The* (1908); *Dangerous Days* (1919); *Doctor, The* (1936); *Door, The* (1930); *Episode of the Wandering Knife* (1950); *Frightened Wife and Other Murder Stories, The* (1953); *Great Mistake, The* (1940); *Haunted Lady* (1942); "K" (1915) *Kings, Queens and Pawns* (1915); *Lost Ecstasy* (1927); *Man in Lower Ten, The* (1909); *Miss Pinkerton* (1932); *More Tish* (1921); *Mr. Cohen Takes a Walk* (1934); *My Story* (1931); *Nomad's Land* (1926); *Out Trail, The* (1922); *Poor Wise Man, A* (1920); *Red Lamp, The* (1925); *Romantics, The* (1929); *Sight Unseen and the Confession* (1921); *State vs. Elinor Norton, The* (1933); *Street of Seven Stars, The* (1914); *Swimming Pool, The* (1952); *Temperamental People* (1924); *Tenting Tonight* (1918); *Through Glacier Park* (1916); *Tish* (1916); *Twenty Three and a Half Hours' Leave* (1918); *Two Flights Up* (1926); *Wall, The* (1938); *When a Man Marries* (1909); *Where There's a Will* (1912); *Window at the White Cat, The* (1910); *Yellow Room, The* (1945)

Robbins, Harold (Harold Rubin)

(1916–1997)

Norman Mailer once famously wrote of the great novelist and short story writer Paul Bowles: "He let in the murder, the drugs, the incest, the death of the Square . . . the call of the orgy, the end of civilization."

These words might also be applied to another postwar fiction writer, Harold Robbins, whose transgressive novels and their influence on millions of devoted readers make him an equally appropriate subject for Mailer's apocalyptic sentiment. It was Robbins who, in the culturally turbulent 1950s and 1960s, most successfully and visibly stripped away the curtain of modesty that still hung before even

the more daring of mainstream American novels. Robbins strutted onto the best-seller lists with a series of brutally frank and gleefully crass novels about sex, power, violence, sex, Champagne, cocaine, yachts, fast cars, and sex.

Robbins, a character as colorful, self-possessed, and pleasure-mad as any of his own fictional creations, reinvented himself at the start of his writing career and added fiction to the story of his early years. He was not adopted, for example, was never a teenage sugar baron, and was not widowed when a supposed Asian wife was killed by a diseased parrot. Born Harold Rubin in New York City, the son of well-educated Russian and Polish immigrants, his father a successful pharmacist, Harold married at a young age and worked for some years on the business side of Universal Pictures, first in New York and then in California. Feeling, in the time-honored tradition, that he could come up with something better than the books he saw Universal buying for the movies, he wrote his first novel. *Never Love a Stranger* was a tempestuous bildungsroman in the tradition of James T. Farrell's *Studs Lonigan*. It was a critical and popular success. Already Robbins's treatment of sex—though tame by comparison to his later work—was sufficiently strong to get the book banned in Philadelphia. He followed it with a powerful story of early Hollywood, *The Dream Merchants*. His third novel, *A Stone for Danny Fisher*, was, like his first, a tale of a young man's struggles on the New York streets and contained many elements of autobiography. The book was critically acclaimed, and might have positioned Robbins as a serious postwar novelist. But Robbins had other fish to fry.

With the publication of *The Carpetbaggers* (1961), Harold Robbins left his literary competition in the dust—and left literature there too, according to his critics. The book was a thick, teeming, bluntly written saga of the industrialist/pilot/movie mogul/bastard Jonas Cord, a figure clearly based on Howard Hughes. Other characters in the book also were easily identifiable as real-life personages. *The Carpetbaggers* presented a winning formula for the author—big, brawling stories with characters drawn from the headlines. He followed it with such top sellers as *The Adventurers*, *The Betsy*, *The Pirate*, and

other hedonism-soaked pulp epics of the rich, the famous, and the sexually adventurous. Robbins relocated to the French Riviera and other sultry spots, where his own hedonistic nihilism—along with a devotion to drugs, orgies, and yachts—made writing an inconvenience. There are tales of the author being locked in hotel suites without room service, until he produced a sufficient number of typed pages, and of losing track of characters' identities from chapter to chapter and refusing to fix the mistakes. The later works show an increasingly skin-and-bones style and a brute dependence on the sort of kinky sex scenes and dirty talk that Robbins hoped would keep him in lobster and cocaine money.

Eventually, in developments as over-the-top as his best (and worst) plot devices, Robbins lost it all. He became seriously ill, went broke as a result, lost his wife, and was unable to continue writing. He rallied in the years before his death in 1997, returning to print with new works and sequels to old successes, although his sales were nothing like they were in the old days. Readers were considerably harder to shock at the dusk of the 20th century. Still, many of Robbins's titles remain paperback perennials, and a worldwide audience continues to enjoy his propulsive, entertaining tours of wretched excess.

Works

Adventurers, The (1966); *Betsy, The* (1971); *Carpetbaggers, The* (1961); *Descent from Xanadu* (1984); *Dream Merchants, The* (1949); *Dreams Die First* (1977); *Goodbye, Janette* (1981); *Inheritors, The* (1969); *Lonely Lady, The* (1976); *Memories of Another Day* (1979); *Never Leave Me* (1953); *Never Love a Stranger* (1948); *Piranhas, The* (1986); *Pirate, The* (1974); *Raiders, The* (1994); *79 Park Avenue* (1953); *Spellbinder* (1982); *Stallion, The* (1996); *Stiletto* (1960); *Stone for Danny Fisher, A* (1952); *Storyteller, The* (1985); *Tycoon* (1997); *Where Love Has Gone* (1962)

Robbins, Tod (1888–1949)

Tod Robbins was a popular contributor to the pulp magazines of the 1900s, a stylish writer who spe-

cialized in tales of the eerie and the grotesque. In novels and short stories about murder, revenge, and fate, recounted in tones both poetic and cruel, Robbins had the power to haunt and disturb long after his last sentences had been read.

The Brooklyn-born writer began appearing in top-of-the-line fiction magazines like *All-Story Weekly* (where Edgar Rice BURROUGHS would get his start at about the same time), *Top Notch*, and other Munsey and Street & Smith publications. With his taste for the uncanny already in evidence, Robbins was a natural recruit for an innovative new magazine that would be the first pulp devoted exclusively to stories of horror and the fantastic. *The Thrill Book*, from Street & Smith, made its debut in February 1919 and lasted just 16 issues. Robbins's stories appeared in five of these (with more work scheduled at the time the plug was pulled), including his extraordinary "The Bibulous Baby," a tale told by an absinthe-swigging "infant" in a perambulator who recounts how his grandfather—cursing the aging process—made a pact with the devil that reversed his grandson's—the narrator's—physical life, born with a white-bearded old body and now, in appearance a baby, about to die.

What name recognition Tod Robbins retains is due entirely to a pair of famous film adaptations of his work, both brought to the screen by the legendary director Tod Browning, Robbins's spiritual brother in devotion to the bizarre. *The Unholy Three*, a novel first serialized in the pulps, was a strange thriller about a trio of sideshow oddities—a childlike midget, a giant strongman, and a schizophrenic ventriloquist—who band together as a criminal syndicate, aiming to loot the riches of the "normal" world that has scorned them and that they in turn despise. The midget in particular—the brains of the outfit—is consumed with hatred for the freak show patrons who have stared and pointed and pawed at him, especially the children: "Their piping voices, their pointed fingers, their curious eyes—all filled him with a nauseating hatred hard to bear. At the sight of them, he felt tempted to spring forward, to dig his fingernails into their soft flesh, to hurl them to the ground, to stamp them into unrecognizable bloody heaps . . ."

The short story "Spurs" was still more unusual. First appearing in the general fiction pulp *Munsey's* in February 1923, it was set entirely among the attractions of a small wandering circus, and largely among the strange individuals known as the circus freaks. In the story, a beautiful, scheming bareback rider conspires to exploit a lovestruck midget with a large inheritance, but the plan backfires with an ironic and grotesque result. Written as a kind of dirty fairy tale, "Spurs" treated the deformed entertainers with a disturbing mix of compassion and cruel, pitiless humor—a tone that was taken to even more unsettling lengths when Browning, working with real sideshow performers (pinheads, dwarfs, a "human torso," and the like) filmed the story in 1932 as *Freaks*.

Robbins faded from the scene in the 1930s, and in the 1940s was unheard from for good reason: living on the French Riviera when the war erupted and the country was invaded by Hitler's army, Robbins was captured and held prisoner for the duration. He remained in France after the war, and died in the beautiful coastal resort village of St.-Jean-Cap-Ferrat.

Works

In the Shadow (1929); *Master of Murder, The* (1933); *Mysterious Martin* (1912); *Silent, White and Beautiful, and Other Stories* (1920); *Unholy Three, The* (1917); *Who Wants a Green Bottle? and Other Uneasy Tales* (1926)

Rohmer, Sax (Arthur Henry Ward) (1883–1959)

The name of Sax Rohmer is synonymous with pulp fiction of the 20th century. The creator of the immortal Dr. Fu-Manchu and numerous other weird and memorable characters, Rohmer was a popular and prolific author of dozens of exotic thrillers and mysteries. Though his output varied wildly in quality, the lurid turn of his mind and the feverish settings of his stories—whether a fetid, sunlit bazaar in Cairo or a creepy English manor house at midnight—were always instantly identifiable.

Even as a child, Arthur Henry Ward, of Birmingham, England, had no ambition but to write for a living. He ventured to London as a young man

and began peddling journalistic pieces and prose sketches to the thriving newspaper and magazine markets. From the start of his professional career he showed an obsessive interest in the strange and foreign, particularly matters of the occult and of ancient and modern Egypt. His first short-story sale, to *Pearson's Magazine* in 1903, was titled "The Mysterious Mummy," set (like so many of his tales would be through the years to come) in and around the archaeological and Egyptological wings of the British Museum. An early, popular series character of Rohmer's creation was Morris Klaw, the so-called dream detective. Resident of a cluttered antique store, Klaw was a kind of psychic Sherlock Holmes who solved his cases through the interpretation of his own dreams and visions.

As legend has it, Rohmer conceived of his most famous character while researching a newspaper story in London's Chinatown district. Tales of a much-feared Chinese gang leader sparked an idea for a story that would first appear in a British fiction magazine in October 1912. "The Zayat Kiss" began the saga of the brilliant supervillain Fu-Manchu, a malevolent, emerald-eyed mandarin intent on world domination. Xenophobic, so-called yellow menace or yellow peril stories—in which an Asian country attacks or tries to overpower the West—had been popular since the turn of the 20th century. Rohmer personalized such paranoid fears with his towering, fiendish doctor, the embodiment of a mysterious, invincible foreign enemy. In short stories, and then in a series of novels in the 1930s, and intermittently until the author's death, Rohmer tracked Fu-Manchu's evil deeds around the world. His nemesis was the noble crime-fighter Sir Denis Nayland Smith and his sidekick Dr. Petrie (resemblances to Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson likely not unintentional). But while Smith was the nominal hero of the series, the figure of fascination was, always, the diabolical doctor, with his shaved head, his ingenious disguises, and his pampered marmoset, and his never-ending schemes to make the world succumb to his desires.

Prolific to a fault, Rohmer developed many other series characters, including such determined detective heroes as Paul Harley, whose cases in-



Illustration from a scene in Sax Rohmer's *Tales of a Secret Egypt* (1919): "She stood there . . . her slim body swaying in a perfect rapture of admiration for her own beauty."

cluded *Fire-Tongue* (1921) and *Bat-Wing*, (1921) and Chief Inspector Red Kerry, protagonist of the 1919 novel *Dope* and several others. Rohmer was a frequent contributor to story magazines in Britain and the American pulps, and these were routinely gathered in collections, usually belonging to Rohmer's recurring settings of Chinatown or Egypt. Beginning in 1950, Rohmer did a kind of gender switch on Fu-Manchu to create a female supervillain, Sumuru. She would be featured in five published volumes, though most fans considered her a shadow of the fascinating original, and in the end Rohmer would abandon her for a final return to Fu-Manchu. *Emperor Fu Manchu* would

be Rohmer's final work of fiction, published in the year of his death, 1959.

Works

Bat Flies Low, The (1935); *Bat Wing* (1921); *Bimbashi Baruk of Egypt* (1944) (variant edition published in the United Kingdom as *Egyptian Nights*); *Book of Fu-Manchu, The* (1929); *Brood of the Witch Queen* (1918); *Daughter of Fu Manchu* (1931); *Day the World Ended, The* (1930); *Dope* (1919); *Dream Detective, The* (1920); *Drums of Fu Manchu, The* (1939); *Emperor Fu Manchu* (1959); *Emperor of America, The* (1929); *Exploits of Captain O'Hagan, The* (1916); *Fire Goddess, The* (also published as *Virgin in Flames*) (1952); *Fire-Tongue* (1921); *Fu Manchu's Bride* (1933); *Golden Scorpion, The* (1919); *Green Eyes of Bast, The* (1920); *Grey Face* (1924); *Hand of Fu-Manchu, The* (1917); *Hangover House* (1949); *Haunting of Low Fennel, The* (1920); *Island of Fu Manchu, The* (1941); *Mask of Fu Manchu, The* (1932); *Moon of Madness* (1927); *Mystery of Dr. Fu-Manchu, The* (1913), also published as *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu*; *Nude in Mink* (also published as *Sins of Sumuru*) (1950); *Orchard of Tears, The* (1918); *President Fu Manchu*

(1936); *Quest of the Sacred Slipper, The* (1919); *Re Enter Fu Manchu* (1957); *Return of Fu-Manchu, The* (1916); *Romance of Sorcery, The* (1914); *Salute to Bazarada and Other Stories* (1939); *Secret of Holm Peel and Other Strange Stories* (1970); *Seven Sins* (1943); *Shadow of Fu Manchu* (1948); *She Who Sleeps* (1928); *Sinister Madonna* (1956); *Sins of Severac Bablon, The* (1914); *Sumuru* (1951); *Tales of Chinatown* (1922); *Tales of East and West* (1932); *Tales of Secret Egypt* (1918); *Trail of Fu Manchu, The* (1934); *White Velvet* (1936); *Wrath of Fu Manchu and Other Stories* (1973); *Wulfheim as by Michael Furey* (1950); *Yellow Claw, The* (1915); *Yellow Shadows* (1925); *Yu'An Hee See Laughs* (1932)

Roscoe, Theodore

(1906–1992)

Theodore Roscoe was one of the big-name and regular contributors to *Argosy* magazine during its heyday in the 1930s, exotic adventure and suspense his specialties. He wrote of faraway places with strange-sounding names—Saigon, Tangier, Haiti, Timbuktu. His own upbringing had been in the more prosaic town of Rochester, New York, but his parents, formerly missionaries and educators in India, had inspired in the boy a burgeoning wanderlust and love for the exotic. With money earned from peddling newspaper features and pulp stories, Roscoe began to travel the globe. "I was always catching a freighter to somewhere," he recalled for this author in 1990. "Europe, Africa, South America . . ."

Roscoe went by freighter to Haiti to investigate voodoo ceremonies: "On horseback I crossed the country to visit Christophe's Citadel. Found signs of recent voodoo activity, goats hanging from trees and other symbols." Even in the capital city, Port-au-Prince, Roscoe recalled, there were thatch-roofed voodoo temples where you could purchase an ouanga, "a small bag stuffed with parrot feathers, goat hairs, pebbles, spice, frog legs, perhaps a chicken head—to use as a charm, pro and con." Any local he talked to would confirm the rumors of zombies—the undead brought back to life by voodoo in order to be used as slave labor in the fields. These explorations resulted in a pair of excellent *Argosy* serials, *A Grave Must Be Deep*



Illustration from a scene in *Dope* (1919): "Are you ready for us, Sin?" asked Sir Lucien."



Theodore Roscoe specialized in adventure and suspense. (*HS Media*)

and *Z Is for Zombie*. The writer's stories of the French Foreign Legion grew out of a visit to legion encampments in Morocco and Algeria. "I went to the Legion headquarters at Sidi bel Abbes and to a

place called Biskra in the desert, listening to stories, taking notes. There was a small war with the Arabs going on but all the Legionnaires I saw were working pick and shovel, building a road. Glamorous, no. In Casablanca I met an old Legionnaire with hash marks up to his elbow. He had been in the Legion forever and had a thousand stories. I used him as the prototype for my narrator, [Thibaut] Corday."

In addition to *Argosy*, Roscoe contributed pulp fiction to *Adventure*, *Air Stories*, *Danger Trails*, *Detective Fiction Weekly*, *Short Stories*, and *Weird Tales*. For his work during World War II, Roscoe was awarded the Navy's Civilian Distinguished Service Medal. He continued after the war as writer and adviser for presidential and military committees. Having drifted far from the often unreal world of pulp adventure, Roscoe spent most of his postwar career writing history and nonfiction, including many books and articles on World War II and the U.S. Navy.

Works

Grave Must Be Deep, A (1947); *I'll Grind Their Bones* (1936); *Murder on the Way* (1935); *Only in New England: The Story of a Gaslight Crime* (1959); *Seven Men* (1942); *To Live and Die in Dixie* (1962); *Toughest in the Legion* (1989); *Wonderful Lips of Thibong Linh, The* (1981); *Z Is for Zombie* (1989)

S

Sabatini, Rafael (1875–1950)

Inarguably one of the greatest of all historical novelists, Rafael Sabatini brought the distant past most excitingly alive in book after book for half a century. His purview was vast, ranging across centuries and continents, up and down the corridors of power in assorted empires, on battlefields, aboard pirate galleons, and inside royal boudoirs. His novels and story collections combined a lively scholarship and intimate knowledge of history's most colorful personages and events with florid yet compellingly readable prose, a style that was elaborate and antique and yet brisk and contemporary in effect.

The child of two opera singers (and later well-known vocal coaches), an Italian father and English mother, Rafael was raised in artistic, cosmopolitan circles all over Europe. Spending time in Italy, France, and Portugal with his parents, as well as sojourns in Liverpool, England, with his grandmother and years in Swiss academies, Sabatini grew up well educated, a linguist, a sophisticate. Apparently lacking his parents' vocal abilities, he became a businessman and translator for several years. But the artistic gene eventually made itself apparent in Rafael, who began writing stories in his spare time and published his first novel, *The Lovers of Yvonne*, in 1902. He wrote for more than a decade before his literary reputation was made with the publication in 1915 of *The Sea Hawk*, a tale of piracy and slavery and heroic derring-do on

the Arabian coast. It was a popular novel and sold to the movies. Sabatini had an even greater success with *Scaramouche*, his 1921 novel set at the time of the French Revolution. A tale of love, death, and revenge with a dashing, impudent hero, it was one of the most popular books of the 1920s and it, too, was brought to the silent screen by Hollywood.

In 1922 Sabatini released the greatest of his pirate stories, *Captain Blood*. It was the swashbuckling history of Peter Blood, an Irish doctor with a searoving past who is arrested for treating the wounds of a British traitor and packed off to a West Indian slave mart. He escapes in a fierce revolt, commandeers a ship, and turns buccaneer. As Captain Blood the good doctor becomes a fierce legend of the danger-soaked Spanish Main. Sabatini chronicled his adventures with vigor and élan, dazzling the reader with the images of full-masted galleons on turquoise Caribbean seas, gleaming cutlasses, blinding white sand beaches, lustrous pieces of eight. In America, the saga of Captain Blood was related in installments in the pages of the leading pulp magazine, *Adventure*. Sabatini's most popular character, Captain Blood would star in numerous short stories in the years ahead, all of which were eventually republished in several collections. Though *Captain Blood* is widely considered the greatest pirate novel of the 20th century, another later swashbuckler of pirates on the Caribbean, *The Black Swan* (1932), is nearly as good.

In addition to his novels and short story collections, Sabatini wrote many nonfiction works,

including popular histories and biographies of Italian Renaissance figure Cesare Borgia and Torquemada, notorious in the Spanish Inquisition.

Works

Anthony Wilding (1910), also published as *The Arms and the Maid*; *Banner of the Bull: Episodes in the Career of Cesare Borgia* (1915); *Bardelys the Magnificent* (1906); *Bel-larion the Fortunate* (1926); *Black Swan, The* (1932); *Captain Blood* (1922); *Captain Blood Returns* (1931); *Carolinian, The* (1925); *Chivalry* (1935); *Columbus* (1942); *Fortune's Fool* (1923); *Fortunes of Captain Blood, The* (1936); *Gamester, The* (1949); *Gates of Doom, The* (1914); *Heroic Lives* (1934); *Hounds of God, The* (1928); *Justice of the Duke, The* (1912); *King in Prussia* (1944); *Life of Cesare Borgia* (1911); *Lion's Skin, The* (1911); *Lost King, The* (1937); *Love at Arms* (1907); *Lovers of Yvonne, The* (1902); *Marquis of Carabas, The* (1940); *Minion, The* (1930); *Mistress Wilding* (1924); *Nuptials of Corbal, The* (1927); *Reaping, The* (1929); *Romantic Prince, The* (1929); *Scaramouche* (1921); *Sea Hawk, The* (1915); *Shame of Molly, The* (1908); *Snare, The* (1915); *Stalking Horse, The* (1933); *St. Martin's Summer* (1909); *Strolling Saint, The* (1913); *Sword of Islam, The* (1939); *Tavern Knight, The* (1904); *Torquemada and the Spanish Inquisition* (1913); *Trampling of the Lilies* (1906); *Turbulent Tales* (1946); *Venetian Masque* (1934)

Sale, Richard

(1911–1993)

The man once known to his readers as “the Dumas of the pulps,” Richard Sale was one of the top journeymen writers in the 1930s and 1940s. He was not a superstar like Max BRAND or Edgar Rice BURROUGHS, but his name was on countless magazine covers in the golden age of the pulps. Sale guaranteed to publishers a reliable supply of first-rate fiction and to readers the certainty of an hour or two well spent. He was barely out of his teens when his name started appearing in *Detective Fiction Weekly*, *Dime Detective*, *Argosy*, *Bluebook*, *Thrilling Mystery*, *Double Detective*, and more.

“From the start . . . even as a small kid,” he told this author, “I sold some stuff to the *New York Herald Tribune*. Poems, and I mean bad. But I had no other ambition except to write.” Sale studied

journalism at Washington and Lee University, in Lexington, Virginia. While still at school, he began sending out stories to magazines. He sold one to Street & Smith's *College Stories*: “I got \$100 and that was a lot of money in those Depression days.” He sold a second story with a school setting, and then got nothing but rejections for two years. He left school before graduating, got married, and worked for a couple of New York newspapers, but mostly devoted himself to trying to make a living from his fiction. Before long it happened. His stories for the pulps started selling—and selling. In a 10-year period Sale published around 500 stories, nearly one a week. But at his busiest, Sale's schedule was actually more grueling than that. “A story a day. A story was 3,000 words, 5,000 words. It depended how it flowed. I'd do it in a day, sometimes it carried over to the next day. If you were doing novelettes, that would be 12,000 words and that would carry over into the next day . . . First draft was a last draft,” he said. Sale took his place among the speed demons of the pulps, the legendary million-words-a-year men like Brand, Arthur J. Burks, and Lester DENT. Sale wrote mysteries, exotic adventures, horror and terror tales, air war stories, and sea stories week after week,



Richard Sale, “the Dumas of the pulps” (HS Media)

throughout the depression and into the first years of World War II. "You couldn't sit around and wait for ideas to come. Sometimes you'd sit there and just look around the room and pick an object . . . Or think of something impossible and then solve it." Sale was such a reliable storytelling machine at this time that an editor thought nothing of grabbing him in the hallway as he was leaving the publisher's office and demanding a publishable story on the spot: "He needed a story in a hurry. Emergency. So he sat me down and I knocked out a 3,000-word story. I came up with a story about what goes through a man's mind when he drifts down in a parachute. Turned out to be a good story. I gave him the story, went to the window and they issued me a check right then and there and I went home."

Sale became best known to pulp readers for his series of stories about a tough-talking newspaperman, Joe "Daffy" Dill. Pulp writers were always looking to get a series going. "If a character caught on," he recalled, "then you knew they would ask for more. A popular series sold a lot of copies. They'd get letters from readers asking for more about so-and-so." Sale had some firsthand knowledge of the big city news hawks of the day, and built upon the popular archetype of the front page reporter—tough, fast-moving, wisecracking, amiably ruthless. Published by *Detective Fiction Weekly*, the Dill stories (occasionally supplemented by spinoff stories about Dill's Weegee-like pal, photographer Candid Jones) were told in a first-person, vernacular voice, and moved like lightning. Until the final shootout and crime-solving denouement, nearly all of Dill's narration and dialogue was slangy sarcasm—he even answers the phone with a bantering, "Your nickel!" This sort of thing was done to death in the detective pulps, but Sale's brash skill kept the Dill stories fresh and funny.

Concurrent with his pulp work load, Sale began writing novels. The first, published in 1936, was a tale of hard-bitten prisoners escaping from Devil's Island, *Not Too Narrow, Not Too Deep*, a strange combination of hard-boiled adventure and evangelism. "My wife was a Christian Scientist then," Sale told me. "Not I, I was barely a Christian in that sense. But I took the core of what she

believed and applied it . . . to make a positive Christian story. People have always said the character was supposed to be Jesus. I said no, it was about one Christian practicing Christianity." The novel is a forgotten classic of early hard-boiled writing, memorable right from the terse, haunting first paragraph:

Nine out of ten of those coast fishermen who put in at St. Pierre and offer escape are rascals. I remember the horror I felt when I first learned that they trafficked in other men's misery. They'd offer their boat for your escape. When you got on it and put out to sea they'd stab you in the back, and when you were dead they'd disembowel you, cut out the metal capsule with your precious money, and throw your body overboard where the sharks and barracuda made short work of it. You have to hide your money in your body, you see, because that is the only safe place you have.

Sale moved to Hollywood, hoping to break into the movies as a screenwriter. In the meantime he wrote a series of fast-paced crime novels with a film background. Sale used all the clichéd ingredients of the popular Hollywood mystery, but he gave them an imaginative reshuffling. *Lazarus No. 7* concerned a murderous movie star with leprosy and a studio doctor who resurrects dead dogs in his spare time. In *Passing Strange*, Sale took the notion of shallow Hollywood to new heights of black humor: when a surgeon is shot dead while performing a Cesarean section on a "two-time Oscar winner," all the tinseltown press corps wants to know about is the celebrity mother and her new kid.

As he had hoped, Sale did find work in the movies. He and his then wife Mary Loos—a niece of the legendary pioneering screenwriter and bon vivant Anita Loos—peddled scripts to Republic and then Fox studios. Sale, a charismatic fellow with movie-star good looks himself, made a steady pursuit of big studio success and was soon producing and directing films as well as writing them. His first film, a Technicolor comedy western called *A Ticket to Tomahawk* (1950), contained an early appearance by Marilyn Monroe. Subsequent films

that Sale directed were mostly light-hearted entertainments (for example, *Gentlemen Marry Brunettes*) (1955). He wrote but did not direct *Suddenly*, a tense suspense picture with Frank Sinatra as a would-be presidential assassin. His last directorial effort, and his best, was not light-hearted at all. *Abandon Ship* (1957) was a harrowing variation on Hitchcock's 1944 film *Lifeboat*. Shot entirely on an English sound stage, Sale's film managed to fully convey the agony of shipwreck survivors in an open sea. Under Sale's direction, Tyrone Power, as the wretched ship's captain forced to choose who must live and who must die, gave the best performance of his career.

Sale made a return to fiction with an inside look at sleazy Hollywood, a best-selling novel called *The Oscar* (which became a risible motion picture of the same name starring Stephen Boyd and Elke Sommer). He continued writing books and movies to the end of his life. His epic spy novel, *For the President's Eyes Only*, was masterful, as was his wintry western adventure, *White Buffalo* (which he subsequently adapted for the film version with Charles Bronson). He has been unfairly neglected in pop cultural chronicles in favor of pulpsters, crime writers, and filmmakers with a fraction of his talent. Sale's was a remarkable career—a half-century of interesting, varied, and entertaining work.

Works

Benefit Performance (1946); *Cardinal Rock* (1940); *Destiny Unknown* (also published as *Death at Sea*) (1943); *For the President's Eyes Only* (1971); *Home Is the Hangman* (1949); *Is a Ship Burning* (1937); *Lazarus No. 7* (1942); *Murder at Midnight* (1950); *Not Too Narrow, Not Too Deep* (1936); *Oscar, The* (1963); *Passing Strange* (1942); *Sailor, Take Warning* (1942); *White Buffalo* (1980)

Short, Luke (Frederick Glidden)

(1908–1975)

One of the great names of western fiction, Luke Short (born Frederick Glidden in Kewanee, Illinois) wrote dozens of novels and hundreds of short stories about life—and death—in the Old West,

and could be counted among those authors—in a field of many hacks—who could create westerns that were serious and well-written and looked to avoid the cowboy story clichés. His early stories were written for pulp magazines like *Ace-High*, *Star Western*, and *Western Trails*, and were typical shoot-em-ups. Later work showed an increasing narrative skill and maturity, as in such novels as *Gunman's Chance* (also published as *Blood on the Moon*, 1941), *Ramrod* (1943), and *And the Wind Blows Free* (1945), stories that dealt with the serious business of working the West; *Vengeance Valley* (1950), with its frank approach to sexual relationships on the frontier; and *Station West* (1947), a novel that was both action western and suspense thriller.

Significantly, both *Blood on the Moon* and *Station West* were filmed by RKO in the 1940s in the style of film noir, and both were well served by the treatment.

Works

Ambush (1950); *And the Wind Blows Free* (1945); *Barren Land Murders* (1951); *Bought with a Gun* (1943); *Bounty Guns* (1940); *Brand of Empire* (1940); *Bull Foot Ambush* (1938), also published as *Marauder's Moon*; *Coroner Creek* (1946); *Dead Freight for Piute* (1940), also published as *Bull Whip*; *Debt of Honor* (1967); *Desert Crossing* (1961); *Deserters, The* (1969); *Donovan's Gun* (1968); *Feud at Single Shot* (1936); *Fiddlefoot* (1949); *First Campaign* (1965); *First Claim* (1960); *Flood-Water* (1939); *Gauntlet of Fire* (1944), also published as *Raw Land*; *Gold Rustlers, The* (1939); *Gunman's Chance* (1941), also published as *Blood on the Moon*; *Guns of Hanging Lake, The* (1968); *Guns of the Double Diamond* (1937), also published as *The Man on the Blue*; *Hardcase* (1942); *High Vermilion* (1948); *Last Hunt* (1962); *Man from the Desert* (1971); *Man from Two Rivers, The* (1974); *Misery Lode* (1938), also published as *King Colt*; *Outrider, The* (1971); *Paper Sheriff* (1966); *Play a Lone Hand* (1951); *Primrose Try* (1967); *Ramrod* (1943); *Ride the Man Down* (1942); *Rimrock* (1955); *Saddle by Starlight* (1952); *Silver Rock* (1953); *Six Guns of San Jon* (1939); *Some Day Country* (1964); *Stalkers, The* (1973); *Station West* (1947); *Summer of the Smoke* (1958); *Sunset Graze* (1943); *Three for the Money* (1970); *Trouble Country* (1976); *Trumpets West* (1951); *Vengeance Valley* (1950); *War on the Cimarron* (1940); *Weary Range*

(1939), also published as *The Branded Man*; *Whip, The* (1957)

Shulman, Irving

(1913–1995)

Irving Shulman was the first novelist to turn the burgeoning postwar problem of juvenile delinquency into sensational fiction. Published to great success in 1947, his novel *The Amboy Dukes* described the antisocial adventures of some gang members in the slums of Brooklyn, New York, Shulman's hometown. For some the book was a harrowing, realistic horror story of modern wayward youth. But for quite a few others, Shulman's racy read was actually quite alluring. In addition to its gripping, action-packed narrative, *Dukes* contained precise detailing of the characters' narcissistic devotion to style, from pastel zoot suits and razor-sharp signet rings to "Vaselined hair" shining in reflected light. The book gave gang life a fetishistic glamor that, to some armchair juvenile delinquents, was sexily irresistible. *Cry Tough* (1949), a sequel, followed the young hero of *The Amboy Dukes* into manhood as he struggled to keep from returning to jail, and solidified Shulman's status as chronicler of disaffected young people.

The success of *Amboy Dukes* led to publishers bringing out other novels about the juvenile delinquency problem, and by the early '50s the paperback houses had established "J.D. lit" as a thriving new genre, with dozens of novels about youths on the mean streets, switchblades, zip guns, bennies, rumbles, and so on. As the premier purveyor of such fiction, and with a supposed keen insight into the violent, alienated youth culture, Shulman was hired to work with director Nicholas Ray on what would become the classic James Dean film *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). Shulman worked up a script containing much of what went into the film, then fought with Ray and departed, putting his version of the story into a novel he called *Children of the Dark* (1955). Shulman returned to his bread-winning subject from time to time over the years. He made novels out of the film stories of producer Albert Zugsmith's sensational *Platinum High School* and *College Confidential* (the film version of the

latter starred Steve Allen as a professor doing a sex survey with sexy young "scholars" like the redoubtable Mamie Van Doren). Shulman also was the natural choice to write the story line of the Broadway and Hollywood smash *West Side Story*.

In 1964 Shulman had another big seller, non-fiction this time. *Harlow: An Intimate Biography* was a best-selling life story of the doomed platinum blonde movie star of the 1930s, Jean Harlow. The book dripped with prurience, shock, and sex. Some Hollywood veterans who knew Harlow said the portrait of her in the book had nothing to do with reality—but that was beside the point. *Harlow*, the book, like Errol FLYNN's *My Wicked, Wicked Ways* and Barbara PAYTON's shudder-inducing *I Am Not Ashamed*, belonged to a newly emerging genre—call it "pulp fiction biography"—that was meant, first and foremost, to give pleasure. Like any good read, the facts were handy but not crucial. Shulman followed this 1965 blockbuster two years later with an equally lurid and eminently readable biography of another doomed sex symbol: *Valentino*.

Works

Amboy Dukes, The (1947); *Big Brokers, The* (1951); *Calibre* (1956); *Children of the Dark* (1955); *College Confidential* (1960); *Cry Tough* (1949); *Devil's Knee, The* (1973); *Good Deeds Must Be Punished* (1955); *Notorious Landlady, The* (1962); *Platinum High School* (1960); *Saturn's Child* (1976); *Short End of the Stick, The* (1960); *Square Trap, The* (1953), also published as *The Flesh Is Real*; *Upbeat* (1965); *Valentino* (1967); *Velvet Knife, The* (1959); *West Side Story* (1961)

Siodmak, Curt (Kurt Siodmak)

(1901–2000)

In a singular career lasting nearly as long as his own long life, Curt Siodmak established a unique position as a writer of romantic horror and science fiction stories. He was equally adept in two languages and equally successful in film and fiction.

Born in Dresden, Germany, to an affluent Jewish businessman and a doting mother, Siodmak had an unhappy childhood, beset by anxiety over his parents' tense relationship and other matters he barely comprehended. He began writing to

express otherwise repressed feelings and was published for the first time at age seven. He had composed a story called “The Key” about a young prince who lives in a castle with a thousand rooms. Little Curt (then Kurt) wrote the story out on parchment pages and put sequins on it, constructing his own small book. His mother was delighted and showed the book to the publisher of a magazine, *Kinderwelt* (Children’s World), and the story was printed. “And from that moment on I was hooked,” Siodmak told me. “I did my studies, got my degrees, mathematics, engineering. But I wrote always. And it saved my life. When the Nazis forced me to leave Germany, who wanted an engineer? But a writer can work anywhere.”

While gathering his academic degrees, Siodmak continued to write, selling fiction and articles to German periodicals. He created science fiction stories before such a term existed, and a translated version of one of these appeared in America, in 1926, in the first issue of the first science fiction magazine—Hugo Gernsback’s *Amazing Stories*. The story, Siodmak recalled, “was a whole new approach to this kind of fantastic writing because I went into great scientific detail.”

As a journalist in Berlin in the 1920s, Siodmak’s various and extraordinary experiences included a stint as an extra on Fritz Lang’s 1926 silent film *Metropolis*, taking the job in order to report on the production from the inside (“And I got [paid] ten times more as an extra than I would get for the story”). Siodmak’s career surged forward. He wrote books, exciting speculative fiction and adventure stories like *FP. 1 Does Not Reply*, a thrilling spy story with a futuristic edge, involving midocean platforms built to refuel transatlantic aircraft (Siodmak would later take this speculative idea to outer space with his novel *Skyport*). The novel was turned into an exciting film of the same name, notable because it was shot simultaneously in German and English versions. Siodmak himself began working in the movies early on. He cowrote (with Billy Wilder) the seminal “new wave” low-budget sensation, *Menschen am Sonntag* (*People on Sunday*, 1930), which catapulted the careers of future motion picture notables Fred Zinnemann, Edgar Ulmer, Wilder, and the film’s director (and Curt’s brother), Robert Siodmak.

The rise of Adolf Hitler sent Siodmak’s career into a tailspin. The popular writer became an undesirable citizen in his own country and his publishers informed him that all copies of his books were being banned or seized by the police. With the anti-Jewish oppression growing stronger, Siodmak and his wife fled Germany for France, then England. The couple—with their newborn child—roomed in a London brothel for six months while Curt went to the movies to try to learn English. After some jobs for the British studios—including rewrite work on Alfred Hitchcock’s *Sabotage*—in 1937 Siodmak traveled to America. With an English writer friend, Siodmak bought an ancient Cadillac and drove cross-country to California. He found an assignment at Paramount Pictures rewriting the script for a Dorothy Lamour sarong saga, *Her Jungle Love*. He then found a berth at Universal Pictures, which specialized in horror movies. Siodmak’s contributions to the genre would include the scripts for *The Wolf Man*, *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*, *House of Frankenstein*, and *Son of Dracula*. The last film was directed by Curt’s brother, at the writer’s instigation, beginning



Curt Siodmak, author of horror and science fiction stories, was first published at age seven. (*HS Media*)

Robert Siodmak's relationship with Universal that soon led to his direction of the seminal film noir, *The Killers*.

Siodmak's B-budget or category assignments at Universal and elsewhere did not pay well by Hollywood standards, and out of economic need—as well as creative urges—he continued writing novels for publication. His first novel written in English—a language he had only spoken fluently for a few years—published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1943, was Siodmak's best-known and probably his greatest work of prose, *Donovan's Brain*. "I was dumped out in Devil's Hot Springs [in California]. [My wife] Henrietta wanted to get me away from my brother because he interfered with my writing. It was a strange place in the desert. Wild boars come out at night. Nobody lives there but the old women with arthritis. There are holes in the ground and the steam comes out. You put your food in there and it cooks it. So I had the idea and I lived there and wrote the book," he said. The story dealt with a scientist in the desert who revives the brain of a dead man, and how the dead man's mind exerts control over other people and begins a reign of terror. A swift, provocative SF thriller that brought to mind the SF classics of H. G. Wells, *Donovan's Brain* was written in a sharp, tough style that did not seem out of place when it first appeared as a serial in three issues (beginning September 1942) of the hard-boiled pulp magazine *Black Mask*.

Though Siodmak's novels occasionally went in different directions—he wrote the romance *Whomsoever Shall I Kiss?* and the sexy historical *For Kings Only*—most fell into the science fiction category. The most enjoyable of these, including *Hauser's Memory*, about a government spy agency's attempt to remove the memory (the RNA) from a dying Communist defector, and *The Third Ear*, international intrigue revolving around the formula for chemically-induced extrasensory perception (ESP), were thrillers with interesting scientific ideas in the *Donovan's Brain* tradition. Siodmak would proudly point to his various ideas and fictional inventions through the years—radar, lasers, space stations, microchips, and the like—that became realities. Science fiction, Siodmak said, was science without having to prove

anything: "If it proves to be right, it is science. If not . . . science fiction." He claimed to have once given a talk to research scientists who told him, "We read your stuff. We get all our ideas from you." But Siodmak's first allegiance was to a good story, and his position among hardcore science fiction fans was generally marginalized for the degree of "unscientific" and Hollywood elements in his SF books.

Siodmak, who became an exile to escape the living nightmare of Nazi Germany, no doubt took such criticisms lightly. He went his own way, continuing to publish until the end of his life. Ironically, in his last years his work found its largest audience in Germany. His memoir—originally titled *Even a Man Who Is Pure at Heart* from some lines of "folklore" he invented for *The Wolf Man*—was published as *Wolf Man's Maker* when he was 97. "Real writers write. They are driven people," he once reflected. "Writing is a sickness and a cure at the same time. For me, it is easier to write than not to write."

Works

Donovan's Brain (1942); *EP 1 Does Not Reply* (1932); *Gabriel's Body* (1992); *Hauser's Memory* (1968); *Skyport* (1959); *Third Ear, The* (1971); *Whomsoever I Shall Kiss* (1954)

Smith, Arthur D. Howden

(1887–1945)

In his day, Smith was both a respected journalist and biographer, well-known for his expertise in the American political scene. He also was a writer of popular historical fiction who brought the distant and ancient past to life in some of the most vivid and entertaining stories and novels ever written. Smith was a regular contributor to *Adventure* magazine in the 1920s, the period in which that magazine was at its peak and Smith was one of *Adventure's* great stars.

Smith moved across the map and through the centuries for his stories. His tales of the Viking hero Swain took place among the Norse seamen of the Orkney Islands and flirted with elements of the supernatural, no doubt one of the influences on

writer Robert E. HOWARD and his subsequent stories about Conan the Barbarian. In *The Doom Trail* and *Beyond the Sunset*, Smith wrote about exciting events in the settlements and wilderness areas of 17th-century America, using as his hero a steadfast new American, Harry Ormerod, a Jacobite exile. *The Dead Go Overside* dealt with the African-American slave trade and was another exciting and wonderfully written story that made the past come alive.

A remarkable achievement was Smith's episodic epic, *Grey Maiden*. Using a narrative gimmick that has been repeated many times since, Smith told a series of separate stories linked by a common object passed on from one character to another, in this case a majestic iron sword known to those who wield it as the Grey Maiden for the supposed womanly shape of the blade ("the gracious slimness and strength of some grey maid, most wildly perfect and thirsty of life . . ."). The sword—thought to be touched by the gods—brings both glory and death, the former to brave warriors and the latter to cowards. Smith tracks the sword's history through centuries of conflict and raging battle in Egypt, Greece, Persia, Iberia, and the deserts of the Holy Land.

Best of all was *Portobello Gold*, Smith's prequel to the 19th-century classic *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson (the book's use of Stevenson's characters was officially sanctioned by Stevenson's heir and sometimes collaborator, stepson Lloyd Osbourne). Taking on a daunting task, presuming to create the events leading up to those detailed in what was perhaps the most beloved adventure story of all time, Smith succeeded brilliantly. The first-person tale recounted a spirited New York youth's recruitment—somewhat against his will—aboard a pirate ship seeking Caribbean treasure. The novel traces his various and life-threatening encounters with the deadliest and sleaziest bunch of cutthroat sea rats imaginable (including the expected Long John Silver, Flint, and Blind Pew), and his ambivalent but growing affection for his remarkable great-uncle Andrew Murray, the legendary buccaneer known as "Captain Rip-Rap." Written with brio, this roaring yarn of the Spanish Main had characterizations so dazzlingly alive that Stevenson might have popped up from

his grave and saluted, and a death scene so wonderfully realized ("A glad day—sir—but a mad world . . ." breathes the expiring Murray) that even the savage Cap'n Flint would shed a tear. *Portobello Gold* was a stunning achievement, certainly one of the greatest of all adventure novels.

Works

Beyond the Sunset (1923); *Conqueror* (1933); *Dead Go Overside* (1938); *Doom Trail* (1922); *Eagle's Shadow* (1931); *Grey Maiden, The* (1974; originally serialized in *Adventure*, 1920s); *Portobello Gold* (1924); *Swain's Saga* (1931); *Treasure of the Bucoleon* (1923)

Smith, Clark Ashton

(1893–1961)

Clark Ashton Smith lived an isolated, eccentric existence, ill at ease in the 20th century. He spent most of his years with his parents in a primitive cabin in rural Auburn, California, near the gold mines of Placer County. In this rugged region, among the miners and farmers, the self-educated Smith found an unlikely calling as a writer of fin-de-siècle verse. His first book of poetry, *The Star-Treader and Other Poems*, was published in 1912, when he was 19. It was not until the late 1920s that Smith began to write the otherworldly fiction for which he is remembered. For a dozen years or so he became a regular and acclaimed contributor to that strange and special pulp magazine, *Weird Tales*, and to the handful of other pulps that were willing to print his unusual fantasy and science fiction stories.

Most of Smith's 110 stories were set in one of his wholly imagined earthly locales: Zothique, the last, barely habitable continent in a fading future where magic has replaced science; Poseidonis, one of the isles of the doomed Atlantic; medieval Averigne; and the prehistoric polar continent of Hyperborea. In addition, there were several jaunts to the extraterrestrial settings of Mars and planet Xiccarph. Smith could write conventional horror fiction, and he created some of the most grotesque and unsettling beasts in the literature. "The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis" (*Weird Tales*, May 1932) for instance, an electrifying tale of a group of archaeolo-

gists who encounter leechlike, skull-sucking monsters in a deserted Martian catacomb, is pure scream-out-loud entertainment.

Smith's more characteristic work, however, was unconventional: baroque, poetic, and haunted by specter and regret. His settings were often worlds on the eve of destruction. The malevolent and powerful wizards and necromancers who figure in many of the tales are at the end of their reign, resigned and melancholic. There is Malygris, the magician of "The Last Incantation" (1930), whose reviving of the long-dead girl he loved in his youth is a soul-shattering disaster—"He could believe no longer in love or youth or beauty, and even the memory of these things was a dubitable mirage, a thing that might or might not have been."

In "The Maze of Maal Dweb," (1938) a tour de force of intense imagining and descriptive power, a valiant young man of Xiccarph pursues his kidnapped lover to the dangerous labyrinth of a tyrant-wizard. In a stunning climax, the brave hero is suddenly, horribly defeated and the perspective abruptly switches to evil Maal Dweb himself, rueful and alone with his metal automatons: "And it may have been that there were times when he wearied a little even of this, and preferred the silence of the petrified women, or the muteness of the beasts that could no longer call themselves men."

Nostalgia and psychic pain haunt another of Smith's masterworks, "The Empire of the Necromancers" (1932), arguably his greatest story. Mmatmuor and Sodosma, two practitioners of black magic who are capable of raising the dead, attempt to create their own kingdom from the deceased citizens of a city doomed by plague. The corrupt wizards succeed, filling their kingdom with a populace of resurrected skeletons and plague-scarred corpses. But the dead, longing to return to their interrupted sleep, rebel, and the necromancers are given their just deserts:

Hestaiyon lifted the great sword and struck off the head of Mmatmuor and the head of Sodosma, each with a single blow. Then, as had been directed, he quartered the remains with mighty strokes. And the necromancers gave up their unclean lives and lay

supine, without movement, adding a deeper red to the rose and a brighter hue to the sad purple of their couches.

Smith had the poet's love of rare words and elaborate imagery. His best work had a narcotic, incantatory effect on the reader. "Take one step across the threshold of his stories," Ray Bradbury wrote, "and you plunge into color, sound, taste, smell and texture—into language." Smith virtually ceased writing after 1937. He occupied himself with other things, including the carving of grotesque sculptures, now highly prized. He married at age 61, but continued to lead an isolated life in the backwoods of California, and died there in 1961. Why he gave up writing has never been explained.

Works

STORIES

"Adventure in Futurity, An" (1932); "Beast of Averoine, The" (1933); "Beyond the Singing Flame" (1932); "Black Abbot of Puthuum, The" (1937); "Chain of Aforgomon, The" (1935); "Chamel God, The" (1934); "City of the Singing Flame, The" (1932); "Colossus of Ylourgne, The" (1934); "Coming of the White Worm, The" (1941); "Dark Age, The" (1938); "Dark Eidolon, The" (1935); "Death of Ilalotha, The" (1937); "Death of Malygris, The" (1934); "Demon of the Flower, The" (1933); "Dimension of Chance, The" (1932); "Disinterment of Venus, The" (1934); "Door to Saturn, The" (1932); "Double Shadow, The" (1939); "Dweller in Martian Depths" (1933); "Empire of the Necromancers, The" (1932); "Enchantress of Sylaire, The" (1941); "End of the Story, The" (1930); "Eternal World, The" (1933); "Flight into Super-Time" (1932); "Flower-Women, The" (1935); "Garden of Adompha, The" (1938); "Genius Loci" (1933); "Gorgon, The" (1932); "Great God Awto, The" (1940); "Holiness of Azedarac, The" (1933); "Hunters from Beyond, The" (1932); "Ice Demon, The" (1933); "Immeasurable Horror, The" (1931); "Invisible City, The" (1932); "Isle of the Torturers, The" (1933); "Last Hieroglyph, The" (1935); "Last Incantation, The" (1930); "Light from Beyond, The" (1933); "Maker of Gargoyles, The" (1932); "Mandrakes, The" (1933); "Marooned in Andromeda" (1930); "Master of the Asteroid" (1932); "Master of the Crabs, The" (1948); "Maze of Maal Dweb" (1938); "Metamorphosis of Earth, The" (1951); "Monster

of the Prophecy, The" (1932); "Morthylla" (1953); "Mother of Toads" (1938); "Murder in the Fourth Dimension" (1930); "Nameless Offspring, The" (1932); "Necromancy in Naat" (1937); "Necromantic Tale, The" (1931); "Night in Malneant, A" (1939); "Ninth Skeleton, The" (1928); "Offering to the Moon, The" (1953); "Phantoms of the Fire, The" (1930); "Planet Entity, The" (1931); "Planet of the Dead, The" (1932); "Plutonian Drug, The" (1934); "Powder of Hyperborea, The" (1958); "Quest of Gazolba" (1947); "Rendezvous in Averoine, A" (1931); "Resurrection of the Rattlesnake, The" (1931); "Return of the Sorcerer, The" (1931); "Sadastor" (1930); "Satyr, The" (1931); "Second Interment, The" (1933); "Seed from the Sepulchre, The" (1933); "Seven Geases, The" (1934); "Supernumerary Corpse, The" (1932); "Symposium of the Gorgon" (1958); "Tale of Satampira Zeiros, The" (1931); "Testament of Athammaus, The" (1932); "Tomb Spawn, The" (1934); "Treader of the Dust, The" (1935); "Ubbo-Sathla" (1933); "Uncharted Isle, The" (1930); "Vaults of Yoh-Vombis, The" (1932); "Venus of Azombeii, The" (1931); "Vintage from Atlantis, A" (1933); "Visitors from Mlok, The" (1933); "Voyage to Sfanomoe, A" (1931); "Vulthoom" (1935); "Weaver in the Vault, The" (1934); "Weird of Avoosl Wuthoqquan, The" (1932); "Who Are the Living?" (1942); "Willow Landscape, The" (1939); "Witchcraft of Ulua, The" (1934); "Xeethra" (1934)

BOOKS

Abominations of Yondo, The (1960); *Double Shadow and Other Fantasies, The* (1933); *Genius Loci and Other Tales* (1948); *Hyperborea* (1971); *Lost Worlds* (1944); *Other Dimensions* (1970); *Out of Space and Time* (1942); *Planets and Dimensions* (1973); *Poseidonis* (1973); *Rendezvous in Averoine* (1988); *Tales of Science and Sorcery* (1964); *Xiccarph* (1972); *Zothique* (1970)

Smith, E. E. (Edward Elmer Smith) (1890–1965)

One of the most popular and influential of all the early science fiction writers of the pulp era, E. E. Smith, from Sheboygan, Wisconsin, was a chemist in a Michigan doughnut factory (he earned a Ph.D. in chemical engineering) before he published his first epic tale of space adventure, *The Skylark of Space*. Smith's epochal fiction had been a sideline

for many years. He made steady but slow progress, only gradually figuring out how to put his ideas together and getting assistance, particularly with his love-interest scenes, from a friend's wife, Mrs. Lee Hawkins Garby. The story took more than five years to complete, and then another eight years before he could find someone to print it.

Skylark was finally bought by *Amazing Stories*, the first magazine devoted to science fiction and the brainchild of a Luxembourg emigrant named Hugo Gernsback. Gernsback an expert in telephonics and electronics and a fledgling inventor, had come to the United States when he was 20. He began publishing a magazine, *Modern Electronics*, and in 1922, with some pages to fill, the publisher wrote a piece of futuristic fiction. The story gained a favorable reaction from readers and he published more of the same, eventually, in 1926, creating a magazine devoted to "science fiction" which he called *Amazing Stories*. The magazine paid little and maintained high standards for scientific detail and plausibility, thus turning away many of the pulp hacks from other magazines and encouraging the participation of many new writers with a background or interest in hard science.

When *The Skylark of Space* was printed in *Amazing Stories* (Smith was paid \$125 for the huge, serialized work), in three installments beginning in the August 1928 issue, readers roared their approval. The prototype for what would come to be known as "space opera," Smith's novel was an action epic of genuinely cosmic scope and jaw-droppingly spectacular technology. *Skylark's* characterizations were primitive, the sentiments were awkward, and the plot was in essence a long chase scene: scientist Richard Seaton pursues across the galaxies the evil space pirate (and the kidnapper of his fiancée) Dr. Marc "Blacky" Duquesne. But if Smith lacked subtlety and complexity, he had a compensating abundant imagination and audacity. Smith thought big, and his readers' eyes widened with the scope of his imagination. Other writers confined themselves to the solar system; Smith made the entire cosmos his setting. Smith's dynamic use of scientific principles, his vivid, sweeping action scenes, his breathtakingly spacious canvas and mile-long spaceships made all the previous forms of outer-space fiction seem paltry and

old-fashioned by comparison. Smith, with his epic scientific style, would become the major influence in the field, replacing A. MERRITT and Edgar Rice BURROUGHS for a generation of impressionable aspiring science fiction writers.

Smith continued at his day job, but in his spare time he wrote more tales of outer space. He produced several sequels to the first *Skylark* story, and later, for *Amazing's* rival *Astounding Stories*, he began his Lensman series about an outer space cop, Kimball Kinnison. Smith occasionally tried a less operatic space story and a smaller canvas, but his readers complained. They liked their E. E. Smith stories big, broad, and action-packed. Thus, as science fiction grew more complex and varied, Smith felt obliged to remain behind the times with his original style, and some critics called him old-fashioned and primitive. He maintained a sizable fan base through it all, however, and continued turning out successful entries in his two popular series through the '50s and '60s.

Works

Children of the Lens (1954); *First Lensman* (1950); *Galactic Patrol* (1950); *Gray Lensman* (1951); *Second Stage Lensman* (1953); *Skylark of Space* (1946); *Skylark of Valeron* (1949); *Skylark Three* (1948); *Spacehounds of IPC* (1947); *Subspace Explorers* (1965); *Triplanetary* (1948); *Vortex Blaster* (1960)

Smith, Guy N. (Guy Newman Smith) (1939–)

Among his other achievements as a prolific modern pulpster, Guy N. Smith can certainly lay claim to being the greatest of all writers on the subject of giant killer crabs. In the summer of 1976 New English Library brought out Smith's *Night of the Crabs*, about a deadly crustacean army that wreaks havoc on Welsh beachgoers ("From the depths of the sea they come to watch us . . . stalk us . . . devour us!"). It was a surprise hit. In fact, Smith's book was better written and scarier than Benchley's American megaseller *Jaws*. Five sequels (including a de facto prequel, *Origin of the Crabs*) and assorted short stories followed. After the success of the crab novels, Smith followed up with various

marauding-creature books and also—eventually—earned the clout with publishers to expand his repertoire. From the 1980s, he became one of Britain's great imaginative writers.

The son of a banker father and a novelist and magazine editor mother, Guy as a youth was drawn to his mother's creative world (he wrote and illustrated a comic strip for her section of the local newspaper) even as family pressures led him to a career in banking. In his spare time he wrote articles about country living, then mystery stories for a newspaper syndicate. In the early '70s he put his foot in the door at New English Library, a lively British house with a heart of pulp, and sold it an outline for a novel about a rural English werewolf, which took 30 days to write (earning, up front, a meager 200-pound advance). *Werewolf by Moonlight* was published in 1974 and was popular enough to warrant two sequels. Established as a new genre writer with real flair, Smith gave up banking and hit the typewriter full time.

Most of Smith's work fell within the horror category (with notable exceptions, like his series of novelizations of Walt Disney animated classics), but these books often broke the constraints of genre formula, with elements of noir, crime, and espionage thrillers keeping things interesting. Smith was in many ways a throwback to the golden age of the American pulp writers, suited to churning out material for *Weird Tales* and *Dime Mystery* in its lurid phase. In addition to his exhilarating stories of those irrepressible crabs, some of Smith's best work includes the four-volume series about the psychic detective Sabat (a cross between Ian FLEMING's James Bond and Seabury QUINN's Jules de Grandin), and the stories of special agent John Mayo, the man in *The Black Fedora*.

While continuing to supply paperback houses in Britain and the United States with first-rate work, Smith has also published some of his own work as part of a mail-order business that includes a rare-book trade.

Works

Abomination (1986); *Accursed* (1983); *Alligators* (1986); *Bamboo Guerrillas, The* (1977); *Bats Out of Hell* (1978); *Black Fedora, The* (1991); *Black Knights* (1977); *Blood Circuit* (1983); *Blood Merchants, The (Sabat 2)* (1982);

Busker, The (1998); *Cannibal Cult (Sabat 3)* (1982); *Cannibals* (1986); *Caracal* (1980); *Carnivore* (1990); *Crabs on the Rampage* (1981); *Crabs' Moon* (1984); *Dark One, The* (1995); *Dead End* (1996); *Dead Meat (The Complete Sabat)* containing *Blood Merchants*, *Graveyard Vultures*, *Druid Connection*, *Vampire Village* and *Hellbeat* (1997); *Demons* (1987); *Druid Connection, The (Sabat 4)* (1983); *Festering, The* (1988); *Fiend* (1988); *Ghoul, The* (1976); *Graveyard Vultures (Sabat 1)* (1982); *Hijack* (1977); *Human Sacrifice* (1988); *Killer Crabs, The* (1978); *Knighton Vampires, The* (1993); *Locusts* (1979); *Lurkers, The* (1983); *Mania* (1989); *Manitou Doll* (1981); *Night of the Crabs, The* (1976); *Origins of the Crabs* (1979); *Phobia* (1990); *Plague Chronicles, The* (1993); *Satan's Snowdrop* (1980); *Sleeping Beauty* (1975); *Snakes* (1986); *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1975); *Son of the Werewolf* (1978); *Song of the South* (1975); *Sucking Pit, The* (1975); *Thirst* (1980); *Throwback* (1985); *Unseen, The* (1990); *Warhead* (1981); *Water Rites* (1997); *Werewolf by Moonlight* (1974); *Witchspell* (2000); *Wolfcurse* (1981)

Spillane, Mickey

(1918–)

In the 1950s Mickey Spillane was the most popular novelist in America. Born in Brooklyn and reared in Elizabeth, New Jersey, he wrote blood-and-sex-drenched mysteries of an unprecedented ferocity. His detective stories were more about vengeance than detection, and usually climaxed in cathartic prose poems of bloodshed and destruction. The public loved him. Alarmed critics called Spillane a vulgarian, a fascist, an illiterate. Some of these attacks made it seem as though Spillane was the architect of the nation's destruction. Spillane, an air force veteran, former salesman for Gimbel's department store, and a writer of comic books, knew you couldn't please everybody. "My mother loves the stuff," he said at the time. "My father thinks it crud."

There were seven titles published in the original Spillane cycle of best-sellers—*I, the Jury*, *My Gun Is Quick*, *Vengeance Is Mine*, *One Lonely Night*, *The Big Kill*, *The Long Wait*, and *Kiss Me, Deadly*. Six were about Spillane's tough private eye, Mike Hammer; the one out-of-series title, *The Long*

Wait, was about a tough amnesiac. Unlike the typical private-eye tale that begins with a PI hired for a case, Spillane liked to have a less mercenary, less objective motivation for his plots. Hammer was compelled by personal motives, usually the need for revenge coupled with an obsessive hatred of wrongdoers. It was a higher calling than those of previous PIs, a philosophical mission that put Hammer closer to the worlds of the writer Ayn Rand and pulp superhero the Shadow than of Raymond CHANDLER's Philip Marlowe.

Hammer was a soft touch with old army buddies and heart-of-gold hookers in trouble, but he was a barbarous, Old Testament-style avenger when it came to crooks and communists. Spillane had a detailed, almost lyrical approach to the violence in his books. Every casual encounter with the bad guys turned into a ballet of gore and breaking bones, as in this passage from *The Big Kill*:

I snapped the side of the rod across his jaw and laid the flesh open to the bone. He dropped the sap and staggered into the big boy with a scream starting to come up out of his throat only to get it cut off in the middle as I pounded his teeth back into his mouth with the end of the barrel . . .

The plots were serviceable, but the writing sold the books: Spillane/Hammer's pounding, charismatic, inescapable voice, the outlandishly vivid violence, and the forthright erotic details. One infamous passage in *I, the Jury*—"All that was left were the transparent panties. And she was a real blonde."—probably earned Spillane a small fortune in royalties. The endings of the Hammer novels were much talked about, tying sex and violence together for one last sucker punch, as in these final sentences from *Jury*:

Slowly, a sigh escaped her, making the hemispheres of her breasts quiver. She leaned forward to kiss me, her arms going out to encircle my neck.

The roar of the .45 shook the room. Charlotte staggered back a step. Her eyes were a symphony of incredulity, an unbe-

lieving witness to truth. Slowly, she looked down at the ugly swelling in her naked belly where the bullet went in.

“How c-could you?” she gasped.

I only had a moment before talking to a corpse, but I got it in.

“It was easy,” I said.

Although all of his books would be published first in hardcover, Spillane’s enormous breakthrough came in paperback. His first novel, for example, sold just 7,000 copies in the first, hardcover edition, while the softcover reprint by Signet moved more than 2 million in two years. To many people, Spillane epitomized the postwar sensational paperback in all its lurid, two-bit glory. Spillane brought to the mass market his innovative, ultra-visceral style and a provocative new direction for hard-boiled fiction; his work and the big sales electrified the softcover book industry in the ’50s. Spillane was a pioneer in another way as well, a brilliant self-promoter who willingly exploited the similarities between his jaw-breaking, tough-talking fictional hero and his own hard-boiled, two-fisted persona, complete with trench-coated and pistol-toting author photos on the book jackets. Spillane’s huckstering for his work paved the way for such subsequent promotional geniuses as Jacqueline SUSANN and Jackie COLLINS. But none of the authors who followed could match Spillane’s audacious, ultimate promotional coup—the author portraying his own creation, Mike Hammer, in the big-screen version of *The Girl Hunters*. The film was an entertainingly tawdry take on the novel, but the definitive Spillane adaptation remains Robert Aldrich’s and A. I. Bezzerides’s apocalyptic, subversive film of *Kiss Me Deadly*.

After making a fortune many times over from those first seven titles, Spillane took a long breather. Some said he was wounded by the attacks and insults hurled at him by the culture vultures. Whatever the reason, 10 years went by before the appearance of another Mike Hammer novel. In *The Girl Hunters*, Spillane acknowledged the mysterious hiatus: Mike’s beloved, devoted secretary Velda had gone out on a job for him and never returned; Hammer himself dropped out of

circulation, hit the bottle and hit bottom. The story begins with Hammer, now a derelict literally in a gutter (subtlety was not Spillane’s watchword). But soon, Mike is busting heads and bedding broads as before. It was another great read, but Spillane’s heyday was over. In the years since *I, The Jury* had blasted a hole in the best-seller lists, imitators (some cheap and some not bad) had arrived by the hundreds, and sex and violence had become common. No one topped him in sales—even by 1968, seven of the 25 best-sellers of all time were Spillane’s—but he was no longer a cultural influence. The ’60s found a new big name in blood-and-thunder fiction, Ian FLEMING, with his licensed-to-kill agent James Bond—a Mike Hammer with class. Detectives like Hammer seemed old-fashioned to many readers, like something out of one of those old black-and-white movies with the rain-soaked backlot streets. Spillane tried to join the rival team with his own James Bond, Tiger Mann, but it didn’t really catch on—people said it was just Mike Hammer with a new name and a job in the government.

Spillane continued writing books, good ones and indifferent ones. By the ’70s, however, most Americans thought of him not as a terrific and innovative writer but as the corny tough guy with the big blonde on his arm in a series of television commercials for Budweiser beer. He didn’t fade away, though. With a rising interest in crime fiction in the ’80s and interest drummed up by a so-so television series starring Stacy Keach as Mike Hammer, Spillane hit the typewriter, putting his old hero through his paces once again. The result, *The Killing Man* (1989), was a marvelous return to form, full of classic Spillane prose about lonely nights and deadly kisses. The opening seemed to melt away the years and the platoons of bad imitators:

Some days hang over Manhattan like a huge pair of unseen pincers, slowly squeezing the city until you can hardly breathe. A low growl of thunder echoed up the cavern of Fifth Avenue and I looked up to where the sky started at the seventy-first floor of the Empire State Building. I could smell the rain. It was the kind that hung above the

orderly piles of concrete until it was soaked with dust and debris and when it came down it wasn't rain at all, but the sweat of the city.

Spillane's fans were fewer in number now but no less fanatical, and they welcomed back the real Mike Hammer with enthusiasm.

Works

Big Kill (1951); *Black Alley* (1996) *Bloody Sunrise* (1965); *Body Lovers* (1967); *By-Pass Control* (1966); *Day of the Guns* (1964); *Day the Sea Rolled Back* (1981); *Death Dealers* (1965); *Deep* (1961); *Delta Factor* (1969); *Erection Set* (1972); *Flier* (1964); *Girl Hunters* (1962); *I, The Jury* (1947); *Killer Mine* (1965); *Killing Man* (1989); *Kiss Me, Deadly* (1952); *Last Cop Out* (1973); *Long Wait* (1951); *Me, Hood!* (1963); *My Gun Is Quick* (1950); *One Lonely Night* (1951); *Return of the Hood* (1964); *Ship That Never Was, The* (1982); *Snake, The* (1964); *Survival . . . Zero!* (1970); *Tough Guys, The* (1969); *Twisted Thing, The* (1966); *Vengeance Is Mine* (1950)

Sturgeon, Theodore (Edward Waldo) (1918–1985)

Theodore Sturgeon's brilliant talent was considered so special and unique that some have accused him—with classic condescension toward genre fiction—of having wasted it in the writing of science fiction. Sturgeon's work had little to do with the juvenile and space-operatic side of the category; he had little interest in spaceships or little green men. He was a discovery of *Astounding* magazine editor John Campbell, part of the brain trust that revolutionized and intellectualized science fiction, bringing advanced and sometimes arcane scientific speculation and philosophical rumination to the genre.

Born Edward Waldo in Staten Island, New York, he lost his father to a divorce when he was a boy and later took the surname of his mother's second husband. He changed his first name at about the same time because—to the best of anyone's knowledge—he liked to be called "Ted." He had little interest in education but became a

skilled gymnast and worked as an acrobat in a circus. This career ended after a bout with rheumatic fever, so he shipped out to sea. During one long freighter voyage, he wrote his first story, a short-short about a confidence trickster, which sold to a newspaper syndicate and earned him \$5. Early in 1939 Sturgeon sent a story to the office of Campbell, then editing two pulps for Street & Smith, *Astounding* and a new offshoot, *Unknown*, which was being molded as a home for high-quality, mostly contemporary fantasy fiction. Campbell rejected Sturgeon's first submission, offered some advice, then accepted a new piece called "A God in a Garden," a brittle, comic short story about a man who finds a magic statue in his backyard, then finds that wishes fulfilled can be a pain in the neck. Sturgeon contributed several more stories to *Unknown* and began appearing in *Astounding* as well. In the next year, Sturgeon sold Campbell and his two magazines about a dozen stories, all the while profiting from his editor's advice and inspiration. His early work was clever and cool, often shot through with a caustic misanthropy (as in the cruel fable "Bianca's Hands," which remained rejected and unpublished for many years), but often, too, with a rueful poetry, as in these opening lines from "The Golden Egg" (1941):

When time itself was half its present age,
and at an unthinkable distance, and in an
unknowable dimension, he was born.

He left his world so long before he
came to earth that even he did not know
how long he had been in space. He had
lived so long on that world that even he
could not remember what he had been be-
fore his science changed his race.

With a wife and child to support, Sturgeon gave up hope of making of living as a pulpster and found job running a hotel in the Caribbean. With the coming of the World War II he went into the army as a construction worker. In the immediate postwar period Sturgeon went adrift: his marriage ended and he experienced psychological problems, a depression that left him unable to write. When the block eventually faded and he returned

to the typewriter, Sturgeon's work often showed an added depth and a recurring melancholy. Feelings and thoughts about the nature and future of mankind weighed on him and translated into provocative and haunting stories like "Maturity," with its metaphoric use of the little-known disease called progeria, which causes premature aging, and novels such as the acclaimed *More Than Human* (1953), the bizarre chronicle of a band of misfit children with paranormal abilities. Unlike many of his more antiseptic peers in the science fiction elite, Sturgeon's work began to explore the subject of sex, sometimes with mordant humor as in "The Wages of Synergy," about a deathly form of orgasm, and the groundbreaking "The World Well Lost," which concerned a pair of homosexual lovers—though alien ones. Again unlike many other writers in the field, Sturgeon's style and viewpoint continued to evolve—shifting, for example, from the early, cynical misanthropy through a Zen-like acceptance of humankind's fallibility and capacity for evil.

Science fiction remained Sturgeon's métier, but the need to increase his income or the challenge of something new led him to write the occasional piece in some other category, including a number of western stories for the last of the cowboy pulps, and hack assignments like the novelization of the movie *The Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*. A more curious departure was the novel *I, Libertine*, a "bawdy" historical with a unique genesis: a hoax fostered by late-night radio monologist Jean Shepherd, who had begun talking about a (nonexistent) modern erotic classic worthy of comparison with the works of Casanova and Kathleen Winsor (*Forever Amber*); Shepherd drummed up such rabid interest in the book that Sturgeon was inveigled into making the joke a reality and the ribald memoir was published as a paperback original (hailed on the front cover as "Turbulent! Tempestuous! Turgid!"), supposedly written by an Oxford-graduated Royal Navy commander named "Frederick R. Ewing."

In later years Sturgeon wrote mostly in the short story form. His work appeared in collections and in the handful of science fiction digests that remained in business, the stepsons of the pulps where his career began.

Works

STORIES

"Affair with a Green Monkey" (1957); "Bianca's Hands" (1947); "Blabbermouth" (1941); "Bones, The" (1943), (with James H. Beard); "Brat" (1941); "Cargo" (1940); "Cellmate" (1947); "Chromium Helmet, The" (1946); "Clinic, The" (1953); "Dazed" (1971); "Dern Fool" (1940); "Ether Breather, The" (1939); "Farewell to Eden" (1949); "God in a Garden, A" (1939); "Golden Egg, The" (1941); "Golden Helix, The" (1954); "Granny Won't Knit" (1954); "Green-Eyed Monster, The" (1943); "Hag Seleen, The" (1942), (with James H. Beard); "Haunt, The" (1941); "He Shuttles" (1940); "Helix the Cat" (1973); "It" (1940); "Jumper, The" (1942); "Killdozer" (1944); "Memorial" (1946); "Nightmare Island" (1941); "Prodigy" (1949); "Scars" (1949); "Sex Opposite, The" (1952); "Shuttle Bop" (1941); "Suicide" (1970); "Ultimate Egoist, The" (1941); "Verity File, The" (1971); "When You Care, When You Love" (1962); "Yesterday Was Monday" (1941)

BOOKS

Alien 4 (1959); *Beyond* (1960); *Case and the Dreamer* (1974); *Caviar* (1955); *Cosmic Rape, The* (1958); *Dreaming Jewels, The* (1950); *E Pluribus Unicorn* (1953); *More Than Human* (1953); *Starshine* (1966); *Sturgeon in Orbit* (1964); *Touch of Strange, A* (1958); *Venus Plus X* (1960); *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* (1961); *Way Home, A* (1955); *Without Sorcery* (1948)

Surdez, Georges Arthur (1889–1949)

The Swiss-born Surdez was at once the most elegant prose stylist and the most realistic of all the pulpsters and novelists of the early 20th century who specialized in tales of the French Foreign Legion. His firsthand knowledge of the legionnaires and of the North African region where most of such stories took place assured him a wealth of inside information and rich, authentic detail. The immigrant to America settled in Brooklyn, New York, and was selling to the pulp magazines by the early 1920s. His first of many stories of the Legion for *Adventure* was "The Yellow Streak," which appeared in the issue dated October 10, 1922. He became one of the magazine's regular and valued contributors, no small feat in company that in-

cluded Talbot MUNDY, Rafael SABATINI, Arthur Howden SMITH, Gordon Young, and John Buchan. In later years his continuing chronicles of the legendary (or notorious) fighting force were printed in other top magazines, including *Bluebook* and *Argosy*, as well as in some of the more lucrative slick magazines. In addition, Surdez occasionally did the English translations for French authors of the time.

A journalist seeking the origins of the deadly game of Russian roulette determined that its first use was in a Foreign Legion story by Surdez. “Russian Roulette,” published in *Collier’s* in 1937, described—possibly for the first time in print—the now well-known dare. Instead of spinning a chamber with one bullet in it and firing, however, Surdez’s Russian soldiers speak of a far riskier game with just one empty chamber.

Surdez’s novel *The Demon Caravan* was filmed in 1953 as *Desert Legion*, starring Alan Ladd and Arlene Dahl. For his efforts on behalf of the legion, he was made an honorary sergeant.

Works

“Africa Landing” (Feb. 1943); “All Survivors Report” (July 27, 1940); “Another Man’s Chevrons” (June 9, 1934); “Badge of Hate” (June 10, 1933); “Clarions of Youth” (Sept. 28, 1935); “Coat of Monsieur Picart” (Feb. 13, 1938); “Demon Caravan” (1927); “Forever Glory” (June 1943); “France in Their Hearts” (Dec. 1943); “Homeland” (1946); “Jacket Number 6984” (Mar. 4, 1933); “Madame X of the Legion” (June 27, 1936); “Outside the Walls” (May 30, 1923); “Russian Roulette” (Jan. 30, 1937); “Six Good Men” (Oct. 28, 1922); “Unknown Legionnaire” (Aug. 1949); “Yellow Streak, The” (Oct. 10, 1922)

Susann, Jacqueline

(1921–1974)

Whether read as a campy hoot by postfeminist hipsters or as the ultimate in racy, can’t-put-it-down melodrama, Jacqueline Susann’s *Valley of the Dolls* (1966) remains the classic of its kind, the ne plus ultra of best-seller “trash,” outselling Grace METALIOUS’s *Peyton Place* (1956), outlasting Harold ROBBINS’s *The Carpetbaggers* (1961), outclassing Jackie COLLINS’s *Hollywood Wives* (1983). A revolutionary work, Susann’s novel would influence the tastes of readers and the course of publishing for decades to come. The book’s style and content, an “insider’s” saga of showbiz sturm und drang, rife with sex, drugs, infidelity, suicide, and breast cancer, would be imitated countless times, often successfully, as book buyers hungered for more “Valleys”; the novel’s success and Susann’s astounding salesmanship would become the template for future best-sellerdom and brand-name publicity centered on a charismatic author; and, perhaps most revolutionary of all, *Valley’s* phenomenal popularity among women signaled the beginning of the ascent of females as the dominant force in American book buying.

Susann brought the emotional portraiture and feminine perspective of Grace Metalious to the bawdy, glamor-pulp world of Harold Robbins. Su-



Adventure magazine, May 1923, featuring a story by Georges Surdez

sann's tempestuous, bitchy tale derived from a mix of Broadway/Hollywood gossip and myth and personal experience (for example, as a onetime actress, Susann had had a close, bizarre relationship with the singer Ethel Merman, the model for *Valley's* veteran stage star Helen Lawson), filtered through the author's compelling sense of drama and vulgarity. Critics and the intelligentsia scoffed at Susann's contrived shock effects and corny dialogue, but Susann wrote scenes people could not forget and characters that had readers trembling with empathy.

Valley of the Dolls was followed in 1969 by *The Love Machine*, which continued the formula of hedonism and heartbreak in a glitzy media setting, this time with a male protagonist: a bastard television mogul based on real-life CBS head James Aubrey, known as "the smiling cobra." Susann's third novel, *Once Is Not Enough*, remained in the world of showbiz, media, and conspicuous wealth but returned the focus to a woman, this time January Wayne, a conflicted young beauty in the throes of an Electra complex. A fourth novel, pub-

lished posthumously, *Dolores*, was a vapid roman à clef about the glamorous widow of an assassinated American president, and read more like a film treatment than a full-fledged novel.

None of Susann's succeeding books had quite the same delirious narrative force or impact on readers as *Valley of the Dolls*, but they were all tremendous popular hits and maintained Susann's "Queen of Trash" title until her untimely demise from cancer at the age of 53. In the late 1990s Susann's books were brought back into print, repackaged with more than a touch of camp irony, and became big sellers once again. In 2001, the writer Rae Lawrence, working from a reputed outline written by the long-dead Jackie, produced a sequel to Susann's biggest hit, titled *Shadow of the Dolls*.

Works

Dolores (1976); *Love Machine, The* (1969); *Once Is Not Enough* (1973); *Shadow of the Dolls* (by Rae Lawrence from an outline by Susann) (2001); *Valley of the Dolls* (1966)

T

Taylor, Valerie (Velma Young)

(1913–1997) *Also wrote as: Francine Davenport, Velma Tate*

Taylor could be considered the most significant female contributor to the extraordinary era of pulp lesbian fiction, a subgenre that found mainstream marketability in the sensational age of American paperbacks in the 1950s. Taylor's importance in a field that included contributions by Vin PACKER, Ann BANNON and Patricia Highsmith, is a result of her various contributions to the "gay liberation" movement from the 1960s onward. While other writers remained nominally closeted or led quiet lives away from the public eye, Taylor was a groundbreaking lesbian activist and spokeswoman. Among her accomplishments was the establishment in 1974 of the first Lesbian Writers Conference at which she gave the first keynote speech.

Born Velma Young in Aurora, Illinois, she married in 1939 and gave birth to three sons. She threw her relatively conventional life to the winds as she neared middle age. She divorced her husband in 1953 and that same year she published her first novel, *Hired Girl*. By the time of her second book, Velma's change of lifestyle was well under way. Her first lesbian novel was published in 1957 by Crest Books, a division of Fawcett, the premier publisher of lesbian literature, home to the trailblazing works of Tereska TORRES, Vin Packer, and Ann Aldrich (the latter two names both pseudonyms of Marijane Meaker). *Whisper Their Love* ("Theirs was the kind of love they dared not

show the world . . .") was concerned in large part with a teenage girl's sexual affair with a worldly woman twice her age; in the final three pages, the young heroine repents her sordid relationship and suddenly decides to marry a man and live happily ever after, the sort of last-minute switcheroo undoubtedly imposed by the publisher (so they could not be accused of endorsing "perversion").

Fawcett published Taylor's next two books, *Girls in 3-B* (1959) and in 1960 *Stranger on Lesbos* ("The searching novel of a lonely young wife faced with the temptation of unnatural love . . ."). In 1963 she switched to Midwood, a lower-rung paperback line that specialized in softcore erotica. At Midwood, Taylor published *A World Without Men* (1963), *Unlike Others* (1963), and *Journey to Fulfillment* (1964).

The era of lesbian pulp fiction was coming to a close, just as an era of lesbian liberation was beginning and Taylor, living openly in the gay section of Chicago in a relationship with a feminist attorney, moved on to other things. But Taylor's novels would not be forgotten. For many readers those books, despite their exploitation packaging and prurient appeal to men, were an important introduction to ideas and experiences otherwise unavailable to young women in postwar America.

Works

Girls in 3-B (1959); *Hired Girl* (1953); *Journey to Fulfillment* (1964); *Stranger on Lesbos* (1960); *Unlike Others* (1963); *Whisper Their Love* (1957); *World Without Men, A* (1963)

As Francine Davenport:*Secret of the Bayou* (1967)**Tepperman, Emile C.**(unknown) *Also wrote as: Curtis Steele, Grant Stockbridge*

Tepperman was one of the high-output pulpsters of the 1930s, able to deliver readable, action-packed fiction, stories and book length, with the regularity of a time-clocked factory worker making widgets on an assembly line. He wrote in a variety of genres, sold several tough mystery stories to *Black Mask* in the late 1930s and a typically lurid tale for the weird-menace pulp *Terror Tales* (“Mad Surgeon of the Everglades,” June 1939). But he is best known to pulp buffs for his work in the super hero/single-character pulps that thrived in the 1930s. Tepperman wrote a number of the Spider novels and some later tales of the less-well-remembered Avenger, but it was his contribution to *Operator #5* that secured his place in the pantheon of hero-pulp writers.

The magazine *Operator #5* (Op 5) first appeared in April 1934, and centered on the adventures of intelligence operative Jimmy Christopher, America’s undercover ace, written by the talented workaholic Frederick C. Davis. When Davis gave up the series after 20 novel-length tales, the assignment was handed over to Tepperman. He carried on as before for his first five issues, but with the June 1936 story, titled *Death’s Ragged Army*, Tepperman took *Operator #5* in a new direction and began one of the great wild rides in the history of the pulps. For 13 issues he chronicled the remarkable saga of the Purple Invasion, an epic, apocalyptic, blood-soaked war between the United States and a cruel foreign enemy led by Rudolph I, the Purple Emperor. As America valiantly defended itself against the vicious, rampaging invaders, secret agent Jimmy Christopher was formed into a fearless leader of the armed Resistance. With nearly two years to develop his bellicose epic (“The *War and Peace* of the pulps,” someone would label it), Tepperman did not let the United States off easy. As the seemingly invincible Purple armies attacked, the “woefully unpre-

pared” America reeled. On every page readers found devastation, death, torture, or Purple encampments protected with living walls of American youths hung upon crosses. The extraordinary cover paintings by artist John Howitt set the stage—feverish, Goyaesque images of desperate, anguished Americans manning the barricades. The whole saga was violently xenophobic and paranoid on the one hand—and yet amazingly prescient of the very real World War that lay just a few years away.

Despite his considerable contributions to *The Spider* and certainly to *Operator #5*, Tepperman could not take credit for the origins of those fine pulps. *The Suicide Squad*, however, was his baby, a bullet-riddled action series that lasted for 22 episodes in the pages of *Ace G-Man Stories*. Several pulps had focused on the adventures of the FBI, beginning with *G-Men* magazine and followed by *Public Enemy*, later retitled *Federal Agent*, and *The Feds*. Some of the magazines had the loose approval of the bureau itself, and even published editorials and articles by J. Edgar Hoover in between the pages extolling the bravery and infallibility of the federal law enforcers. *Ace G-Man Stories* was one of the last of the FBI magazines and the least realistic, filled with fiendish supervillains and blazing gun battles. Even *Ace’s* publisher Harry Steeger admitted, “I don’t think many real F.B.I. agents ever saw the kind of action we had in our stories.”

Tepperman’s series, begun in May 1939 and lasting until April 1943, detailed the exploits of Murdoch, Kerrigan, and Klaw, the fearless and—in the name of justice and freedom—ruthless federal crime fighters known as the Suicide Squad. Though pulp fiction that dabbled in peacetime politics endorsed antidemocratic solutions, Tepperman’s trio was from the start opposed to home-grown fascist groups and fifth column fronts, as represented by the vile Skull and Swastika Corps in *The Suicide Squad and the Murder Bund*. The squad, after closing down the main branch of the corps in an exhilarating, blood-soaked firestorm, ponders the imminent future:

They were thinking of the heartbreak and the sorrow that would come to many Amer-

ican homes where a son or a daughter or a father had been led into disloyalty by the vile tenets of the S.S. Corps. But they were also thinking that the heartbreak and the sorrow would be a small price to pay to keep America free!

The Suicide Squad and the Murder Bund was published more than a year before America's entry into World War II. The later stories, in the months and years after the attack on Pearl Harbor, naturally added the Japanese to the squad's enemies list, as in *The Suicide Squad Meets the Rising Sun* and *So Sorry, Mr. Hirohito!*

Tepperman worked in radio as well and was one of the scriptwriters of the popular *Gangbusters* program. Whether Tepperman died at an early age or merely abandoned writing for another line of work, his later whereabouts and activities are not known.

Works

STORIES

"Married for Murder" (1935)

BOOKS

Blood, Sweat and Bullets (1943); *Bloody Forty Days, The* (1936); *Coffin Barricade, The* (1941); *Coffins for the Suicide Squad* (1940); *Crime's Reign of Terror* (1936); *Devil's Pawnbroker* (1937); *Death for Sale* (1939); *Death—to the Highest Bidder* (1939); *For Tomorrow We Die* (1942); *Liberty's Suicide Legions* (1937); *Mad Surgeon of the Everglades* (1939); *More Over, Death* (1942); *Mr. Zero and the Suicide Squad* (1939); *Shells for the Suicide Squad* (1940); *So Sorry, Mr. Hirohito!* (1942); *Spider and the Pain Master* (1940); *Stormy Nocturne* (1937); *Suicide Squad and the Murder Bund, The* (1940); *Suicide Squad and the Twins of Death, The* (1943); *Suicide Squad—Dead or Alive* (1940); *Suicide Squad Meets the Rising Sun, The* (1942) *Suicide Squad Pays Off* (1939); *Suicide Squad Reports for Death* (1939); *Suicide Squad's Dawn Patrol, The* (1942); *Suicide Squad's Last Mile* (1939); *Suicide Squad's Murder Lottery, The* (1940); *Suicide Squad's Private War, The* (1941); *Targets for the Flaming Arrows* (1942); *Tunnel Death Built, The* (1941); *Voyage of the Coffin Ship* (1937); *Wanted—In Three Pine Coffins* (1941); *Death to the Avenger* (in *Clues*) (1942); *Vengeance on the Avenger* (in *Clues*) (1943); *Calling Justice Inc.* (in *Clues*) (1943)

As *Grant Stockbridge* (The Spider):

City of Dreadful Night (1936); *Dictator of the Damned* (1937); *Dictator's Death Merchants* (1940); *Man from Hell, The* (1940); *Master of the Night Demons* (1940); *Milltown Massacre* (1937); *Reign of the Snake Men* (1936); *Satan's Workshops* (1937); *Scourge of Yellow Fangs* (1937)

As *Curtis Steele* (Operator #5):

America's Plague Battalions (1936); *Army Without a Country, The* (1937); *Bloody Frontiers, The* (1937); *Coming of the Mongol Hordes, The* (1938); *Death's Ragged Army* (1936); *Drums of Destruction* (1937); *Patriot's Death Battalion* (1936); *Patriot's Death March* (1937); *Raiders of the Red Death* (1935); *Revolt of the Devil Men* (1938); *Revolt of the Lost Legions* (1937); *Rockets from Hell* (1936); *Siege of 1,000 Patriots, The* (1937); *Siege That Brought the Black Death, The* (1938); *War Dogs of the Green Destroyer* (1936); *War Master from the Orient* (1936)

Thomey, Tedd

(1920–)

Tedd Thomey could properly be called one of the last of the original pulp writers. He was part of the final generation of storytellers to establish themselves in those rough-hewn fiction periodicals that had grown and flourished for 50 years and began their decline and fall at the end of World War II. Thomey and a handful of other young writers like John D. MacDonald, many of them just back from service in World War II, infused new blood into ailing titles like *Black Mask* and *Ten Detective Aces* and for a time helped lift those cherished magazines to the standards of a fading golden age.

Born in Butte, Montana, Thomey graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1943. He entered the U.S. Marine Corps that same year, and as a member of the 28th Marines regiment he was part of the invasion force at the bloody battle of Iwo Jima, where he was wounded in combat. Thomey took home a Purple Heart and a Presidential Unit Citation. In peacetime he worked as a reporter, covering the crime beat for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. By night he followed the cops to various crime scenes and dreamed of



Tedd and Pat Thomey attending the Broadway production of *The Big Love*, adapted from Tedd Thomey's book (*HS Media*)

writing fiction. He loved the idea of inventing dialogue and creating characters. It seemed more challenging than the newspaper game—and less dangerous. One Christmas Eve in San Francisco he was on the street, covering a murder. A young woman had killed her boyfriend in front of their Christmas tree. It was a freezing cold night, and when Thomey and the cops came back outside he sat in the back of the police car while they decided what to do next. “One of the police officers had the murder weapon,” Thomey recalled for this author, “a .32 calibre pistol, and he was playing with it while they were talking, and suddenly it went off. I was sitting in the backseat and the bullet went right through the seat and beside my head. It was just a coincidence but I quit the *Chronicle* shortly after that and started writing pulp stories.”

A writer friend of Thomey's named Richard Dermody gave him the name of an agent, August Lenninger, and Thomey sent him the short story he had just finished. Called “\$10,000 an Inch,” it was about a six-foot-tall heiress and a murderer, and it sold. “I immediately quit my job on the paper to be a freelance writer. And my friend Dermody said, ‘Don't do it, you'll starve.’ And of course that's what happened.”

Thomey moved to a small beach town north of San Diego and wrote one detective story per week. He got \$50 or \$75 when he was “lucky enough to sell one.” He got pretty lucky. Thomey's work began appearing in nearly every one of the remaining crime pulps—*Black Mask*, *FBI Detective Stories*, *Thrilling Detective*, *Ten Detective Aces*, *All-Story Detective*, *Dime Mystery*, *G-Men Detective*, *Super Detective*, and *New Detective*, as well as such science fiction titles as *Amazing Stories*, *Fantastic Stories*, and others. In 1949 he switched agents, from Lenninger to an ambitious newcomer named Scott Meredith. The pulps were folding even faster than Thomey could write for them, and soon Meredith found himself with a backlog of stories and no place to publish them. Everything old became new again sooner or later. Only a couple of years after the detective pulps virtually disappeared, along came a new line of tough-guy fiction magazines—*Manhunt*, *Suspect*, *Accused*, *Pursuit*. “Darned if they didn't buy those same old stories from the files,” said Thomey. “For \$800 and \$900. And I would have been glad to get \$75 for one a few years before!”

With his pulp writing experience and Meredith on his team, Thomey was perfectly poised to get in on the boom in paperback originals in the early '50s. He sold to Gold Medal, Berkeley, and Avon. Scott Meredith provided him with a kind of formula to follow. The most important part of the formula was that a dead body show up by page three of the story. “I found it strikingly easy to write these novels,” Thomey said. Avon paid a \$1,000 advance for *And Dream of Evil*. “In the opening chapter I've got a hero on a roof and he's handcuffed to a slot machine. He's going down a fire escape lugging this thing—if you've ever carried a slot machine, believe me they're heavy—and then he makes love to a beautiful girl while

still handcuffed to the slot machine. All in the first chapter!”

The book sold well and was translated and published in France, Germany, and elsewhere. Thomey then wrote *I Want Out*, about a tough bail bondsman, and it sold to Ace as half of a double edition. The author fashioned *Killer in White* out of actual experiences with a female obscene phone caller and a gang of chiropractor scam artists in Long Beach. Other books followed.

In 1961, Thomey got a call from the Meredith agency asking him to work on a book they were throwing together with Mrs. Florence Aadland. Florence was the mother of Beverly Aadland, a then-notorious blonde nymphet who was known as the underage mistress of Errol Flynn in the last years of Flynn’s life (he died at 50 in 1959). Other scandals followed, and Mrs. Aadland lost custody of her daughter. Now, broke and living alone in Hollywood, she wanted to peddle her side of the story. Meredith found a buyer at Lancer Books, which paid Florence a \$2,500 advance that she had to split with her assigned writer. Thomey went to see her. He found her drunk, her place a dump. “I was afraid even to drink a glass of water there,” he recalled. After some initial acrimony, however, the work went well. Thomey found that Aadland’s stories about Flynn were gold and her offbeat perspective on life was priceless. The book they put together was titled *The Big Love*, a weird, backseat view of celebrity, unforgettable from the first startling sentence: “There’s one thing I want to make clear right off: my baby was a virgin the day she met Errol Flynn.”

Rushed out to exploit what little interest remained in the fading scandal and the dead movie star, Lancer Books gave the book no special publicity. And yet *The Big Love* found an audience, a cult of hip readers who were taken with the book’s strange mixture of trashiness, self-delusion and pathos, and its devastating portrait of the ultimate pushy showbiz mom. Tedd Thomey had helped Mrs. Aadland to come across as if one of the characters from Nathanael West’s *The Day of the Locust* had sprung to life and decided to write a memoir in her declining years. Copies of the book became collectors’ items and sold for hundreds of times the cover price. The book’s cult status was catapulted

by a tongue-in-cheek review in *Esquire* magazine by the novelist William Styron, who labeled the book “a masterpiece” and “a work of wild comic genius.” The director Robert Aldrich bought the film rights, and made plans—unfulfilled—to make the movie with Bette Davis as Florence. Many years later the text was adapted into a one-woman show and performed in a number of productions, including one on Broadway starring Tracey Ullman.

Tedd Thomey properly saw the book as a highlight of his career, although he continued to produce fiction and nonfiction works in the years ahead and returned to newspaper work, writing for some decades for the *Long Beach Press-Telegram*. In 1996, the Naval Institute Press published Thomey’s *Immortal Images*, a personal history of two photographers and the flag-raising on Iwo Jima during World War II. A brilliant volume, part memoir, part history, part journalistic detective story, the book, written 50 years after the author’s own experiences on Iwo Jima, will likely rank as one of the last significant books about World War II written by an actual combat veteran of that long-ago war.

Works

All the Way (1964); *And Dream of Evil* (1954); *Big Love, The* (1961); *Doris Day* (1962); *Flight to Takla-Ma* (1961); *Glorious Decade, The* (1971); *Immortal Images* (1996); *I Want Out* (1959); *Jet Ace* (1958); *Jet Pilot* (1955); *Killer in White* (1956); *Prodigy Plot, The* (1987); *Sadist, The* (1961)

Thompson, Jim (1906–1977)

At the time of his death in 1977, Jim Thompson was an obscure, mostly forgotten thriller writer whose passing caused little attention in media and cultural circles. None of his work was in print in his own country. He was 70 years old at the time, but looked 90. His career as a novelist and sometime screenwriter had come to a halt. From the height of his success in the 1950s, writing such stunning novels as *The Killer Inside Me* and movie scripts with the likes of Stanley Kubrick (*The Killing*, *Paths of Glory*),

he had descended to bottom-feeder assignments writing paperback novelizations (an ignominious “tie-in” to the television series *Ironsides*), and then long years of inactivity and hopelessness. Today Thompson’s name is legendary among fans of crime stories and is often added to the sacred hard-boiled triumvirate of Dashiell HAMMETT, Raymond CHANDLER, and James M. CAIN as one of the most important and influential writers in the annals of hard-boiled fiction.

Thompson was born in a jailhouse in Anadarko, Oklahoma; his father was the town sheriff. “Pop” Thompson later became a lawyer and a rich oilman, a demanding character who gave his son a lifelong supply of dread and ambivalence. In his teen years Jim went through a series of jobs, from oil field work to hotel bellhopping, occupations he would one day use in his fiction. In his twenties he began to find outlets for his desire to write. He wrote pieces for industrial trade journals and then for one of the government’s depression-era works projects. His most significant and formative employment was as a contributor to the popular “true crime” magazines. The nonfiction equivalent of the pulps, the true crime magazines printed accounts—complete with sometimes shocking crime scene photographs—of murders and other brutal events and how the criminals were brought to justice.

However much imagination crept into the printed articles in the sleazy true crime rags, they did depend on actual, on-location reporting. To keep his stories up to snuff, Thompson had to travel to the crime scenes and interview or observe the various victims, deputies, prosecutors, and perpetrators, then synthesize his material into a 5,000-word story, making the sometimes random events of crime and punishment into a readable, compelling narrative. Unlike many of the jaded crime reporters who did this sort of magazine work, Thompson brought a sensitivity and psychological intensity to his investigations of the gruesome, small-town homicides and robberies. Thompson felt real dread when he had to immerse himself in the exploits of backwater sociopaths and psychotics. In his classic paperback fiction to come, Thompson would use some of the raw story materials he gathered and give intense artistic ex-

pression to the emotions he felt when looking into the details of these real-life horrors.

In the ’40s Thompson wrote a couple of unsuccessful novels. Critics saw promise, but the books found few readers. He worked at a number of newspapers, mostly in Southern California, as a rewrite man and occasional reporter on a couple of Los Angeles dailies. But Thompson had become a problem drinker and was regularly fired for his boozing. As he entered middle age, his life was a mess. Broke, frequently unemployed, he fought a constant battle with alcoholism and creative frustration.

At last, in the early ’50s, circumstances and good fortune allowed Thompson to find a reliable source of income and an outlet for his talents and his psychological frustrations. One day in 1952 Jim Thompson entered the offices of Lion Books in New York City, looking like “a big sheepdog” and “following docilely behind his woman agent,” according to editor Arnold Hano. Lion was a small paperback house that had recently begun to publish a line of “originals,” following the trend away from depending on reprints from the hardcover houses. With no other prospects at hand, Thompson had agreed to see Hano and try and drum up an assignment. He and the editor conferred. According to Hano—although his account was disputed in later years by Thompson’s widow—he had already worked up a premise for a story about a killer cop that became Thompson’s first and most famous paperback novel. They talked it over and came up with the idea of a rustic southern sheriff. Hano gave him the go-ahead and Thompson turned out the first of his crime classics—*The Killer Inside Me*.

Thompson made the lethal sheriff a smiling psychopath and the unsettling narrator of his own shocking story. Thompson’s Lou Ford is a tedious, witless, cliché-spouting good ol’ boy on the surface. But under that surface is an enraged, murdering monster. The book’s creative coup is its first-person narration: the reader is trapped inside Ford’s demonic thought processes as he goes on his sadistic, self-justifying murder spree. Thompson wrote most of the book while staying with his sister and her husband at the U.S. Marine Corps base in Quantico, Virginia. He typed out 10 pages a day

and his sister would read them in the evening. "I was horrified," the sister told her brother's biographer. "After my husband had gone to bed, I said to him, 'What in the world is this, Jimmie, how do you know all this?' He just said, 'research,' a lot of it was research."

The success of *The Killer Inside Me* and Thompson's good relationship with Arnold Hano unleashed in the writer a creative fury. In the following two years he wrote a dozen novels. These included the autobiographical *Bad Boy* and the deliriously self-revealing *The Alcoholics*, as well as such twisted crime classics as *A Hell of a Woman* and *Savage Night*, both dark, disorienting suspense stories. Hano's discerning, open-minded editorship allowed Thompson to experiment, to take these tales into strange, innovative territory. His narratives could fracture into the ravings of a lunatic, or become a kind of waking dream, as in *The Getaway's* bizarre climax in a weird Latin American purgatory. *Savage Night* concludes with the bloody demise of its narrator, a James M. Cain gimmick that Thompson took to a grotesque extreme. The book's protagonist, a sickly, dwarfish hit man attacked by an ax-wielding female, literally falls to pieces in the last sentences of his story.

Thompson's work brought him to the attention of a young film director named Stanley Kubrick, who put him to work adapting another author's hard-boiled crime novel, Lionel WHITE's *Clean Break*. This became *The Killing* (1956), a superb, noirish caper movie whose intricate structure would influence films to come, most famously Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* (1992). Thompson then went on to script an even more well received Kubrick film, *Paths of Glory* (1957), the grim World War I story of soldiers needlessly executed. Despite these spectacular credits, Thompson's movie writing career did not take off. His relationship with Kubrick turned bitter, no other good assignments came his way, and he was a failure as a television hack. He seemed doomed to remain a writer of paperback originals, with occasional film rights sales to perk up his bank balance.

Thompson continued his struggle with the bottle as his skills and his markets dried up. A producer friend, knowing he needed money, helped to get him an acting job, playing the grave Judge

Grayle opposite Robert Mitchum's Philip Marlowe in the 1974 film version of Raymond Chandler's novel *Farewell, My Lovely*. It was a brief but thrilling onscreen encounter between two of the true icons of noir (as a reporter in Los Angeles in 1949, Thompson claimed to have covered Mitchum's notorious narcotics trial). The writer died in obscurity, only a few years away from the republication of many of his novels and subsequent interest in his life and work. He has since been the subject of two published biographies, nearly all his works have been republished, and many of the novels and stories have been adopted to film.

Works

After Dark, My Sweet (1955); *Alcoholics, The* (1953); *Bad Boy* (1953); *Child of Rage* (1972); *Criminal, The* (1953); *Cropper's Cabin* (1952); *Getaway, The* (1959); *Golden Gizmo, The* (1954); *Grifters, The* (1963); *Heed the Thunder* (1946); *Hell of a Woman, A* (1954); *Ironside* (1967); *Killer Inside Me, The* (1952); *Kill-Off, The* (1957); *King Blood* (1973); *Nothing But a Man* (1970); *Nothing Man, The* (1954); *Nothing More Than Murder* (1949); *Now and on Earth* (1942); *Pop. 1280* (1964); *Recoil* (1953); *Rip-Off, The* (1987); *Roughneck* (1954); *Savage Night* (1953); *South of Heaven* (1967); *Swell-Looking Babe, A* (1954); *Texas by the Tail* (1965); *This World, Then the Fireworks* (1983); *Transgressors, The* (1961); *Undefeated, The* (1967); *Wild Town* (1957)

Thompson, Morton (?–1953)

Morton Thompson was a journalist and essayist whose first book, a nonfiction work of humor, *Joe, the Wounded Tennis Player*, was popular among World War II GIs in its Armed Services paperback edition (the book's odd, random content included a recipe for blackened turkey that was much praised and reprinted by food critics). In 1949 he published *Cry and the Covenant*, a biography of the revolutionary, controversial 19th-century physician Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis. This proved to be something of a warmup for Thompson's most famous work, the phenomenally popular *Not As a Stranger*, a fictional exposé of the medical profession.

The melodramatic doorstep, 948 pages of scalpels, infidelities, and stitches, told the life story of Lucas Marsh from childhood through his schooling and first decade as a doctor. Raised in sordid poverty by an abusive, alcoholic parent, young Lucas manages to put himself through medical school, accepting and then exploiting the help of an adoring nurse who eventually becomes his wife. After hundreds of pages of Dr. Marsh's self-indulgence, emotional cruelty, and a growing God complex, *Stranger's* hero ultimately comes to learn that a doctor must also be a human being.

Thompson had researched the background for years, and the book was considered the most detailed and revealing look at the medical profession ever published, with its intimate descriptions of surgeries, diseases, and the behind-the-scenes workings of hospital and doctor's office. *Not As a Stranger* also contained a healthy dose of eroticism, with protagonist Dr. Marsh doing considerable sexual healing from chapter to chapter. Indeed, some of the nation's moral watchdogs cautioned against the book's potentially fever-inducing content. An editorial in *Catholic World* warned: "Because of this book's . . . continuous and insistent emphasis on medical cases and experiences which involve the sexual, this book should not be recommended." This sort of warning no doubt helped the book to become the number one best-seller in the United States for two years running. On the artistic level, critics were curiously divided between those who were moved by Thompson's massive, eventful volume (like Edmund Fuller in the *Saturday Review*, who called it "a work of beauty and power, possibly the finest novel about a doctor that this country has seen"), and those who agreed with *Time's* reviewer, who declared it a "literary embarrassment" fit only for hypochondriacs.

The blockbuster was sold to the movies, and the award-winning producer Stanley Kramer made his directorial debut with the film adaptation. An all-star cast included Frank Sinatra, Olivia de Havilland, Broderick Crawford, Gloria Grahame, Lee Marvin, and Robert Mitchum in the lead as Lucas Marsh. Like the novel, the motion picture version was an enormous popular success. Although the book itself would fall into obscurity, *Not As a Stranger's* groundbreaking content and

style would strongly influence the numerous "professional exposés" that filled the paperback racks and best-seller lists of the '50s and '60s. Thompson himself did not get to enjoy the fruits of his labors. He committed suicide in 1953.

Works

Not As a Stranger (1954)

Tidyman, Ernest

(1928–1984)

The literary roots of Ernest Tidyman's most famous creation, John Shaft, have been subsumed by the character's motion picture incarnation in the early 1970s, and neither fictional nor film versions have remained nearly as vibrant in the collective memory as a certain musical evocation of the black private eye—the eternally sinuous "Theme from Shaft" by Isaac Hayes. Tidyman's first *Shaft* novel was published in 1970, a year before the movie version garnered huge box office rewards with its depiction of an African-American action hero, with studly Richard Roundtree in the title role. There had been A-budget American films with black protagonists before, but nearly all had been earnest, liberal, and socially-minded projects, the sort that usually starred Sidney Poitier. *Shaft* was something different: a sexy, violent, mainstream popcorn flick with an unabashedly ultra-glamorized, black-leather-clad hero ready to go toe to toe with James Bond as the ultimate swaggering, sharp-dressing superhero.

Shaft's creator was a white man. A Cleveland native of English-Hungarian roots, Tidyman at the time of *Shaft's* release was one of the last of a dying breed of tough, fecund, journalism-bred characters who could move between one creative medium and another as the markets shifted, with a tabloid news hawk's instinct for headline premises, hot stories, and punchy prose. After service in the U.S. Army, Tidyman got work on the hometown *Cleveland News* (where his father was a long-established crime reporter), then moved on to papers in New York City. He turned to fiction writing in the 1960s, publishing action and exploitation novels like *Anzio Death Trap*

(1968) and *Flower Power* (1968), the latter a sexy and hot-off-the-headlines exploration of Haight-Ashbury “groove-ins.” Again responding to the zeitgeist, Tidyman conceived the idea of a black private eye hero in the midst of combustion in the African-American population and the increasing national concern for racial equality. Publishers and then Hollywood embraced his refreshing concept. Tidyman’s delineation of John Shaft was pulp fantasy for the most part, and not entirely lacking in what scolds would call racial stereotyping—including his private dick’s moniker, with its priapic connotation (though Tidyman would claim the name came to him innocently, while staring at a fire shaft in a Manhattan building). Still, Shaft was so positively and unapologetically a hero that Tidyman was awarded a prestigious Image Award by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He followed his original *Shaft* novel with six sequels (two film productions followed the first in the series). The novels were tough, compulsively readable, and brought Shaft’s asphalt stomping ground to vigorous life, a sweeping yet intimate depiction of New York City that betrayed the eye of a seasoned Big Apple reporter. The success of the first Shaft movie would spur the production of other commercial and action films with dark-skinned protagonists, spawning a vibrant subgenre known as “blaxploitation.”

Tidyman’s success with *Shaft* led to lucrative screenwriting jobs including *The French Connection* (1971) and the Clint Eastwood western *High Plains Drifter* (1972) (from Tidyman’s original story). He continued writing prose all the while, and in addition to the Shaft series and other novels he published two fictionalized true-crime stories, *Dummy* (1974), about a black deaf-mute accused of murder, and *Big Bucks* (1982), about a large-scale mail robbery. A heavy drinker and smoker, Tidyman saw his health decline when he reached his fifties, and he died from kidney failure in 1984.

Works

Absolute Zero (1971); *Anzio Death Trap* (1968); *Big Bucks* (1982); *Dummy* (1974); *Flower Power* (1968); *Goodbye Mr. Shaft* (1973); *Last Shaft, The* (1975); *Line of Duty* (1974); *Shaft* (1970); *Shaft Among the Jews* (1972);

Shaft Has a Ball (1973); *Shaft’s Big Score* (1972); *Shaft’s Carnival of Killers* (1974); *Starstruck* (1976); *Table Stakes* (1978)

Torres, Tereska

(c. 1920–?)

A Frenchwoman of Polish/Jewish extraction, the daughter of well-known artists, Torres followed her family into exile a few jumps ahead of Hitler’s rampage in World War II. They resettled in England and Tereska, still a teenager, volunteered to join Charles de Gaulle’s Free French Forces (FFF), quickly becoming transformed, she would declare, “from a schoolgirl to a woman with a purpose.” Headquartered in a big, dank mansion on London’s Downing Street, the women’s division was formed to relieve the men from noncombat assignments, although women would eventually enter the battle zones as nurses and ambulance drivers. Torres’s five-year tour of duty in the division brought her into close contact with an extremely colorful and unpredictable group of females. Due to the chaotic circumstances of the war, and the reluctance of middle-class French families to let their daughters join the cause, the FFF recruits were an unconventional lot. They were, wrote Torres, “the children of disturbed or broken families—divorced parents, disoriented homes. And . . . girls from the working classes—French maidservants and the French prostitutes of Soho. Another category of women were the adventuresses, emancipated women, and career women who for one reason or another had no family life.”

Torres recounted her wartime experiences in a fictionalized work, written in French and translated to English for its first publication, in a soft-cover edition from Fawcott Gold Medal Books entitled *Women’s Barracks*. Gold Medal was a new line specializing in original paperback novels, an innovation that would have an enormous impact on the popular fiction of the next 20 years. If the paperback house offered no prestige, it certainly figured out how to sell a lot of copies. Declaring Torres’s lively but serious-minded story a “frank autobiography of a French girl soldier,” Gold Medal gave the book a provocative cover featuring

a glimpse of the locker room in the barracks, with one uniformed female ogling three or four others standing about in pink bras, white towels, and other states of undress. The voyeuristic cover, the insinuating back cover copy, and phenomenal word of mouth made *Women's Barracks* a hit, and one of Gold Medal's best sellers for years. Though there was plenty of fraternization between women and men in the book, what provoked the paperback's big buzz in the early 1950s were the "frank" passages about female homosexuality and lesbian lovemaking:

Ursula felt herself very small, tiny against Claude, and at last she felt warm. She placed her cheek on Claude's breast. Her heart beat violently, but she didn't feel afraid. She didn't understand what was happening to her. Claude was not a man; then what was she doing to her? What strange movements! What could they mean? Claude unbuttoned the jacket of her pajamas . . .

If *Women's Barracks* was not the first explicit treatment of lesbian activity in a mainstream American publication, it was the first (thanks to the burgeoning new paperback industry) to be available at every corner drugstore and bus station book rack. Gold Medal was so thrilled by the success of *Women's Barracks* that they looked for a lesbian follow-up. But Tereska Torres had written of serious, real-life situations and profound memories (her first husband, George Torres, had been killed in action), not sexy fantasies. She produced no salacious sequel for Gold Medal to exploit, but the company's huge success with the touchy subject of lesbianism led to the commissioning of Vin PACKER's *Spring Fire*, another phenomenal seller. Soon the paperback racks of America were filled with examples of a new genre of pulp fiction recounting the "twilight" adventures of women loving other women. Hundreds of titles followed in the army boots and silk stockings of Tereska Torres's *Women's Barracks*, but few would match its groundbreaking success. Torres continued to publish fiction in the years ahead, but never again caused the stir of her sexy paperback bestseller.

Works

By Cecile (1963); *Converts, The* (1970); *Dangerous Games, The* (1957); *Golden Cage, The* (1959); *Not Yet* (1957); *Only Reason, The* (1961); *Open Doors, The* (1969); *Women's Barracks* (1950)

Tracy, Don

(1905–1976) *Also wrote as: Roger Fuller, Barnaby Ross*

A neglected figure (at least in his own country; his crime fiction has a cult following in France), Tracy was an amazingly fertile talent whose broad interests and experiences animated both hack assignments and more personal works through nearly 50 years of professional writing. Born in New Britain, Connecticut, he worked as a journalist as a young man, first at the *New Britain Herald*, then at the *Baltimore Post* in Maryland. The move south would prove significant, as much of Tracy's subsequent creative output would find inspiration in the people and places, the history, and current social mores of the South's eastern shore, from Maryland to Florida.

Vanguard published his first novel, *Round Trip*, in 1934. Making use of the author's experience as a journalist, Tracy's debut was an unblinking and unflattering look at a tough reporter, a drunkard whose vices leave him in the gutter more often than not—redeemed by love for a time, then tumbling back to the gutter after a terrible tragedy. The *New York Times* called it "another hard-boiled newspaper novel" that "depicts journalism in its lowlier aspects," and declared it a "squalid tale." A reviewer for *Books* magazine called it "strong stuff and straight stuff, but there is so much vigor in its style and such honesty in its portrait of the 'prize bum' that it cannot be dismissed as merely another routine product of the hard-boiled school."

The following year Vanguard brought out Don Tracy's second novel, *Criss Cross*, a work that showed in plot and language the influence of James M. CAIN, the newly acclaimed master of hard-boiled, sensational fiction. *Criss Cross* involved an amoral hero, a treacherous dame, adultery, a robbery, and a double cross. Johnny, a not-too-bright ex-boxer on the skids, takes a job as

a guard on an armored truck; his lust for Anna, a beautiful woman married to a gangster, leads to his downfall. The critic Cyril Connolly, in a 1936 review in the *New Statesman*, sniffed at the book's lowbrow origins but reckoned it was hard to put down: "A fascinating crime story—aesthetically worse than *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, if that were possible—but begin it at any page, nevertheless, and you can't stop till you've read all the others. It is a mass of fake simplicity, fake intensity, fake slang. Only the sentimentality and bad grammar are genuine. But one has to read it."

What name recognition Tracy maintains in America is due almost entirely to *Criss Cross*—not the novel itself but the 1949 Hollywood adaptation, a superb film noir directed by Robert Siodmak and starring Burt Lancaster and Yvonne De Carlo.

Tracy's career as a novelist ground to a halt with *How Sleeps the Beast?*, a shocking exploration of racial conditions in the South, featuring a brutal lynching of a black man. Tracy considered himself a progressive man, and he was appalled by the heartless and endemic nature of the racism he saw in the southern states. He would return to the subject on several occasions. Never wanting to write a polemic on the subject, he tried to maintain a degree of objectivity in these stories. But *How Sleeps the Beast?* was considered too much too soon and could not find an American publisher; it was published in Britain but did not appear in the United States until many years later, in the '50s, when Lion Books judged it an exploitable paperback "original."

Tracy continued in journalism until World War II, working as a writer, editor, and publicist for various media outlets. He began selling stories to the pulp magazines, mostly to the less significant sports and romance titles, including *Popular Sports*, *Exciting Sports*, *Popular Love*, and *Thrilling Love*. In the army, Tracy served his time as an officer in the military police, stationed in Washington, D.C. When he returned to writing fiction after the war, he took a new direction. *Chesapeake Cavalier* was a big, swashbuckling historical novel set in colonial America. The book was a considerable success in hardcover and in subsequent paperback editions. Numerous historicals would follow, including *Crim-*

son Is the Eastern Shore, *Roanoke Renegade*, and *Carolina Corsair*.

In 1959 Tracy returned to crime fiction with *The Big Blackout*. Set in a small town in Florida (the author's home state for the second half of his life), it concerned a local man's involvement in the hunt for dope traffickers. The hero's struggle with alcoholism was a subtext of the book. The ravages of booze were a major concern of Tracy's in later years, and he addressed the subject in both fiction and nonfiction works, including the novel *The Big Brass Ring* and a self-help volume called *What You Should Know About Alcoholism*. In the 1970s he worked for an organization that treated alcoholics.

In 1964 Tracy published a legal thriller that returned to his interest in race relations—with likely conscious echoes of Harper Lee's best-selling *To Kill a Mockingbird* but more explosive by far. *The Hated One* was about a young black girl accused of murder and the white lawyer who defends her.

Tracy wrote his first detective series rather late in life. *Deadly to Bed*, published in 1960, was the first of the Giff Speer books, about a master sergeant in the military police, an undercover agent who investigates crimes involving the U.S. Army. With the author's own background in the military police and the books' Florida and southern settings, Tracy gave the Giff Speer novels plenty of vivid and authentic background. Speer himself was a smart, rational investigator who got the job done. Tracy avoided the usual tough-guy clichés to tell involving, well-structured stories. Some of the Speer books had a torn-from-the-headlines timeliness, such as *Look Down on Her Dying*, published in 1968, which sent Speer to solve a murder at an ROTC post at a Louisiana college beset by campus unrest, student war protesters, and a group of right-wing paramilitary Cajuns.

In addition to the crime novels, historicals, juveniles, and nonfiction that he wrote under his own name, Tracy also produced, concurrently, a nearly equal amount of work under pen names, generally using the "Roger Fuller" byline for his hack jobs. These included such assignments as novelizations of television shows (*Burke's Law*, *The Defenders*) and minor motion pictures (*Son of Flubber*, *The Facts of Life*), and the somewhat more distinguished job of writing sequels to the late Grace

METALIOUS's *Peyton Place* blockbuster. Tracy published three novels, all Giff Speer mysteries, in 1976, the last year of his life.

Works

Amber Fire, The (1954); *Bazzaris* (1965); *Big Black-Out, The* (1959); *Big Brass Ring, The* (1963); *Big X, The* (1976); *Black Amulet, The* (1968); *Captain Little Ax* (1956); *Carnival in Peyton Place* (1967); *Carolina Corsair* (1955); *Cherokee* (1957); *Chesapeake Cavalier* (1949); *Corpse Can Sure Louse Up a Weekend, A* (1972); *Crimson Is the Eastern Shore* (1953); *Criss Cross* (1935); *Deadly to Bed* (1960); *Death Calling Collect* (1976); *Flats Fixed, Among Other Things* (1974); *Fun and Deadly Games* (1968); *Hated One, The* (1963); *High, Wide and Ransom* (1976); *Honk If You've Found Jesus* (1974); *How Sleeps the Beast?* (1938); *Last Boat Out of Cincinnati* (1970); *Last Year's Snow* (1937); *Look Down on Her Dying* (1968); *Naked She Died* (1962); *No Trespassing* (1961); *On the Midnight Tide* (1957); *Pot of Trouble* (1971); *Pride of Possession* (1960); *Quintin Chivas* (1961); *Reluctant Rebel* (1968); *Roanoke Renegade* (1954); *Round Trip* (1934); *Sign of the Pagan* (1954); *Streets of Askelon* (1951); *What You Should Know About Alcoholism* (1975)

As Roger Fuller:

Again in Peyton Place (1967); *All the Silent Voices* (1964); *Eve of Judgment* (1965); *Evils of Peyton Place* (1969); *Facts of Life, The* (1960); *Fear in a Desert Town* (1964); *Hero in Peyton Place* (1969); *Nice Girl from Peyton Place, The* (1970); *On the Double* (1961); *Ordeal* (1964); *Pleasures of Peyton Place, The* (1968); *Secrets of Peyton Place* (1968); *Son of Flubber* (1963); *Temptations of Peyton Place* (1970); *Thrills of Peyton Place, The* (1969); *Timeless Serpent, The* (1964); *Who Killed Beau Sparrow?* (1963); *Who Killed Madcap Millicent?* (1964); *Who Killed Sweet Betsy?* (1965)

As Barnaby Ross:

Duke of Chaos, The (1964); *Scrolls of Lysis, The* (1962); *Strange Kinship* (1965)

Trail, Armitage (Maurice Coons) (1903–1931)

Armitage Trail, his brother Hannibal would recall, “was interested in gangsters as other men are in-

terested in postage stamps, old coins, or spread-eagled butterflies.” His real name was Maurice Coons, the son of a successful and intriguingly diverse man who both managed the New Orleans Opera Company and manufactured furniture. Maurice dropped out of school at 16 to give all his time to writing, and he was selling stories by the time he was 17. In the mid-1920s, he moved with his family to Illinois, where his father opened a garden furniture factory, and then to Chicago when Mr. Coons took an executive job at a home-building company.

Chicago in the '20s, of course, was the place to go if you were interested in gangsters. Maurice Coons began exploring the town's gang-ruled streets and lowlife centers. He met an Italian-American lawyer who was instrumental in getting Coons accepted by “the boys” in the various back rooms and speakeasies around town. “For the next year or more,” said Hannibal Coons, “my brother spent most of his nights prowling Chicago's gangland He spent evenings beyond number with gangsters and their families. He met their mothers. . . . He prowled Chicago's gangland until he knew enough about gangsters, and about Capone, the top gangster of them all, to write *Scarface*.”

W. R. BURNETT's *Little Caesar*, published in 1929, beat Armitage Trail to the punch as the first big book based on the Al Capone legend, but Trail kept going, certain he could top Burnett or anybody with his inside angle and the real facts about Big Al. Every morning, still awake from a long night out with the gangsters, he would sit in the sunroom of his family's Oak Park apartment and write his novel. *Scarface*, published in 1930 (and dedicated to the pulp editor Leo Margulies), was a fast, brutal document, the bullet-riddled biography of Tony “Scarface” Guarino, a fictionalized but not particularly romanticized version of the Al Capone story (though Trail gives his Scarface the brutal death—by his own policeman brother—that the Chicago cops or rival gangsters were never able to accomplish with the real mob boss). Armitage Trail had few of Burnett's gifts as a novelist, but Trail's book vividly evoked a ruthless nihilistic underworld where law and order and anything like normal behavior does not exist.

Trail sold *Scarface* for \$25,000 to a young producer named Howard Hughes and went west to help transfer his novel to the screen. According to W. R. Burnett, who was soon working for Hughes on a *Scarface* screenplay, "Trail never drew another sober breath." He quickly affected a flamboyant Hollywood lifestyle, hiring a chauffeur, wearing an assortment of wide-brimmed Borsalino hats, and living well, a big man getting bigger (he weighed more than 300 pounds, according to his brother). *Scarface* (1932), scripted by Burnett, Ben Hecht, John Lee Mahin, and others, and directed by Howard Hawks, became a film masterpiece. But Armitage Trail did not live to see it—he dropped dead of a heart attack inside Hollywood's Grauman's Chinese Theatre.

Works

Scarface (1930)

Trocchi, Alexander See LENGEL, FRANCES.

Tuttle, W. C. (1883–19?)

W. C. Tuttle, like Walt Coburn and a few other stars of pulp cowboy fiction, was an authentic westerner, the son of a Montana lawman. He spent some of his younger years punching cattle and riding the range. Tuttle derided the glamorization of cowboy life found in some other writers' work. "What a job! Forty-a-month plus frostbite. Out of the sack about five o'clock in the morning, the temperature about zero in the bunkhouse, outside ten or twelve below, and a wind blowing. You shiver into frozen overalls, fight your way down to the stable, where you harness a team of frosted horses, take'em out and hitch them to a hayrick wagon. . . . Man, it was romantic!"

Tuttle wrote cowboy fiction that entertained and had a sense of humor. His comic stories went from wry and wisecracking to slapstick hilarity. His most popular stories, though, were straight, a long-running series about a range detective and his sidekick, Hashknife Hartley and Sleepy Stevens. This was an innovative series—likely the first true

melding of the western and mystery genres. The stories were originally published in *Adventure* magazine, then in *Argosy* and *Short Stories*. Hashknife and Sleepy were a sort of Wild West Sherlock Holmes and Watson, drifting into assorted frontier towns and solving crimes. The amalgam of detective story and western might sound contrived, but Tuttle's realistic atmospherics, idiosyncratic dialogue, and sharp sense of humor made for immensely enjoyable reading.

Tuttle continued writing westerns long past the peak of popularity for this genre. His later books were published in America in small print runs intended for the library market, but Tuttle's cowboy stories continued to find an enthusiastic audience in Great Britain until the end of his life.

Works

Arizona Drifters (1964); *Bluffer's Luck* (1937); *Buckshot Range* (1966); *Danger Range* (1958); *Deadline, The* (1927); *Deputy, The* (1957); *Devil's Payday, The* (1929); *Double Crossers of Ghost Tree* (1965); *Double Trouble* (1964); *Dynamite Days* (1960); *Flood of Fate, The* (1926); *Galloping Gold* (1961); *Ghost Guns* (1956); *Ghost Trails* (1939); *Gold at K-Bar Ranch* (1961); *Gun Feud* (1951); *Hashknife of Stormy River* (1931); *Hashknife of the Canyon Trail* (1928); *Hashknife of the Double Bar-8* (1927); *Henry the Sheriff* (1936); *Hidden Blood* (1943); *Keeper of the Red Horse Pass* (1930); *Lone Wolf* (1967); *Lucky Partners* (1967); *Medicine Man, The* (1925); *Montana Man* (1966); *Mystery of the Red Triangle, The* (1929); *Outlaw Empire* (1960); *Passengers for Painted Rock* (1962); *Reddy Brant, His Adventures* (1920); *Redhead from Sun Dog, The* (1930); *Renegade Sheriff* (1953); *Rifled Gold* (1934); *Rocky Rhodes* (1936); *Rustlers' Roost* (1927); *Santa Dolores Stage, The* (1934); *Shadow Shooter* (1953); *Shotgun Gold* (1940); *Silver Bar Mystery, The* (1932); *Singing Kid, The* (1953); *Spawn of the Desert* (1929); *Stockade* (1965); *Straight Shooting* (1926); *Straws in the Wind* (1948); *Sun Dog Loot* (1926); *Thicker Than Water* (1927); *Thunderbird Range* (1954); *Tin God of Twisted River, The* (1941); *Trail of Deceit, The* (1951); *Trouble at the JHC* (1950); *Trouble Trailer, The* (1946); *Tumbling River Range* (1929); *Turquoise Trail, The* (1935); *Twisted Trails* (1950); *Valley of Suspicion* (1964); *Valley of Twisted Trails* (1932); *Valley of Vanishing Herds, The* (1942); *Wandering Dogies* (1939); *West of Aztec Pass* (1963); *Wild Horse Valley* (1938); *Wolf Pack of Lobo Butte* (1945)

V

Vance, Jack (John Holbrook Vance) (1916–)

An important, multiple-award-winning author, Jack Vance began his career in such pulp magazines as *Thrilling Wonder Stories* (where his first published work, an action chase story called “The World Thinker,” appeared in 1945), when science fiction was still considered a fringe form of entertainment intended exclusively—depending on whether the branch was “space opera” or “hard” science fiction—for either juveniles or overeducated eggheads. Vance served his apprenticeship well, working his way out of the cliché-prone periodicals to become one of the most original and imaginative of the glittering postwar science fiction stars, a distinctive literary stylist who went his own way with a unique mixture of speculative fiction and fantasy.

Born in San Francisco, Vance was beset by wanderlust and hit the road as a young man. He worked at odd jobs, then in 1940 joined the merchant marine. The job became considerably more dangerous after the start of World War II, and Vance survived two torpedo attacks by the Japanese. His first story was published while he was still somewhere in the Pacific. Vance described himself for the magazine as “taciturn,” with interest in “hot jazz, abstract physical science, Oriental languages, feminine psychology.” Vance wrote many more stories for *Thrilling Wonder* and for *Startling Stories*, most about a space outlaw named Magnus Ridolph. Vance’s work improved quickly,

and by 1950 he was producing dazzling stories like “New Bodies for Old.” *The Five Gold Bands* was his first novel-length piece, a fast-moving interplanetary treasure hunt published in *Startling Stories*. Soon thereafter came Vance’s first great work, and one of the great works in the SF/fantasy canon, *The Dying Earth* (1950).

The book first appeared as an original paperback from Hillman, shoddily put together (the opening two sections were accidentally printed in reverse order) and only briefly distributed (copies are now highly collectible and can be worth hundreds of dollars), but it became an immediate cult sensation. The book comprised six vaguely connected sections that chronicled the planet’s misty last days, written in a rich, antique, atmospheric prose that evoked memories of the great *Weird Tales* fantasist Clark Ashton SMITH. Vance’s bold move was to imagine the collapsed Earth as a phantasmagoric medieval land of sorcerers and swordsmen, a futuristic image of decay and apocalypse mixed up with a dream of the 14th century. Fifteen years later, Vance returned to the same setting with a sort-of sequel, *The Eyes of the Overworld* (1966), another series of stories about humanity’s strange, doomed homeland. This time the sections were linked by a common protagonist, a Ulysses-like rogue named Cugel the Clever.

If some readers felt that Vance could never top his first book’s tour de force, he nonetheless continued to produce extraordinary work from then on, his great books including *Slaves of the Klau* (1958), about the impact of alien immigra-

tion on Earth, and *The Dragon Masters*, an exalted space opera about the war between humans and domineering, slaveholding “lizardmen.” Few writers could top Vance for his three-dimensional characterizations of various unearthly populations. For some, his most entertaining novels were the four that made up the Planet of Adventure series, the saga of a human’s adaptation and adventures on an alien planet, with one of the most fully realized depictions of an outer space civilization and landscape ever written.

In addition to his science fiction/fantasy novels and stories, Vance has also written highly-regarded mystery/suspense fiction, including the Edgar Award-winning *The Man in the Cage* (1960), written under his full name of John Holbrook Vance; he also, in the 1950s, wrote the scripts for a science fiction television series, *Captain Video*.

Works

Anome, The (1973); *Asutra, The* (1974); *Big Planet* (1957); *Blue World, The* (1966); *Brains of Earth, The* (1966); *Brave Free Men, The* (1973); *City of the Chasch* (1968); *Dirdir, The* (1969); *Dragon Masters, The* (1963); *Dying Earth, The* (1950); *Eight Fantasms and Magics* (1969); *Emphyrio* (1969); *Eyes of the Overworld, The* (1966); *Face, The* (1979); *Five Gold Bands, The* (1953); *Future Tense* (1964); *Galactic Effectuator* (1980); *Gray Prince, The* (1974); *Green Magic* (1979); *House on Lily Street, The* (1979); *House of Iszm, The* (1964); *Killing Machine, The* (1964); *Languages of Pao* (1958); *Last Castle, The* (1967); *Many Worlds of Magnus Ridolph* (1966); *Marune: Alastor 933* (1975); *Monsters in Orbit* (1965); *Palace of Love, The* (1967); *Pnume, The* (1970); *Servants of the Wankh* (1969); *Showboat World* (1975); *Slaves of the Klau* (1958); *Son of the Tree* (1964); *Space Opera* (1965); *Star King* (1964); *To Live Forever* (1956); *Trullion: Alastor 2262* (1973); *Vandals of the Void* (1953); *View from Chickweed’s Window* (1979); *World Between and Other Stories, The* (1965); *Wyst: Alastor 1716* (1978)

As John Holbrook Vance:

Bad Ronald (1973); *Deadly Isles, The* (1969); *Fox Valley Murder, The* (1966); *Man in the Cage, The* (1960); *Pleasant Grove Murders, The* (1967)

Van Heller, Marcus (John Stevenson) (unknown)

Marcus Van Heller, the pseudonym of a young British journalist living in Paris in the 1950s, was the most prolific and one of the most popular of the Olympia Press authors of paperback “dirty books.” Not long after arriving for a sojourn in France, John Stevenson had hooked up with the expatriate crowd behind the modernist literary journal *Merlin*, whose founders included the future Beat icon Alexander Trocchi (see LENGEL, Frances). Stevenson soon became the business manager for *Merlin*, a job that seems to have consisted largely of selling copies of the magazine on the street.

Like other literary Left Bank visitors living from hand to mouth, Stevenson looked to Olympia Press as a source of income. He began writing erotic novels for Maurice Girodias, who ran Olympia. Preserving his own name for what he hoped would be more respectable work, he invented what he thought to be an erudite and slightly demonic pen name, “Marcus Van Heller.” The first of Stevenson’s Olympia novels was published in 1955. Well schooled in ancient history, Stevenson specialized in erotica with grand historical settings, beginning with *The Loins of Amon* (1955), a tale of ancient Egypt, and continuing in this vein with *Roman Orgy* (1956), an intimate account of the private life of the slave and rebel leader Spartacus, and *The House of Borgia*, parts 1 and 2 (1957, 1958), an epic fake biography of the 15th-century Italian noble family with an emphasis on their considerable depravity.

In later years, due to Van Heller’s past popularity, Girodias would slap the name on other erotic works that Stevenson did not write. Stevenson went back to his native land eventually and began a new life as a civil servant.

Works

Adam and Eve (1961); *Cruel Lips* (1956); *House of Borgia* (1957); *House of Borgia, Part 2* (1958); *Kidnap* (1961); *Loins of Amon, The* (1955); *Nightmare* (1960); *Rape* (1955); *Roman Orgy* (1956); *Terror* (1958); *Wantons, The* (1957); *With Open Mouth* (1955)

Villiers, Gerard de
(1929–)

If Ian FLEMING's James Bond was often criticized for his snobbish tastes, France's answer to Fleming, Gerard de Villiers, made such charges superfluous in the character of Prince Malko von Linge, the superspy hero of the best-selling and long-running SAS series of spy novels. Malko is a titled aristocrat, an Austro-Hungarian prince done out of his rightful position in the world by the exigencies of democratic republicanism and the cold war. His code name "SAS" stands for *Son Altesse Serenissime*, or His Serene Highness. If Bond was defined in part by his social climber's appreciation of the finer things in life, Malko's exquisite taste is a given, bred in the bone. Bond, with his swaggering pride in his handmade shirts and classic Bentley, is a poor country cousin compared to Malko, whose home is the ancestral castle in Liezen and whose *altesse* status means he is already as exalted as one can get. While Fleming loaded down his hero with the latest gadgets and ingenious weaponry, Malko prefers the elegant simplicity of a single exquisite pistol, as slim and smooth as the finest gold cigarette case, and the sort of first-rate mind and indomitable will that once might have ruled Europe. Even on the sexual front, the athletic and active 007 is no match for the Olympian gymnastic accomplishments of the SAS's highest-paid secret agent.

France had already had a long-established popular spy series in Jean Bruce's OSS 117 books when Gerard de Villiers came on the scene in the 1960s. Malko was born on the wave of spy mania, in the wake of the James Bond movies, and his activities reflected both the established conventions of spy fiction and those invented for the increasingly spectacular movies.

Villiers's hero works for the American CIA, and his high-paying assignments help to fund the restoration of his ancient family castle. Without a

direct patriotic impulse (Malko is an Austrian working for Americans in a series at least initially aimed at French readers), Villiers is able to take a darker, more objective attitude towards the sometimes unsavory assignments. Malko himself is mostly above politics, killing leftists, rightists, and renegade American agents as called for by the plot, and he does not always complete his missions successfully. Villiers's scenes of violence and torture were rendered with detail and blistering intensity, and the even more frequent sex scenes made James Bond's erotic moments read like so much tentative foreplay. Even with harsh, visceral action and explicit sexual content, Villiers also worked to give the books a realistic, contemporary center, with authentic and well-detailed settings. He often made real international crises, trouble spots, and public personages part of the story (for example, *Kill Kissinger!* and *Objectif Reagan*). If Malko and his exploits were larger than life, the world around him was often as real as the latest issue of *Le Monde*.

The series was a spectacular success in France, and began appearing in paperback English translations starting with *Malko: West of Jerusalem* in 1973. The American editions ran to 14 volumes before fading out. In France, the series maintained its appeal, with more than 100 different SAS titles published by the end of the 20th century.

Works

(English-language publication dates)

Angel of Vengeance (1974); *Belfast Connection, The* (1976); *Checkpoint Charlie* (1975); *Countess and the Spy, The* (1974); *Death in Santiago* (1976); *Death on the River Kwai* (1975); *Hostage in Tokyo* (1976); *Malko: Kill Kissinger* (1974); *Malko: Man from Kabul* (1973); *Malko versus the CIA* (1974); *Malko: West of Jerusalem* (1974); *Operation New York* (1973); *Portuguese Defection* (1976); *Que Viva Guevara* (1975)

W

Walsh, Thomas (1908–1984)

Walsh is an unduly neglected mystery and suspense writer with some brilliant crime novels to his credit. While working as a big-city police beat reporter he began writing crime stories under the editorial tutelage of Joseph Shaw, the legendary chief of *Black Mask*, the greatest of all detective pulp magazines. An Irish-American New Yorker, Walsh graduated from Columbia University in the spring of 1933, and by that summer his byline made its debut in *Black Mask* with a brisk short story about a pair of policemen. Shaw took a job with the *Baltimore Sun* as a crime reporter, hoping it would provide him with material for his future writing.

Joe Shaw enjoyed Walsh's work so much that he printed three of his stories in the writer's first year in the magazine. Later he included one of Walsh's stories among the 15 (including works by Dashiell HAMMETT, Raymond CHANDLER, Paul CAIN, and Norbert DAVIS) collected in a classic anthology that Shaw edited, *The Hard-boiled Omnibus: Early Stories from Black Mask* (1946). But Walsh professed to be a slow writer, and only three more of his pieces appeared in the magazine over the four-year period in which he contributed. Walsh wrote just three stories in all for the other leading detective pulp, *Dime Detective*, all of which were printed in 1934.

But he was just getting started. Walsh eventually sold crime and suspense stories to such slick

magazines as *Collier's* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, which paid enormous fees to the lucky commercial writers who cracked that market. In 1950 he published his first novel, *Nightmare in Manhattan*, which took place almost entirely in what was a fictionalized Grand Central Station. It was a tour de force in the race-against-time subgenre, with the huge train station providing an agonizing maze for the police protagonists as they pursue a crazed kidnapper and search for his victim.

Walsh wrote another 11 crime novels and continued to write short fiction long after the last of the pulps had folded. Most of his stories appeared in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. Walsh twice won Edgar Allan Poe Awards from the Mystery Writers of America, once for *Nightmare in Manhattan* in 1950 and the other nearly 30 years later for a short story, "Chance After Chance." *Nightmare* was turned into a classic film noir, *Union Station* (1950), starring William Holden as the hero cop.

Works

STORIES

"Always a Stranger" (1959); "Best Man" (1934); "Breakup" (1934); "Death Can Come Hard" (1935); "Diamonds Mean Death" (1936); "Double Check" (1933); "Ed Mahoney's Boy" (1940); "Fall Guy" (1976); "Getaway Money" (1948); "Girl in Car Thirty-two" (1953); "Girl in Danger" (1954); "Mystery Island" (1934); "Night Calhoun Was Off Duty, The" (1954); "Patient in Room 14" (1934); "Poor Little Rich Kid" (1967); "Stranger in the Park" (1941); "Suicide Pact" (1934); "Tip on the Gallant" (1933)

BOOKS

Action of the Tiger (1968); *Dangerous Passenger* (1959); *Dark Window, The* (1956); *Eye of the Needle, The* (1961); *Face of the Enemy, The* (1966); *Night Watch, The* (1952); *Nightmare in Manhattan* (1950); *Resurrection Man, The* (1966); *Tenth Point, The* (1965); *Thief in the Night* (1962); *To Hide a Rogue* (1964)

Wells, Charlie

(unknown)

In the early 1950s, at the height of his success as the author of the all-time best-selling Mike Hammer detective series, Mickey SPILLANE, for reasons still not at all clear, decided to retire from novel writing and did not publish another book for a decade. Perhaps subscribing to a version of the theory that “those who cannot do, teach,” Spillane was only too happy to assist friends who wanted to see if they, too, could become best-selling authors among them Dave Gentry and Charlie Wells. Mississippian Charlie Wells, a childhood friend of Spillane’s wife, came to live with the couple briefly and received from Mickey an intense tutelage in the art and craft of hard-boiled prose. Wells then wrote a tough crime thriller called *Let the Night Cry* (1953), which Spillane shepherded into print, with the paperback edition by Signet, Mike Hammer’s softcover home. The cover featured a banner blurb from Wells’s friend: “. . . this story moves right along with kicks from first to last.”

Wells’s second and final novel, *The Last Kill*, was a tough mystery about a Memphis private detective. Like the first book, this one did a good job of capturing Spillane’s style—not surprising considering Spillane had his thumbprints all over it (starting with the front cover and a rather awkward blurb this time: “Here’s the writer that you who like your mysteries fast, punchy and dramatic, will be looking for . . .”). Wells retired from crime fiction after that, and apparently even Mickey lost track of him.

The original Signet editions of the Wells novels both feature two of the most evocative and memorable cover illustrations of the period, intense, dramatic scenes of lust and violence.

Works

Last Kill, The (1955); *Let the Night Cry* (1953)

West, John B.

(unknown)

He was not destined to receive the sort of lasting attention that has been given to Chester HIMES, but John B. West was, like Himes, a groundbreaker as a black American writing a hard-boiled detective series in the 1950s. Comparisons pretty much end there, however, as West’s superficial pulp was not in the same league with Himes’s visionary and stylistically brilliant crime novels. West gathered up the well-worn clichés of postwar hard-boiled fiction and reshuffled them to produce his adventures of tough New York private eye Rocky Steele (a white man, incidentally), a slightly less explosive Mike Hammer. A more unusual character was the author himself, a physician and graduate of Howard and Harvard universities whose interest in tropical diseases led him to resettle in West Africa. West moved to the black republic of Liberia, where he practiced medicine, pursued research projects, and came to be a business magnate whose holdings included a broadcasting company and assorted hotels and restaurants. Somehow he found time to write detective stories, too. His first novel, *An Eye for an Eye*, was published in 1959. Five more would follow. They were undemanding, cliché-filled fun. Only the final book, *Death on the Rocks*, offered something unusual—it was set in West’s adopted homeland. By the time it appeared on the racks in America, John B. West was already dead.

Works

An Eye for an Eye (1959); *Bullets Are My Business* (1960); *Cobra Venom* (1959); *Death on the Rocks* (1961); *Never Kill a Cop* (1961); *Taste for Blood, A* (1960)

White, Lionel

(1905–1985)

Lionel White became a writer of crime novels after early years spent as a police reporter and then, most significantly, a couple of decades spent editing “true crime” magazines, including *Homicide Detective*, *True Detective*, and *World Detective*. These were the sordid publications (precursors of television programs like *America’s Most Wanted*)

that recounted, in five- and eight-page features, actual recent crimes. The stories followed each case up to the criminal's apprehension and often, in the case of homicides, to his execution; they were accompanied by black-and-white crime scene photographs, often including shocking, explicit photos of murder victims. After poring over thousands of such stories, White was thoroughly educated in the personalities and mental processes of the criminal class. He knew by heart the way these mostly oafish characters operated and the way most of their schemes came undone. White's first book, *The Snatchers* (1953), focused almost entirely on a criminal gang in the process of ransoming the young girl they have kidnapped. With a smoothly anonymous style, White follows the evolving ransom scheme and the devolving interrelationships of the kidnapers until both narrative strands end in blood-soaked disaster.

White wrote other types of crime stories through the years, but his specialty would follow the model of *The Snatchers*, the "caper" novel that focused on a single—inevitably disastrous and violent—crime for profit undertaken by a gang of crooks. In *Clean Break* (filmed by Stanley Kubrick as *The Killing*), the group heists a racetrack payroll; in *The Big Caper*, a small-town bank. In *Too Young To Die*, diamonds are the goal; in *Operation—Murder*, the loot on a railroad train. Ignoring the pulp tradition of sentimentalizing professional robbers and outlaws, White observes his characters dispassionately and subtly discourages the reader from getting too close to his various casts of dumb thugs, lovestruck broads, and assorted arsonists and sharpshooters.

White wrote at least two great crime novels outside the caper subgenre, *The Money Trap*, about a cop's tragic slide into corruption, and *Obsession*, a kind of rewrite of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* as a sleek, nasty noir adventure. The latter novel was—loosely—adapted into the 1965 arthouse classic *Pierrot le Fou*, directed by Jean-Luc Godard.

White was a favorite author in France, as witness the fact that *The Snatchers* was found to have been the blueprint for a 1950s headline-making kidnapping of a Peugeot automobile heir. And just like the characters in the book, the French kidnapers did not get away with it. In a kind of return

compliment, the American film version of *The Snatchers*, titled *The Night of the Following Day* (1969), starring Marlon Brando and Richard Boone, relocated the story from New York to France.

Works

Big Caper, The (1955); *Clean Break* (1955); *Coffin for a Hood* (1958); *Crimshaw Memorandum, The* (1967); *Death of Sea, A* (1961); *Death of a City* (1970); *Death Takes the Bus* (1957); *Flight into Terror* (1955); *Grave Undertaking, A* (1961); *Hijack* (1969); *Hostage for a Hood* (1957); *House Next Door, The* (1956); *House on K Street, The* (1965); *Invitation to Violence* (1958); *Jailbreak* (1976); *Lament for a Virgin* (1960); *Love Trap* (1955); *Marilyn K.* (1960); *Merriveather File, The* (1959); *Mexico Run, The* (1974); *Money Trap, The* (1963); *Night of the Rape, The* (1967); *Obsession* (1962); *Operation—Murder* (1956); *Party to Murder, A* (1966); *Rafferty* (1959); *Ransomed Madonna, The* (1964); *Rich and Dangerous Game, A* (1974); *Right for Murder* (1957); *Run, Killer, Run* (1959); *Seven Hungry Men* (1952); *Snatchers, The* (1953); *Steal Big* (1960); *Time of Terror, The* (1960); *To Find a Killer* (1954); *Too Young to Die* (1958)

Whitehead, Henry

(1882–1932)

One of the most frequent contributors to the legendary *Weird Tales* magazine in its first decade, Henry Whitehead was also the most distinguished and most unlikely of contributors to that strange and often unsavory publication. Whitehead was a graduate of Harvard University who studied under the American poet and philosopher George Santayana and earned a doctorate in philosophy. He became an ordained minister, then priest, and served in a series of increasingly responsible positions in the church, from rector and children's pastor to his final post as archdeacon to the Virgin Islands.

As a sideline, he wrote of ecclesiastical matters at first, then switched to fiction. "The Intarsia Box" appeared in *Adventure* in 1923. His initial appearance in *Weird Tales*—a story called "Tea Leaves"—was in the first-anniversary issue of that magazine. He became a regular contributor until

his early death in 1932. Doctor Whitehead's observations and investigations of the folklore and superstition of the Virgin Islands and adjacent isles were put to good use in his stories of Caribbean ghosts and haunting legends. Whitehead's alter-ego character, Gerald Canevin, narrates many of the stories. With a diocese to answer to, Whitehead's weird tales were not among the magazine's more lurid or grotesque offerings, but were—in H. P. LOVECRAFT's words—"subtle, realistic and quietly potent."

Works

"Fireplace, The" (1925); "Intarsia Box, The" (1923); "Jumbee" (1926); *Jumbee and Other Uncanny Tales* (1944); "Tea Leaves" (1924)

Whitfield, Raoul

(1897–1945) *Also wrote as: Ramon Dacolta*

One of the original stars of the editor Joe Shaw's regime at *Black Mask* magazine, Raoul Whitfield grown up in the Far East and was a former silent-film actor and World War I fighter pilot. He wrote razor-sharp detective and crime stories, and had two novels serialized in *Black Mask*. *Green Ice* was a tale of Prohibition gangland, a kind of New York version of Paul CAIN's *Fast One*. The book opens with the hero, Mal Ourney, getting out of Sing Sing prison after taking a manslaughter rap for a young woman. The girl, Dot Ellis, comes back into his life momentarily before she is brutally murdered, leaving Ourney determined to settle the score with the "Big Ones" of organized crime. "The plot does not matter so much," Dashiell Hammett wrote for the *New York Evening Post*. "What matters is that here are two hundred and eighty pages of naked action pounded into tough compactness by staccato, hammerlike writing." The review was a bit of logrolling—Hammett and Whitfield were friends—but one suspects he meant it. The *Boston Transcript* reviewer, trying to get a bead on this newfangled hard-boiled style, declared, "It is written in the jargon of the gangster, in a fast-moving style, faintly reminiscent of the old-time dime novel. Murder is committed in nearly every chapter, and all for a handful of emer-

alds, known on the streets as 'Green Ice.' The story would be easier reading if the author had varied his sentence structure more. As it is, too many short sentences give a rather irritating staccato effect."

Whitfield's *Death in a Bowl* was an early Los Angeles P.I. story, with stoic tough guy Ben Jardinn the detective hero. The "Bowl" was the Hollywood Bowl, the town's outdoor cultural auditorium, where a conductor gets killed during a concert. The book used the landmarks and ambiance of Los Angeles in a way that anticipated Raymond CHANDLER's work a decade later. Historically, *Death in a Bowl* has been called the first Hollywood private eye novel, thus inaugurating an important and popular "regional" subgenre. Whitfield portrayed Los Angeles and the movie capital as a glamorous but sordid, amoral region where greed, wealth, and sex kept a private eye in business; he dedicated the book to "The Three Virgins of Hollywood." His third and last crime novel, *The Virgin Kills*, returned to an East Coast setting. The murder mystery, centered on a Hudson River regatta, was narrated by a cynical newspaperman.

Whitfield's novels were well received and in the early 1930, he seemed to be Dashiell Hammett's chief rival as the most important practitioner of the new hard-boiled style. Critics often linked the authors, and one labeled them the Matisse and Cézanne of modern mystery fiction. Besides hard-boiled crime fiction, Whitfield wrote books for children, including *Silver Wings*, a collection of aviation stories that the *Boston Globe* said "pulsated with the vitality and the glamor of the flying service."

In addition to the many stories he wrote for *Black Mask* under his own name, Whitfield penned another couple of dozen under the pseudonym Ramon Dacolta. All of these belonged to a terrific series about a Philippines-based detective, Jo Gar. The stories, with their exotic and atmospheric settings, the sweltering streets of bustling Manila, and the backwaters of the muddy Pasig, were a marvelous respite from the magazine's monthly onslaught of American mean streets.

Whitfield's pulp career was brief but productive. In eight years he wrote nine books and nearly 200 stories, 88 published in *Black Mask*. He then

married a wealthy woman and stopped writing. His wife died unexpectedly and Whitfield spent much of her money before he died—destitute, it is said—at 46.

Works

STORIES

“About Kid Death” (1931); “Black Air” (1926); “Black Murder” (1928); “Blue Murder” (1928) (1932); “Bottled Death” (1927); “Carnival Kill, The” (1929); “Dark Death” (1933); “Dead Men Tell Tales” (1932); “Death on Fifth Avenue” (1934); “Delivered Goods” (1926); “Face Powder” (1931); “First Blood” (1928); “Flying Death” (1926); “For Sale—Murder” (1931); “Ghost Guns” (1928); “Great Black, The” (1937); “Green Ice” (1930); “High Death” (1928); “High Murder” (1934); “High Odds” (1929); “Inside Job” (1932); “Jenny Meets the Boys” (1926); “Killers Show” (1930); “Little Guns” (1928); “Live Men’s Gold” (1927); “Man Killer” (1932); “Money Talk” (1933); “Murder Again” (1933); “Murder by Mistake” (1930); “Murder by Request” (1933); “Murder in the Ring” (1930); “Mystery of the Fan-backed Chair, The” (1935); “Not Tomorrow” (1933); “On the Spot” (1929); “Out of the Sky” (1929); “Outside” (1929); “Oval Face” (1930); “Pay Off, The” (1929); “Red Pearls” (1927); “Red Smoke” (1930); “Red Terrace” (1931); “Red Wings” (1928); “River Street Death” (1929); “Roaring Death” (1926); “Sal the Dude” (1929); “Scotty Scouts Around” (1926); “Scotty Troubles Trouble” (1926); “Sixty Minutes” (1927); “Sky Club Affair, The” (1931); “Sky High Odds” (1927); “Sky’s the Limit, The” (1928); “Sky Trap, The” (1928); “Soft City” (1931); “Soft Goods” (1928); “South of Savannah” (1927); “Squeeze, The” (1929); “Steel Arena” (1931); “Ten Hours” (1926); “Uneasy Money” (1927); “Unfair Exchange” (1931); “Van Cleve Calling” (1931); “Walking Dynamite” (1932); “White Murder” (1927); “Within the Circle” (1929); “Woman Can Kill, A” (1933)

BOOKS

Danger Circus (1933); *Danger Zone* (1931); *Death in a Bowl* (1931); *Five* (1931); *Green Ice* (1930); *Killer’s Carnival* (1932); *Silver Wings* (1930); *Virgin Kills, The* (1932); *Wings of Gold* (1930)

As Ramon Dacolta:

“Amber Fan, The” (1933); “Black Sampan, The” (1932); “Blind Chinese, The” (1931); “Blue Glass” (1931);

“Caleso Murders, The” (1930); “China Man” (1932); “Climbing Death” (1932); “Death in the Pasig” (1930); “Diamonds of Death” (1931); “Diamonds of Dread” (1931); “Enough Rope” (1930); “Javanese Mask, The” (1931); “Magician Murder, The” (1932); “Man from Shanghai, The” (1933); “Man in White, The” (1931); “Nagasaki Bound” (1930); “Nagasaki Knives” (1930); “Red Dawn” (1931); “Red Hemp” (1930); “Shooting Gallery” (1931); “Siamese Cat, The” (1932); “Signals of Storm” (1930); “Silence House” (1931); “West of Guam” (1930)

Willeford, Charles *Also wrote as: Will Charles, W. Franklin Sanders*
(1919–1988)

Charles Willeford was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1919, was orphaned shortly thereafter, and moved in with relatives in California. At the time of the Great Depression, young Willeford left home and became a train-hopping drifter, one of the wild boys of the road in those dark days. He joined the army when he was old enough and became a career soldier, a Third Army tank commander during World War II. He wrote poetry on the side and had a volume of it published by Alicat Press in 1947.

Willeford kept talking about wanting to write a novel and finally, he claimed, his army buddies shamed him into actually trying it. Stationed at Hamilton Air Force Base, he drove in to San Francisco every weekend and worked on the book.

That short novel was titled *High Priest of California* (1953). A weird little item, it was about Russell Haxby, an obnoxious, petty used-car salesman with a violent streak. Haxby was the first of Willeford’s deceptively bland or deadpan nut-case heroes. Like all of Willeford’s early novels, *High Priest* was slyly literary and something of a put-on, a product of the author’s rarefied and unsettling sense of humor. He intended the novel for Fawcett’s Gold Medal Books line, but they rejected it on the grounds that it was “too weird.” He sent it to other publishers and got the same response. Finally Willeford found a home for his firstborn with Arnold Abramson’s sleazy Universal Publishing and Distributing, which had several two-bit



Charles Willeford, a master of irony and black humor
(Betsy Willeford)

paperback imprints including the Royal Giant editions. *High Priest* debuted in 1953 as half of a Royal Giant, thoughtlessly doubled up with one of Talbot MUNDY's exotic adventure stories from the '30s, *Full Moon*. Mundy's top-half cover line said, "Swift adventure in the passionate East!" while the lower-rung come-on for Willeford's book declared, "The world was his oyster—and women his pearls! A roaring saga of the male animal on the prowl!"

Willeford's next published novel, *Pick-Up*, was brought out the following year by one of Universal's softcore sex lines, Beacon Books. *Pick-Up* is a sordid, sometimes cruel, yet moving story about passion, self-deception, and self-destruction. In the barfly milieu familiar to any reader of Charles Bukowski, an artist turned coffee-shop counter-man takes home a drunken blonde. An affair leads to ugly violence, two botched suicide pacts, stints in the mental hospital, and murder. In a bitter-

sweet switch on the ironic closer to James M. CAIN's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Pick-Up*'s protagonist is denied what he most desires—the gas chamber. A strange book, alternately touching and absurd, it concludes with a surprise ending that gives a haunting dimension to all that has occurred before.

Willeford published three more novels with Beacon Books in the '50s, including his funniest and most outrageous novel, *Honey Gal* (reprinted later as *Black Mass of Brother Springer*). In this one, another of the author's obnoxious heroes, an ex-accountant and failed novelist, decides, on a whim, to pretend to be the new minister of an all-black church (for a \$20 fee, paid to the church's "abbot") in rural Florida. By the end of this short, wicked novel the protagonist has seduced some of his parishioners, caused a race riot and the burning of the church, and is hiding out with a young black woman in a rattrap Harlem hotel room. It is surely one of the more fiendishly humorous books ever written.

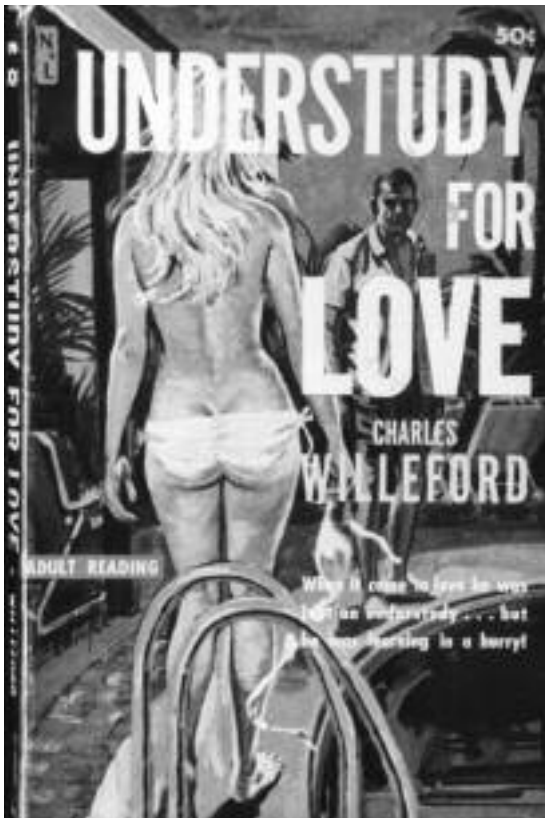
Willeford's novels from the early '60s, *The Woman Chaser*, *Understudy for Love*, *No Experience Necessary*, and *Cockfighter*, were sold to the even more unsavory and out-of-the-mainstream publishers Newstand Library and Chicago Paperback House, short-lived exploitation purveyors that paid an advance of about \$500 on royalties of a penny a book. Newstand was notorious among its hapless authors for "editing" books by throwing out the opening chapters or as much as was necessary to fit a preordained page count. It was no place to get rich or famous. On the other hand, books about the sport of cockfighting based on Homer's *Odyssey* and featuring a mute hero, were not exactly what the readers of Chicago Paperback House were interested in buying.

Willeford settled in Florida and supplemented his military pension with jobs as an editor and book reviewer and then as a college instructor (he had obtained a master's degree from the University of Miami in 1964). He broke into hardcover in 1971 with *The Burnt Orange Heresy*. The esoteric yet highly entertaining tale of a despicable art critic, a blowsy female coconspirator, and an avant-garde artist was as tawdry as the earlier paperback originals but was a more brazenly literary,

intellectual work. He had difficulty finding a publisher, but the novel was finally accepted by a specialty press under the title *The Shark-Infested Custard* (one stand-alone section, oddly reminiscent of his first novel, was published earlier in a limited edition as *Kiss Your Ass Goodbye*).

Finally, after little success as a novelist, Willeford hit the semi-big time with a 1984 crime novel. The mordantly funny, fiendishly clever *Miami Blues* was about a seedy, woebegone Miami cop named Hoke Moseley. Willeford's notion of a "hero" was still far from typical—at one point Hoke's false teeth are stolen. The rest of the action in this brilliant book is likewise unusual—an annoying Hare Krishna in an airport suffers a broken finger and dies from it; the villain loses a few fin-

gers to a hatchet during a botched robbery; ensconced in a suburban apartment complex, the villain shops for dinner by breaking into a neighbor's place and stealing steaks from the refrigerator. The book was well received, sold an impressive number of copies, and later came out in paperback. The publishers wanted to start a series about the toothless Miami detective. Willeford was soon entertaining six-figure advances and movie deals. At first he resisted this late-in-life, unprecedented success; the thought of becoming a series writer seemed to strike him as unbearably conventional. His initial response to the request for a sequel was *Grimhaven*, in which Hoke Moseley goes insane and kills his daughters. This book remained unpublished but was subsequently cannibalized for later books. Willeford soon resigned himself to the idea that Hoke could go on, and that a continuing series did not necessarily have to be a straitjacket for his strange fictional ideas. Three more Hoke novels followed *Miami Blues*—*New Hope for the Dead*, *Sideswipe*, and *The Way We Die Now*, each one a masterpiece of black humor, bizarre and idiosyncratic detailing, and pristine prose. After nearly four decades at the job, Willeford was about to become a famous writer. But in an ironic development that the corrosively witty and philosophical Willeford would have appreciated, if not exactly enjoyed, he died just as his newfound success had begun to accrue.



First edition of Charles Willeford's *Understudy for Love* (1961), one of several novels Willeford sold to short-lived, exploitative paperback publishers.

Works

Burnt Orange Heresy, The (1971); *Cockfighter* (1962); *Cockfighter Journal* (1989); *Everybody's Metamorphosis* (1988); *High Priest of California* (1953); *Honey Gal* (also published as *The Black Mass of Brother Springer*) (1958); *I Was Looking for a Street* (1988); *Kiss Your Ass Goodbye* (1987); *Lust Is a Woman* (1958); *Machine in Ward Eleven, The* (1963); *Miami Blues* (1984); *New Hope for the Dead* (1985); *No Experience Necessary* (1962); *Off the Wall* (1980); *Pick-up* (1955); *Poontang and Other Poems* (1967); *Shark-Infested Custard, The* (1993); *Sideswipe* (1987); *Something About a Soldier* (1986); *Understudy for Love* (1961); *Way We Die Now, The* (1988); *Wild Wives* (1956); *Woman Chaser, The* (1960)

As Will Charles:

Hombre from Sonora, The (1971)

As W. Sanders:

Whip Hand, The (1961)

Williamson, Jack

(1908–)

In every sense the Grand Old Man of science fiction, Jack Williamson published splendid work through eight decades of the 20th century and continued unabated into the 21st. Readers in 2001 could purchase a new story by the 92-year-old legend just as earlier generations could do in his nascent year of 1928, when the genre of “science fiction” had barely found its name.

The covered wagon was still the means of transportation when the young Arizona-born Williamson and his family moved (fearful of Apache Indian raids) to a hardscrabble ranch in New Mexico. He grew up isolated and poor. Williamson was schooled at home until the fourth grade and spent long, hard days outdoors, driving wagons and herding cattle. It was a lonely existence, with few friends—few people at all on that lonely landscape. In what spare time the boy had for hobbies and daydreaming, he liked to read and developed a strong imagination. He became fascinated by science, a field that was developing rapidly but still had about it the mystique of magic. “For people of school age in the 1920s,” he recalled for this author, “science seemed like a sort of wonderland that would be a means of changing the world and making things perfect. And this was a feeling shared by many of us who were drawn to writing science fiction in that period.”

This type of fiction barely existed when Williamson was young. Pulp magazines published the imaginative outer-space and lost-world fantasies of such writers as Edgar Rice BURROUGHS and A. MERRITT, but these were few and far between. In any case, Williamson had limited access to this literature. His father thought the pulps were unhealthy stuff, and the boy never had the money to buy any on his own. The first copy of *Amazing Stories* he read was borrowed from a friend, and another issue came when he answered an ad offering a free sample for potential subscribers. *Amazing Stories*, the first true science fiction magazine, began

publishing in 1926, when Williamson was 18 years old. It was created by an emigrant electronics expert and would-be inventor named Hugo Gernsback. Williamson devoured that first copy, fascinated with the stories he found in its pages. He had been writing a bit by then, but now he could focus his creative energies: he had found a model for the sort of stories he wanted to write. For several weeks in the summer of 1928 he worked on a story, on an ancient Remington typewriting machine (with a purple ribbon) that he had borrowed from an uncle. He sent the story, called “The Metal Man,” to the editorial address of *Amazing Stories*. He heard nothing. Some months later he happened to be in a drugstore and found the December issue of *Amazing Stories*, with his story highlighted on the cover. He bought all three of the drugstore’s copies. The magazine did not pay the young writer, incidentally, until he had sent several letters of inquiry—they eventually forked over a check for \$25. Still, he was “thrilled and delighted” to be in the magazine, and even more so to read what the editors had said about his work. They compared it to MERRITT’s *The Moon Pool*, high praise indeed for *Amazing*’s readers, and raved, “Unless we are very much mistaken, this story will be hailed with delight by every scientific [sic] fan. We hope Mr. Williamson can be induced to write a number of stories in a similar vein.” As it happened, he could.

He wrote outstanding, well-written tales of space exploration and provocative dramatizations of eerie scientific speculation. Williamson had the intellectual, technical approach of the “hard science” SF writers—the scientific knowledge that separated such writers from the mainstream pulp pros—but he was also capable of ripely romantic storytelling, as in his novel *Golden Blood*, serialized in *Weird Tales*, a superb fantasy adventure about a soldier of fortune and a lost civilization in the Arabian sands. The story merited one of *Weird Tales*’ most breathtaking covers, by illustrator J. Allen St. John. *Weird Tales* editor Farnsworth Wright wrote breathlessly of it to Williamson: “That colossal golden tiger looming gigantic against the sky . . . and in the foreground Price and Fouad sitting astride their white camels and looking quite Lilliputian by comparison. . . . What a gorgeous splash of color—the golden-yellow tiger, the vivid



Jack Williamson with his contemporaries in Auburn, California, c. 1940. From left to right: Clark Ashton Smith, E. Hoffman Price, Edmond Hamilton, Williamson, and Monte Linsley (*Historical Services, Eastern New Mexico University*)

green of Vekyra's robe and the intense crimson of Malikar's garment. Allah!"

Williamson was the rare science fiction writer who did not turn up his nose at the folkloric myths and the supernatural, producing excellent horror fiction like his swift and savage novella *Wolves of Darkness*, published in the short-lived *Strange Tales*, Clayton Publication's attempt to do its own version of *Weird Tales*. Years later Williamson would return to the theme with a subtler but perhaps more frightening werewolf story, *Darker Than You Think*, a novella published in *Unknown* magazine in December 1940 (later expanded to twice its length in book form). Through the strange occurrences that follow the arrival of some explorer friends from Asia, the newspaper reporter hero dis-

covers a hidden history of human existence—an ancient battle for domination between homo sapiens and a race of shape-shifting werewolves. Williamson layered the story with dream sequences and psychoanalysis sessions to drape the dreadful events in ambiguity. It was a good example of Williamson's penchant for setting loose scientific principles amongst the monsters of old world myth, or what the writer would call the "traditional culture." Believability, Williamson said, "was the goal. And for me the way to make things believable was to find a scientific explanation."

Williamson went to college for two years, studying to be a teacher, but dropped out in favor of pursuing his freelance writing career. He wrote for most of the new science fiction pulps that ap-

peared in the 1930s, and was a regular and popular contributor to *Astounding Stories*, the most important and popular of the science fiction magazine that followed in *Amazing Stories*' wake. *Astounding Stories* serialized Williamson's wonderful space operas, influenced by Alexandre Dumas and his *Three Musketeers: The Legion of Space, The Cometeers*, and *The Legion of Time*. Williamson published 16 novel-length works in his first dozen years as a pulp writer (most republished in book form, but some not for a dozen or more years). The writer went into the air force during World War II, and after the war his life went in new directions. Personal problems led Williamson to seek psychoanalytic treatment at the Menninger Clinic. Williamson claimed the time under analysis gradually allowed his creativity to return and let him go on writing. He returned to the pulps as strong as ever—his robot story, "With Folded Hands," published in *Astounding Stories*' July 1947 issue, was a masterpiece. He also returned to school, eventually becoming a college professor. Among his achievements as an educator was the pioneering establishment of academic courses devoted to science fiction and of an important science fiction archive at his home base, Eastern New Mexico University.

Williamson's new novels came out with regularity in the 1990s and into the 21st century. The year 2001 saw the release of *Terraforming Earth* ("terraforming," now the accepted term for making an alien environment habitable for people, had in fact been coined by Williamson 60 years earlier), the story of an Earth destroyed in a natural holocaust, the only human survivors the generations of clones living on a colony on the moon; the book was entirely up to date in its thinking, and yet it contained the wonderful epic sweep and sense of wonder of Williamson's early work back when science fiction had not yet found its name.

Works

Beachhead (1992); *Black Sun* (1997); *Bright New Universe* (1967); *Brother to Demons, Brother to God* (1979); *Cometeers, The* (1950); *Darker Than You Think* (1948); *Demon Moon* (1994); *Dome Around America* (1955); *Dragon's Island* (1951); *Firechild* (1986); *Golden Blood* (1964); *Green Girl, The* (1950); *Humanoids, The* (1949);

Humanoid Touch, The (1980); *Lady in Danger* (1945); *Legion of Space, The* (1947); *Legion of Time, The* (1952); *Lifeburst* (1984); *Manseed* (1982); *Mazeway* (1990); *Moon Children, The* (1972); *One Against the Legion* (1950); *Pandora Effect, The* (1969); *People Machines* (1971); *Power of Blackness, The* (1976); *Queen of the Legion, The* (1983); *Reign of Wizardry* (1964); *Silicon Dagger* (1999); *Terraforming Earth* (2001); *Trapped in Space* (1968); *Trial of Terra, The* (1962)

As Will Stewart:

Seetee Ship (1950); *Seetee Shock* (1950)

With Miles Breuer:

Girl from Mars, The (1929)

With Frederik Pohl:

Reefs of Space (1964); *Rogue Star* (1969); *Starchild* (1965); *Undersea City* (1958); *Undersea Fleet* (1956); *Undersea Quest* (1954)

Wolfson, P. J.

(1903–1979)

A pulp Emile Zola, a noir Frank Norris, P. J. Wolfson wrote tough, pitiless melodramas of human corruption in the bleak urban jungle of depression-era America. Wolfson's brief career as a novelist, before Hollywood lured him away forever, produced four works, at least two of them—*Bodies Are Dust* (1931) and *Is My Flesh of Brass?* (1934)—classic.

The first is a remarkably sordid study of a corrupt cop. Anticipating such bold, corrosive character studies as the 1992 Abel Ferrara film *Bad Lieutenant*, *Bodies Are Dust*'s Detective Safiotte is a venal, violent, rapacious figure, a man so tough he demands to watch his own appendix being removed. The narrative follows Safiotte on the rounds through various drug deals, fixed boxing matches, sex scenes (including an affair with a woman who dies from making love to him), and shootouts. Soured on love after the woman in his life becomes a prostitute, the detective finds his passion reignited by a comrade's wife. He manages to get the other cop killed, marries the woman, and has a child with her, but the baby dies and

Safiotte achieves what, in Wolfson's grubby worldview, passes for a transcendent moment.

Relentlessly provocative, Wolfson's second memorable book, *Is My Flesh of Brass?*, dealt with the dissolute life of a young Manhattan gynecologist whose specialty is illegal abortions (his partner in their Riverside Drive clinic handles the venereal disease clients). The doctor/narrator, once a compassionate idealist, sinks into alienation and cynicism as he sees a world filled with corruption, lust, and fear. Wolfson perpetuates the sordid atmosphere with constant "shocking" scenes and characters, syphilitics, hookers, naked women, dirty cops, adulterous married ladies "in trouble," and a mystery death in the middle of an abortion. The protagonist expires in a sudden, last-paragraph leap to third-person ("He lived about a month after the accident, then died").

Wolfson wrote two other works of fiction in this period, *Summer Hotel* (1932), a racy romance, and *All Women Die* (1933), the story of a brawny construction worker's lust for his brother's wife.

According to his Hollywood writing partner Allen Rivkin, the New York-born Wolfson had been a pharmacist at the old Madison Square Garden while he was working on his novels. One of the Hollywood studios brought him west in 1932 or 1933 and he began writing movies. He teamed up with Rivkin for several years, during which time they wrote several distinctly raucous, tough crime melodramas, including *Night World* (1932) with Boris Karloff and *Picture Snatcher* (1933) starring James Cagney, and the fairly hard-boiled musical *Dancing Lady* (1933) starring Clark Gable and Joan Crawford. Wolfson is remembered as a colorful, tough, hard-drinking character in this period, a man who came to work at MGM and Universal with a loaded .25-caliber pistol under his belt. After a certain amount of liquid refreshment, he would fire at random targets, including other screenwriters.

Wolfson rose steadily in the Hollywood hierarchy, becoming a producer and producer-writer for one film—the unusual *Boy Slaves* (1939), supposedly based on a real story about kids held prisoner on turpentine farms in the South—as writer-producer-director). Later Wolfson productions included the exotic film noir *Saigon* (1948), with Alan Ladd and Veronica Lake. In the '50s

Wolfson went into television and was the producer of the hit sitcom *I Married Joan*, with Joan Davis and Jim Backus.

Wolfson's fiction remains almost entirely unsung, except for a persistent cult following in France, where his *Bodies Are Dust* has been reprinted several times and became the source for an acclaimed film noir, *Police* (1985), directed by Maurice Pialat and starring Gerard Depardieu and Sophie Marceau.

Works

All Women Die (1933), also published as *This Woman Is Mine*; *Bodies Are Dust* (1931), also published as *Hell Cop*; *Is My Flesh of Brass?* (1934), also published as *Flesh Baron*; *Summer Hotel* (1932)

Wood, Edward D., Jr.

(1924–1978) *Also wrote as: "Randy"*

In one of the bloodiest battles of World War II, 4,000 U.S. Marines attacked the Japanese stronghold on Tarawa atoll. Only 400 of these warriors survived. Just one—to our knowledge—was wearing a pink brassiere and panties. The transvestite author of *Plan Nine from Outer Space*, *Glen or Glenda*, *Jailbait*, and *Night of the Ghouls*, in recent times frequently called "the worst movie director of all time" and the subject of a major Hollywood movie (*Ed Wood*) starring Johnny Depp, Ed Wood Jr. would find in death the audience and celebrity that had so entirely eluded him in life. Wood's oddly compelling films, with their bravura ineptitude, and his compellingly odd private life have been the chief sources of interest in the man. Less well known, but in some ways equally deserving of attention, is his work as novelist and nonfiction author, a career that began in the early '60s as Wood was in the midst of losing an already marginal place in the lowest-budget independent film community.

His first published work, *Black Lace Drag* (*Killer in Drag* in reissued editions), the story of a cross-dressing contract killer, was released by Raven Books in 1963. Just as he had successfully eluded any association with the major studios during his years as a filmmaker, so did Wood the



The 1999 reprint edition of Ed Wood Jr.'s *Death of a Transvestite* (Four Walls Eight Windows)

novelist restrict his literary corpus to low-profile publishing houses, many of them fly-by-night companies headquartered in one-room offices on Hollywood side streets. *Black Lace Drag* was followed in due course by *Orgy of the Dead* (a movie tie-in brought out by Greenleaf Classics), *Bye Bye Broadie* (a Pendulum Pictorial release in which a lesbian school principal beats a peeping tom to death with her cane), *Watts . . . After* (from Pad Library, tale of a black TV—television, that is, not transvestite—cowboy star mixed up with Black Panther—style revolutionaries; Wood instructed the publisher not to give his address out to any inquir-

ing black militants for fear his home would be bombed). Many of the stories included sizable injections of pure autobiography, from the routine addition of transvestite protagonists and ceaselessly described feminine clothing to frequent scenes of off-Hollywood filmmaking.

Wood's biographer, Rudolph Grey, estimated that his subject sold more than 75 such works between 1963 and 1977. In addition there were uncounted short fiction pieces and reportage (sample title: "Captain Fellatio Hornblower") sold to magazines, but most of these have been lost to the ephemeral and esoteric nature of the periodicals involved—for example, *Bi-Sex*, *Young Beaver*, and *Belly Button Magazine*.

In his last years, Wood continued his busy literary output while scrambling for work in the burgeoning Los Angeles porno film industry (as writer, director, and actor), but he became increasingly debilitated by alcoholism and assorted disappointments. In December 1978, he and his wife Kathy were evicted from their Yucca Street apartment, and 60 hours later Edward Wood Jr. was dead at 54. "It has been shown—proved over the centuries," Wood wrote with conviction in the pages of his 1966 novel *Parisian Passions*, "if one does not conform, one is considered mad." So it was, so it shall ever be. The volume that contained those heartfelt words, alas, misspelled the author's name on the front cover.

Works

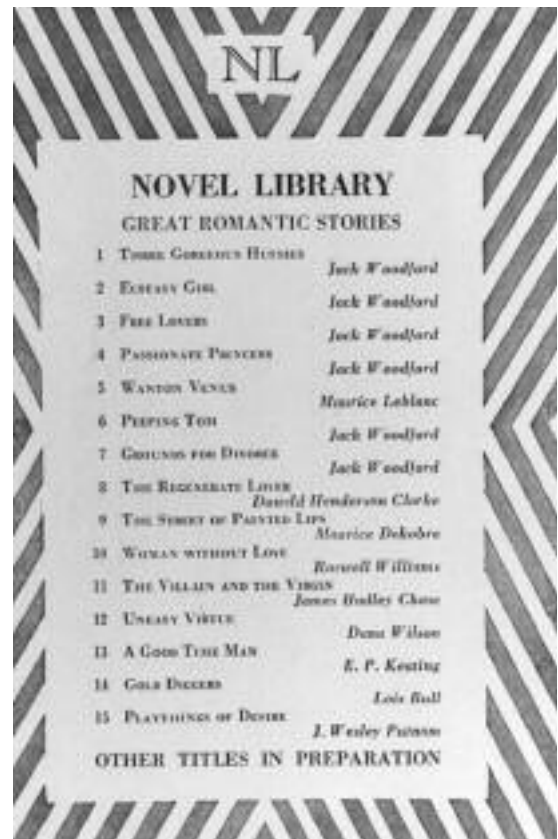
Black Lace Drag (also published as *Killer in Drag*) (1963); *Black Myth* (1971); *Bloodiest Sex Crimes of History* (1967); *Bye Bye Broadie* (1968); *Carnival Piece* (1969); *Death of a Transvestite* (1967); *Drag Trade* (1967); *Gay Underworld, The* (1968); *Hell Chicks* (1968); *Hollywood Rat Race* (1999); *It Takes One to Know One* (1967); *Night Time Lez* (1968); *Orgy of the Dead* (1966); *Parisian Passions* (1966), also published as *Sideshow Siren*; *Pervers, The* (1968); *Producer, The* (1972); *Purple Thighs* (1968); *Raped in the Grass* (1968); *Security Risk* (1967); *Sex Museum* (1968); *Sex, Shrouds and Caskets* (1968); *Sexecutives, The* (1968); *Suburbia Confidential* (1967); *Swedish House* (1978); *Tales for a Sexy Night* (1973); *To Make a Homo* (1971); *TV Lust* (1977); *Watts—After* (1967); *Watts—The Difference* (1966); *Young, Black and Gay* (1968)

As “Randy”:*Death of a Transvestite Hooker* (1974)**Woodford, Jack**(1894–1971) *Also wrote as: Sappho Henderson Britt*

Jack Woodford, to those willing to admit such knowledge, was once a brand name in the peculiar subgenre of popular literature whose goal was the reader's erotic stimulation. In the lending libraries and bookstores of the 1930s and 1940s, a book jacket with Woodford's name on it—or one of his pseudonyms—guaranteed something a little more spirited than the average read. Under his various names, Woodford churned out dozens of mildly risqué “modern” novels that touched on matters of unwed passion and sexual experimentation. In books like *Her First Sin*, *Unmoral*, and *Three Gorgeous Hussies*, Woodford represented the new generation of depression-era, American erotica writers whose work was aimed not at the sophisticated connoisseurs of earlier years but at lower- and middle-class readers, male and female, who were willing to pay the 4-cent lending-library fee for some entertainment and escapism. Woodford's tone was not sophisticated or decadent in the manner of the Edwardian erotica writers, but contemporary and wised-up about intimate matters between guys and dames. The readers, in any case, did not seem to demand more than a hint of naughty intentions. One could comb through some of Woodford's supposedly sexy books—and those of other lending-library sex-pulp authors—without finding anything even remotely juicy, and none of the books were ever as exciting or explicit as their provocative titles or jackets. Nonetheless, Woodford's novels were often banned by court edict and seized by police and vigilante groups who raided offending bookstores well into the 1960s, and people went to jail for selling his work.

In addition to his sex pulp novels, Woodford wrote several volumes of “how-to” books on the art and craft of writing and getting published. These eminently readable and practical guides, such as *Trial and Error*, were considered bibles for a generation of would-be writers. In the '40s, a publishing concern headed by Allen Wilson went into partner-

ship with Woodford to repackage the old erotica titles and some new ones. Flattering the author—and recognizing his marketability—the new firm was called Jack Woodford Press, and the books sold well, especially to servicemen. Woodford then found a final burst of success in the new popular fiction venue of the mass-market paperback. Woodford Press sold paperback rights for numerous Woodford titles to Avon Books and other purveyors of softcover sensationalism. Once again, the books were overhyped with racy new titles and voluptuous cover illustrations. Later in the '50s, Woodford wrote original paperbacks for such “sleaze” publishers as Beacon Books, usually in collaboration with young writers, among them John Thompson. The likelihood is that Woodford was merely attaching



Advertisement for *Novel Library* editions, including several stories by Jack Woodford



The covers of Jack Woodford's novels were usually more provocative than the stories themselves.

his still valuable name to these unknown writers' manuscripts, perhaps giving them the benefit of his final edit. Always a volatile and unpredictable character, Woodford was a notorious writer of angry letters to officials and newsmakers, a rabid anti-Semite and paranoiac (briefly a Hollywood screenwriter in the 1920s, he was said to have been banned from the studios for his bigoted rants). When he shot a visiting postal investigator, he was sent to prison. His stature, such as it was, faded with the changing tastes of the swinging '60s. According to Allen Wilson, he spent his last days in an insane asylum.

Works

Abortive Hussy (1947); *Assistant Wife* (1935); *Bundle of Curves* (1952); *Case for Passion* (1953); *City Limits* (1932); *Come into My Parlor* (1936); *Dangerous Love*

(1950); *Delinquent* (1934); *Ecstasy Girl* (1948); *Ecstasy Girl* (1948); *Evangelical Cockroach* (1930); *Fiddler's Fee* (1934); *Find the Motive* (1932); *Five Fatal Days* (1933); *Flame* (1949); *Frenzy* (1953); *Gentleman from Parnassus* (1936); *God's Lap* (1936); *Hard-boiled Virgin* (1947); *Her First Sin* (1944); *Here Is My Body* (1931); *Honeymoon Delayed* (1937); *Hoof Hearted* (1951); *How to Make Your Friends and Murder Your Enemies* (1981); *How to Write for Money* (1949); *Illegitimate* (1933); *Indecent?* (1934); *Journey to Passion* (1950); *Lady Killer* (1935); *Lady Mis-laid* (1936); *Leased* (1954); *Love at Last* (1937); *Love in Virginia* (1935); *Male and Female* (1934); *Masterful* (1954); *Mirage of Marriage* (1935); *Nikki* (1953); *Nymph's Conquest* (1953); *Passionate Princess* (1948); *Poetry in Flesh* (1952); *Possessed* (1935); *Proxy Princess* (1937); *Rented Wife* (1933); *She Liked the Man: A Novel* (1936); *Sin and Such: An Unconventional Novel* (1936); *Sincerely Yours* (1951); *Smouldering* (1953); *Softly Clay* (1934); *Starved* (1953); *Strangers in Love* (1934); *Surrender* (1953); *Tainted* (1953); *Three Gorgeous Hussies* (1936; revised edition published 1948); *Torrents* (1951); *Trial and Error* (1933; revised edition published 1947); *Two Can Play* (1952); *Unconventional* (1952); *Unleashed* (1953); *Unmoral* (1933); *Unwilling Sinner* (1933); *Vice Versa* (1935); *Web of Desire* (1953); *White Meat* (1931); *Why Write a Novel* (1943); *Wife to Trade* (1936)

As Sappho Henderson Britt:

Passion in the South (1935)

With John B. Thompson:

Desire in New Orleans (1952); *Hitch Hike Hussy* (1956); *Honey* (1954); *Male Virgin* (1950); *Savage Eve* (1953); *Sugar Doll* (1956)

With Robert W. Tracy:

Sinful Daughter (1951)

With Gordon Greene:

Taboo (1953); *Take Me* (1953)

Woolrich, Cornell

(1903–1968) *Also wrote as: George Hopley, William Irish*

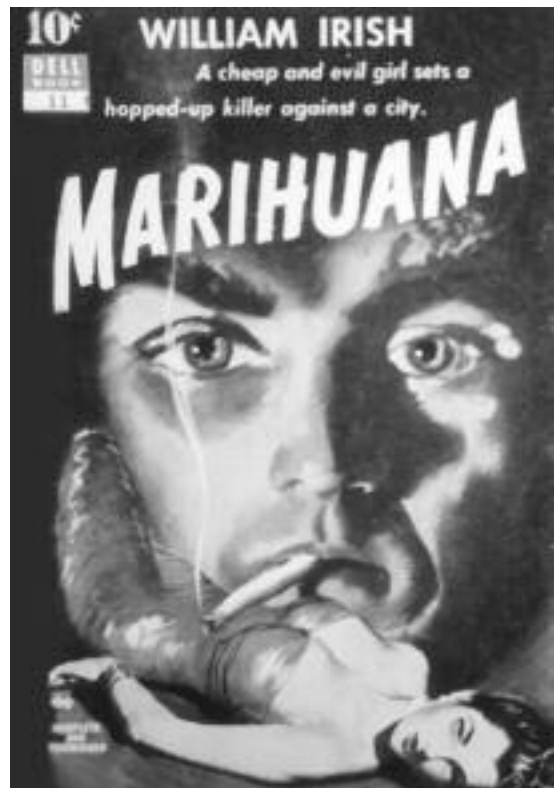
Woolrich was one of the great innovative masters of pulp fiction, a writer whose singular talent was one

of the crucial influences on the suspense story in fiction and film and on the creation of the category of dark melodrama now known as “noir.” Growing up with divorced parents, Woolrich spent much of his unconventional childhood with an engineer father in dangerous corners of Mexico. Cornell returned to New York City to attend Columbia University for a few years, then broke onto the literary scene as the author of a series of youthful Jazz Age novels inspired by F. Scott Fitzgerald. This early promise of a serious writing career fizzled, as did a brief fling with Hollywood screenwriting.

With the coming of the depression, Woolrich was without prospects and lived with his mother in a Manhattan hotel room. Turning to writing again, this time merely to find some income, he peddled stories to the pulps for a penny a word or less. His first crime story was published in 1934 by *Detective Fiction Weekly*. “Death Sits in the Dentist’s Chair” was clever, crisp suspense about a murderous oral surgeon and the narrator’s race to save himself from the effects of a deadly cyanide tooth filling. Woolrich’s second story, “Walls That Hear You,” was even better. A man’s brother is found with his tongue and fingers cut off. The man tracks down the assailant, an insane abortionist, and the story climaxes in a grueling mix of anger, suspense, and dread.

Woolrich, in these and in many of his more than 100 other pulp stories in the next five years, gave mystery fiction an emotional intensity and delirious psychological dimension that it had seldom known. Many of his most effective early stories were imbued with the desperation and hovering violence of the Great Depression, and the settings were often the less savory neighborhoods of Manhattan, all cramped tenement buildings, dirty subway stations, dime-a-dance halls, and police interrogation rooms. The many great and memorable stories and novelettes of his pulp magazine period include “The Dancing Detective” (1938), “The Corpse Next Door” (1937), “You’ll Never See Me Again” (1939), and “Speak to Me of Death” (1937). Woolrich’s propensity for narrative hysteria was well-suited for horror fiction as well, although his ventures in this genre were relatively few. He wrote just four stories for the “weird menace” pulps that thrived in the mid to late

1930s, but two of these were classics. “Dark Melody of Madness,” published in *Dime Mystery* in July 1935, was a poetic and intricately structured evocation of fear and inescapable fate as a jazz musician runs afoul of the voodoo cult whose secret music he has appropriated for his own swing band recordings. There are a half-dozen climactic twists before the last haunting line: “All she says is ‘Stand close to me, boys—real close to me, I’m afraid of the dark.’” “Graves for the Living” was a tour de force of sustained suspense about premature burial and a fiendish cult, with a gut-wrenching climax as the hero searches for his buried-alive fiancée, exhuming coffin after coffin with his bare hands—the sort of race-against-time finale for which Woolrich became legendary. Woolrich could draw a reader so deeply into his protagonist’s dilemma



Paperback edition of the dark, suspenseful *Marihuana* (1951) by William Irish (Cornell Woolrich), whose work contributed to the “noir” genre of fiction and film

that one finished the best of his work—and even some of the worst of it—in a state of anxious, almost unbearable empathy.

By the end of the 1930s, Woolrich, like many of his fellow pulp writers, began writing crime novels for hardcover publication. His first, *The Bride Wore Black* (1940), was a brilliant, dream-like tale of a woman's methodical revenge on the men who killed her lover moments before their marriage. It began his so-called black series—*The Black Curtain*, *Black Alibi*, and so on—each novel intensely suspenseful and written in the author's irresistibly readable lyric-pulp style. Under his own name or his pen names of William Irish and George Hopley, Woolrich, with his story lines about revenge, murder, amnesia, and doomed romance and his pessimistic, paranoid vision of life on Earth, was crucial to the development of film noir and its offshoots. In the '40s and '50s his work was continually adapted for films and for radio, then television programs. These include such classic '40s noirs as *Deadline at Dawn* (1946) and *Phantom Lady* (1944), French filmmaker François Truffaut's stylishly European versions of *The Bride Wore Black* (*La Mariée était en noir*, 1967) and *Mississippi Mermaid* (*La Sirène du Mississippi*, 1969) from *Waltz into Darkness*, and, best of all, Alfred Hitchcock's film *Rear Window* (1954), based on the short story "It Had to Be Murder," originally published in *Dime Detective* magazine in 1942.

A recluse for much of his adult life, Woolrich died as he had lived, a lonely man in a Manhattan residential hotel.

Works

Beyond the Night (1959); *Black Alibi* (1942); *Black Angel, The* (1943); *Black Curtain, The* (1941); *Black Path of Fear, The* (1944); *Blind Date with Death* (1985); *Bride Wore Black, The* (1940); *Children of the Ritz* (1927); *Cover Charge* (1926); *Darkness at Dawn* (1985); *Dark Side of Love, The* (1965); *Death Is My Dancing Partner* (1959); *Doom Stone, The* (1960); *Hotel Room* (1958); *Into the Night* (1987); *Manhattan Love Song* (1932); *Marihuana* (1951); *Nightmare* (1956); *Rendezvous in Black* (1948); *Savage Bride* (1950); *Strangler's Serenade* (1951); *Ten Faces of Cornell Woolrich, The* (1965); *Time of Her Life, The* (1931); *Times Square* (1929); *Vampire's Honey-*

moon (1985); *Violence* (1958); *Young Man's Heart, A* (1930)

As George Hopley:

Fright (1950); *Night Has a Thousand Eyes* (1945)

As William Irish:

After Dinner Story (1944); *Blue Ribbon, The* (1949); *Bluebeard's Seventh Wife* (1952); *Borrowed Crimes* (1946); *Dancing Detective, The* (1946); *Dead Man Blues* (1948); *Deadline at Dawn* (1944); *Eyes That Watch You* (1952); *I Married a Dead Man* (1948); *I Wouldn't Be in Your Shoes* (1943); *If I Should Die Before I Wake* (1945); *Phantom Lady* (1942); *Six Nights of Mystery* (1950); *Somebody on the Phone* (1950); *Waltz into Darkness* (1947); *You'll Never See Me Again* (1951)

Wormser, Richard

(1908–1977) *Also wrote as: Nick Carter*

Typical of the sort of gifted pop fiction craftsman who could have been a contender but never found the way to the top, Richard Wormser was a talented, entertaining writer with a busy career that lasted 40 years or so—through the pulp era, big-studio Hollywood, and the postwar paperback boom, garnered him some prestigious awards, and left him, by the time he died at 59, probably not much more recognizable a name than when he started. Things began haphazardly enough: as a young journalist, Wormser established his own financial news service in 1929, just in time for the stock market crash and the Great Depression to end the need for his service. In 1932 he found a job at Street & Smith, the publisher best known for its pulp magazines but right then starting up a news weekly it hoped would become a rival of *Time*. It didn't but by the time the magazine folded that same year Wormser had enough contacts on the pulp side of Street & Smith to get some story assignments. His work pleased the editors and he became a regular contributor to many of the Street & Smith titles. After the great success of the company's innovative magazine, *The Shadow*, the editors decided to follow it up with another "hero pulp," and they turned to a dormant but once highly popular crime-solving char-

acter, the star of countless dime novels of yore (written by numerous dime novel hacks) Nick Carter. Early in 1933 Wormser was picked to write the revived hero's adventures, a novel-length story to be completed every month. He modernized Carter, turning him into a relatively tough private investigator, though one who made use of fantastic equipment not available to the average *Black Mask* private eye—such as his bomb-carrying private airplane with a floor that could convert into a giant magnifying glass. Wormser churned out close to a million words (17 novels) about the new Nick Carter. Another 23 issues of *Nick Carter* magazine were produced before Street & Smith pulled the plug.

Wormser's first hardcover crime novel, *The Man with the Wax Face*, was published in 1934. This and a follow-up published the next year, *The Communist's Corpse*, were hard-boiled mysteries featuring a Manhattan detective sergeant and his truly unusual nemesis, a statuesque Swedish left-wing radical (read: communist) activist and book reviewer named Erika Strindberg. The books were breezy fun, with a cynical view of the political climate in depression-era New York.

Wormser worked in Hollywood as a screenwriter from the late '30s until the early '50s, laboring mostly on insignificant B westerns and mysteries. A story he sold to RKO, called "The Road to Carmichael's," was chosen by studio boss Howard Hughes to become the comeback vehicle for Robert Mitchum after the star returned from a two-month prison sentence for marijuana possession (the 1949 film would be called *The Big Steal*). Wormser returned to fiction-writing in the '50s, turning out solid westerns and crime novels, including *Battalion of Saints* (1961), an unusual story about Mormon soldiers in the Mexican War, *Drive East on 66*, and *The Perfect Pigeon*—tough, sleazy crime novels in the classic Gold Medal Books tradition. A western for children, *Ride a Northbound Horse* (1964), won a Western Writers of America award, but most of his later credits were ignoble adaptations of movies and television programs, including *Operation Crossbow* (1965), *The Wild Wild West* (1966), and *Torn Curtain* (1966). Wormser, however, was still capable of first-rate, original work to the end, as he proved with another Gold Medal original, *The Invader*

(1972), a thrilling suspense story of a New Mexico sheriff pitted against a band of holed-up Mafiosi. The book won Wormser the Mystery Writers of America Edgar Allan Poe Award that year for best paperback.

Works

All's Fair (1937); *Battalion of Saints* (1961); *Bedtime Story* (1964); *Black Mustang*, *The* (1971); *Body Looks Familiar*, *The* (1958); *Communist's Corpse*, *The* (1935); *Drive East on 66* (1961); *Hanging Heiress* (1949); *Invader*, *The* (1972); *Late Mrs. Five*, *The* (1960); *Lonesome Quarter*, *The* (1951); *Longhorn Trail*, *The* (1955); *Man with the Wax Face* (1934); *McLintock* (1963); *Operation Crossbow* (1965); *Pass Through Manhattan* (1940); *Perfect Pigeon* (1962); *Ranch by the Sea*, *The* (1970); *Ride a Northbound Horse* (1964); *Slattery's Range* (1957); *Sodom and Gomorrah* (1962); *Takeover*, *The* (1971); *Thief of Bagdad* (1961); *Three Cornered War* (1962); *Torn Curtain* (1966); *Wild Wild West*, *The* (1966)

As Nick Carter:

Bid for a Railroad (1934); *Bloody Heritage* (1933); *Crook's Empire* (1933); *Crime Flies High* (1933); *Death Dollars* (1933); *Death Has Green Eyes* (1934); *Death on Park Avenue* (1934); *Gate of Death* (1934); *Gilford Mystery*, *The* (1934); *Gold and Guns* (1933); *Letters of Death* (1933); *Maniacs of Science* (1933); *Marked for Death* (1933); *Newspaper Racket* (1934); *Six Rings of Death* (1933); *Thefts of Yellow* (1933); *Twenty Year Crimes*, *The* (1934)

Wren, P. C. (1885–1941)

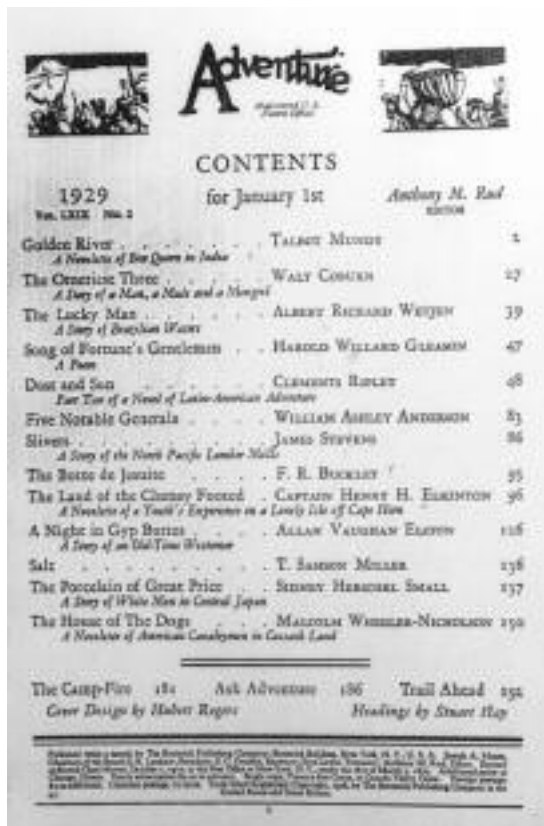
With his novel *Beau Geste*, Percival Christopher Wren created, fully formed, a new archetypal literary category, doing for the French Foreign Legion story what H. Rider HAGGARD did for the African adventure, Bram Stoker for the vampire, Zane GREY for the western, and so on. The literature of the Foreign Legion no longer has the same stature as many other genres among popular fiction enthusiasts, but once upon a time it loomed large in the collective daydreaming of the reading public, with a widely perceived set of clichéd settings, character types, and plot devices, nearly all born from the pen of P. C. Wren.

A native of Devonshire, England, Wren graduated from Oxford and then, eager for adventure and exotic experiences, went into military service, becoming a cavalry trooper stationed at various colonial outposts. He later signed on for a stint in the French Foreign Legion, the association that would ultimately make his fortune. Wren went to work in India for 10 years, mainly as a teacher and colonial administrator. His first books were teaching manuals, with such titles as *The Indian Teacher's Guide to the Theory and Practice of Mental, Moral and Physical Education* (1910). His first works of fiction used the Indian background with which he was familiar, and included elements of local myth and mysticism to melodramatic effect. It was not, however, until Wren turned to another

European nation's colonial stomping ground that the writer found success.

Beau Geste followed the fortunes of the three Geste siblings, a close-knit trio whose boyhood games of military honor and glory and Viking funerals foreshadow the drama and adventure to come. When the honor of the brotherhood is called into question by a mysterious theft, each young man attempts to deflect the accusation against the others by fleeing the country and enlisting in the French Foreign Legion, France's army of foreign volunteers, pledged to risk their lives in far-flung colonies to defend the empire of a country not their own. The legion's promised anonymity made it the legendary repository of criminals, fugitives, and those who, for one reason or another, want to escape their past lives in the no-questions-asked ranks. Wren introduces the reader to life and tradition in the legion, to a colorful cast of characters (including the author's rather broad notion of the American personality), and to the brutal discipline of a sadistic French sergeant who wields over the soldiers the power of life and death. The action moves to the vast desert of North Africa, where the characters are assigned to defend lonely Fort Zinderneuf against attacks by rebel tribesmen. The losses mount and the survivors face slow, inevitable annihilation in the sun-scorched wasteland. A final, tragic reunion of the Geste brothers and a last "Viking funeral" brings the story to a wrenching and satisfying end.

Wren followed the hugely successful work with three sequels, the novels *Beau Sabreur* and *Beau Ideal*, and a short story collection, *Good Gestes: Stories of Beau Geste, His Brothers, and Certain of Their Comrades in the French Foreign Legion*. He would write of other subjects, but the legion would remain Wren's bailiwick. Other writers followed his lead: George's SURDEZ and Theodore ROSCOE specialized in the subject, and tales of legionnaires were particularly popular in the adventure pulps (so much so that one short-lived pulp, *Foreign Legion Adventures*, was devoted entirely to tales of the modern mercenaries). But none would ever come close to Wren's success and worldwide identification with the romantic, exciting subject. Helping his cause were popular adaptations of *Beau Geste* as silent and sound motion pictures.



Contents page from *Adventure* magazine, 1929, featuring stories by Talbot Mundy and Walt Coburn

In addition to *Beau Geste* and its sequels, Wren wrote numerous short story collections with a legion setting, and, in 1933, introduced a new legionnaire hero in the form of boisterous adventure-lover Sinclair “Sindbad” Brody. Brody was featured in three novels, *Action and Passion* (1933), *Sindbad the Soldier* (1935), and, the best of them, *Fort in the Jungle* (1936), an exciting tale set in French Indochina.

Wren’s portrait of the Foreign Legion was romanticized but not pretty. His fiction was filled with evocative scenes of sweating discomfort, pain and exhaustion, soldiers choking their way over sandscapes and through jungle swamps, “the Legion marking its trail with the generous distribution of the graves of its sons.” Wren’s writing was often plagued by wooden dialogue, cardboard characterization, and—to most modern readers, anyway—colonialist chauvinism, but he could also produce scenes of gripping power (the disintegration of Fort Zinderneuf) and wrote with great feeling on questions of honor, loyalty, and brotherhood, and especially on the pleasure of adventure.

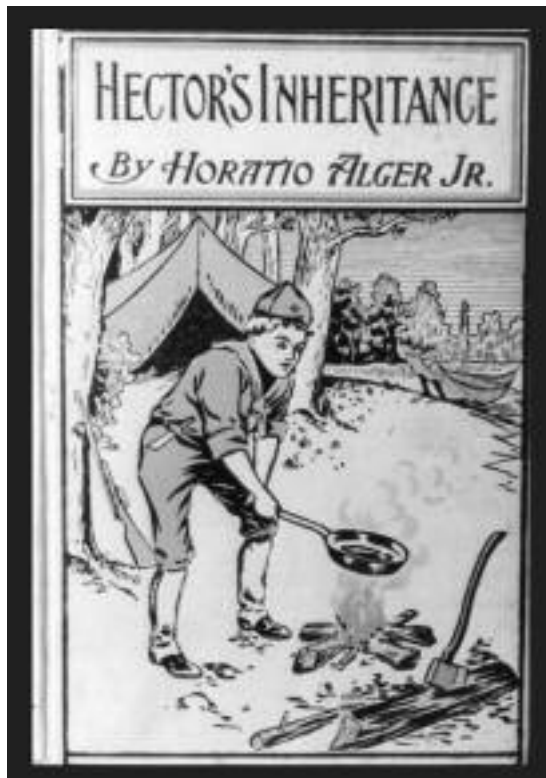
Works

Action and Passion (1933); *Beau Geste* (1924); *Beau Ideal* (1928); *Beau Sabreur* (1926); *Beggars’ Horses* (1934); *Bubble Reputation* (1936); *Cardboard Castle* (1938); *Cupid in Africa* (1920); *Dead Men’s Boot and Other Tales from the Foreign Legion* (1949); *Disappearance of General Jason, The* (1940); *Driftwood Spars* (1916); *Explosion* (1935); *Father Gregory, or Lures and Failures: A Tale of Hindustan* (1913); *Flawed Blades: Tales from the Foreign Legion* (1933); *Fort in the Jungle* (1936); *Good Gestes: Stories of Beau Geste, His Brothers, and Certain of Their Comrades in the French Foreign Legion* (1929); *Haunting of Henri* (1944); *Mammon of Righteousness, The* (1930); *Man of a Ghost, The* (1937); *Man the Devil Didn’t Want, The* (1940); *Mysterious Way* (1930); *Odd, but Even So* (1941); *Port o’ Missing Men* (1934); *Rough Shooting* (1938); *Sinbad the Soldier* (1935); *Snake and Sword* (1914); *Soldiers of Misfortune* (1929); *Sowing Glory: The Memoirs of Mary Ambree, English Woman Legionary* (1931); *Spanish Maine* (1935); *Stepsons of France* (1971); *Stories of the Foreign Legion* (1947); *Two Feet from Heaven* (1940); *Valiant Dust* (1932); *Wages of Virtue, The* (1916); *Worth While* (1937) (also published as *To the Hilt*)

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Horatio Alger Jr.'s rags-to-riches stories (like this one from 1909) were best-sellers for decades.

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