A reader’s guide to hard-boiled American crime novels

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A reader's guide to hard-boiled American crime novels.

by

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A Master's Dissertation, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Master of Arts degree of the Loughborough University of Technology.

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Introduction.

1. Purpose and criteria for selection.

The main purpose of this guide is to help the general reader who has an interest in the genre to find works which will satisfy that interest. The reader who has already enjoyed the work of a particular author should be able to discover further works of a similar type while those who are encountering the field for the first time should be able to discover the major figures in the genre by reading Section I and taking the writers detailed there as their starting point. It is hoped that this work would also be of use as a reference work for those intending to start a collection of first editions of this type of material or as a reference to what works are currently available in the UK.

The authors who are detailed in the entries are essentially any who may be seen to be working in the traditions established by the first generation of hard-boiled or tough guy writers during the '20's and '30's; principally the writers of private investigator (P.I.) stories who took their start from the conventions established by Carroll John Daly and Dashiell Hammett or the criminal centred style which was developed from the start given by James M. Cain. Other minor traditions, such as the gangster story, have been included but I have excluded the newer sub-genres of the juvenile delinquent story, the police procedural and the mafia centred story as it would appear that while these types of fiction may have much in common with the hard-boiled story (realism, violence, etc) they employ different techniques (third person narrative, multi perspective, etc) and are essentially different
categories within the larger grouping of American mystery of crime fiction. Such works have only been detailed where the authors have established themselves within the hard-boiled school with other works or where I have suggested specific authors or works as sharing particular themes with hard-boiled writers.

The bibliographies included are not intended to be exhaustive; I have only included works within the mystery genre and in some authors cases I have limited their bibliography specifically to hard-boiled novels. For the most part, however, once an author has become established within the hard-boiled tradition then I have tended towards including any subsequent crime fiction that has been produced and have only limited such inclusion when the author has clearly moved into a totally new category of crime fiction.

In the case of authors who have produced three or less novels that are clearly within the genre then I have not included them unless their work was a particularly fine example of the tradition or has proved to be particularly influential. Obviously, this has the effect of excluding many newer writers who have not yet published an extensive body of work and has also excluded a number of individual works from the past which could be of some interest; I have, however, included such writers in the suggested further reading/authors section at the foot of each entry.

Entries are of American writers using American settings only; I have excluded all writers who have attempted to set their stories outside of America (or, occasionally, Canada or Mexico) or the slightly larger group of non-American writers who have written
hard-boiled stories set in America.


Whenever possible I have attempted to find and read one or more examples of the work of the writers detailed in each entry. This process was made possible by the large re-printing programmes which have been undertaken over the last ten years by specialist publishing houses (detailed in Section II). Public libraries also proved to be a major resource for this kind of material and I have used the collections of three separate county library services for this purpose. Murder One bookshop in London also proved of great help as it is the specialist bookshop for crime fiction of all sorts and imports many works from the United States which would otherwise be hard or impossible to find.

Where I have been unable to find copies of any novels by a given author then I have attempted to find examples of shorter work in one of the many anthologies of American crime fiction that exist. In this way some idea of the author's style and themes could be gained. I have also consulted numerous secondary sources and have included the opinions and thoughts found in these sources where appropriate.

The suggestions for further reading and similar authors are obviously subjective. I have, however, attempted to reflect what appears to be the consensus of opinion found in the secondary sources and have only applied my own opinions where I have felt justified in doing so by having recognised particular similarities
or styles in the course of my reading and research. Where connections are made between works due to specific comments made in secondary sources then I have indicated this by giving a reference for the source.
Section I.

A Brief History of Hard-boiled American Crime Fiction.


The classical detective story was an American invention; in 1841 Edgar Allan Poe created the first of the great amateur detectives in the figure of Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*.\(^1\) Despite this origin, however, the classical detective story soon became a particularly British (or, indeed, English) form, first through the persona of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and then through a whole school of writers who have continued to work within the tradition up to the present day. It has been stated with some accuracy that "In America, the formal detective novel, though read widely, and practiced ... has never taken hold" because America lacks "the developed structures of a venerable history"\(^2\) which provides the background needed for the use of a formal yet recognisable structure in fiction. It was not until the rise of the "Hard-boiled" or "Tough Guy" school of crime fiction in the 1920's that America was possessed of a tradition of writing "as native as jazz, as recognisable as Mickey Mouse, as appealing as apple pie, as durable as the game of baseball".\(^3\)

Hard-boiled writing rejected the literary Rubrik cube style of plotting typical of the classical form; they "dropped the intricate puzzle, the static calm, the ingenious deduction" and "wrote a different story, characterised by violence, rapid action, colloquial language, and emotional impact".\(^4\) Most of the earliest
Abstract

The purpose of this work is to provide a guide to American hard-boiled crime novels. A history of hard-boiled American crime fiction is given which details the origins of American crime fiction and the origins of the hard-boiled school in Black Mask magazine. The influence of Black Mask writers Carrol John Daly and Dashiell Hammett is considered as well as that of the "tough guy" writers W.R. Burnett, Horace McCoy and James M. Cain. The influence of Raymond Chandler and the second generation of hard-boiled detective writers is then considered and is followed by an examination of the emergence of the "paperback original" market and the work of writers Cornell Woolrich, David Goodis, Mickey Spillaine and Jim Thompson. The developments which took place in the 1960's are then detailed with particular reference to the work of Ross Macdonald before the history is concluded by an examination of six writers to emerge in the 1970's and 1980's: Andrew Bergman, Roger L. Simon, Robert B. Parker, Jerome Charyn, Sara Paretsky and James Ellroy. The growth of critical examination, re-discovery and re-publishing of hard-boiled American Crime fiction is then examined in a separate section which is followed by an accompanying bibliography of critical and biographical literature relating to the field. An A - Z of entries on hard-boiled American crime writers and their work then follows. The entries consist of a biographical sketch, an assessment of the author's importance in the field, a bibliography with works of distinction being highlighted and suggestions for further reading and authors of related interest. There are entries for the following authors: Cleve F. Adams, William Ard, Willis
exponents of the form, however, produced their work for *Black Mask* magazine, where the editor from 1926 to 1936 was Captain Joseph T. Shaw who believed that "action is meaningless unless it involves recognisable human characters in three dimensional form".5 Thus it was that a style of fiction came to be developed which combined the use of tough, violent and contemporary material with a concern from characterisation which was a rejection of what had gone before and the beginning of a new tradition which was very soon to produce Dashiell Hammett and James M. Cain, a little later Raymond Chandler, later still Ross Macdonald and today provides the form from which a plethora of writers, some highly talented and some less so, have sprung.

II. *Black Mask*; Carroll John Daly, Dashiell Hammett and the *Black Mask* school*.

*Black Mask* was founded in 19201 by H.L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan in order to provide funds to support one of their other publications *The Smart Set*. In this *Black Mask* succeeded admirably and was sold after only six months for "an excellent price" which "assured the future of *The Smart Set.*"2 Under the editorship of Phil Cody and Harry North the magazine continued to grow in popularity and "*Black Mask* began to take on a specific character, and within two or three years a version of the heroic knight emerged".3 This development was largely the result of three factors: the appointment of Joseph T. Shaw as editor and the work of two authors, Carroll John Daly and Dashiell Hammett.
Joseph Shaw was a colourful character, a graduate of Bowdoin college, a winner of the national championship in sabers, a former bayonet instructor and five year veteran of the Hoover mission in Czechoslovakia. He was also, according to Julian Symons, "clearly an editor of genius" who had a clear idea of how the fiction in *Black Mask* should be developed and "eliminated everything unconnected with the physical excitement he demanded as rigorously as Ezra Pound blue-pencilled the adjectives in the early works of Ernest Hemingway". This comparison is not as facetious as it may at first appear for it was at this time that Hemingway was writing those early works which in many ways paralleled the development of the hard-boiled school (some critics have even argued that Hammett may have influenced Hemingway and critical comparison has been made between *The Sun Also Rises* and Hammett's *Red Harvest*). Something, then, would appear to have been in the air and the July 1927 issue of *Black Mask* contained the statement "We are constantly looking for new writers who have the *Black Mask* spirit and the *Black Mask* idea of what a short story should be".

Soon this search for new talent was to bear considerable fruit but before that Shaw was to turn to one of *Black Mask's* established writers, Carroll John Daly, to provide an indication of what the possibilities of the emerging form were.

Carroll John Daly has long been recognised as having produced the first fully realised hard-boiled stories. In 1922 *Black Mask* published a Dally story entitled *The False Button Combs* which has been called "the first hard-boiled detective story" (even though its main protagonist is not a detective!) and in the June
1923 issue *Knights of the Open Palm* was published which introduced the series character Race Williams "the first of a new type of private eye". Dally was never more than a competent writer but in Williams he created the first of the hard-boiled detectives, a violent man who lives within an urban environment and who is a professional detective (as opposed to the amateurs of the classical detective story) and it has been pointed out that while "Dally's influence would quickly be overshadowed by that of more talented writers ... he did establish a significant number of conventions of the formula". Just how quickly this overshadowing was to take place is shown by the fact that Dashiell Hammett, the first hard-boiled writer of real significance, was to publish his first short story in *Black Mask* in October 1923, a bare four months later.

Hammett had one great advantage over his contemporaries, he had been a real detective with the Pinkerton Agency for eight years which allowed him "to give an authenticity to his stories that no other writer of his stature could match". The character Hammett created in *Black Mask* was the Continental Op (ie. an operative for the Continental Detective Agency) who Hammett described as "the little man going forward day after day through mud and blood and death and deceit - as callous and brutal and cynical as necessary - towards a dim goal, with nothing to push or pull him towards it except he's been hired to reach it". Shaw was a great admirer of Hammett and felt that in him he had found the kind of writer that exemplified what he had been looking for. The Continental Op stories continued to be published and Shaw "set about to find a group good enough to follow the leader" or, as Erle Stanley 11
Gardner called it, "Hammettizing" the magazine. This process was to lead to the publication of work by a whole school of new writers such as Raoul Whitfield, George Harmon Coxe and Paul Cain who, while they never established reputations to rival Hammett's, did prove that the hard-boiled style extended beyond the work of any individual writer and also that there was a sufficiently large market to support a numerous number of writers in the field.

Hammett continued to write short stories until, with the support and encouragement of Shaw, he began work on the first of his novels. The first instalment of The Cleaning of Poisonville (a story which reflected Hammett's own experiences in Montana) was published in Black Mask in November 1927 and was quickly picked up for hardback publication by Alfred A. Knopf. Retitled Red Harvest Hammett's first novel (and his only novel to feature the Continental Op) was published at the start of 1929 and six months later The Dain Curse appeared, The Maltese Falcon and The Glass Key followed in 1930 and 1931 respectively. With these four novels Hammett set new standards for the crime novel as literature as well as showing what could be done with the still relatively new style of hard-boiled writing. Julian Symons has commented of The Glass Key in particular that it "is the peak of Hammett's achievement, which is to say the peak of the crime novel in the twentieth century" and that it "can stand comparison with any American novel of its decade" (a decade which included some of the best works of Faulkner and Hemingway). With the enormous success of The Maltese Falcon and its detective Sam Spade, however, Hammett was invited to Hollywood to work as a scriptwriter and was only to produce the comparatively lightweight
The Thin Man (1934) during the rest of his career. Despite the relative sparsity of his work it remains clear that Hammett established the hard-boiled style and proved that the form could work as popular literature while at the same time also striving for something better.

III. Tough Guys: W.R. Burnett, Horace McCoy and James M. Cain.

While Hammett and the other first generation of the Black Mask writers established the conventions of the private detective story other writers came to use the hard-boiled or tough guy approach in different ways. W.R. Burnett took the form and applied it to show the growing corruption of urban American life. His first novel Little Caesar was published in 1929 and "caused a sensation" and "created the gangster as the appropriate figure for his time". This theme was to have a particularly significant effect (especially when filmed in 1930) and has been credited with having influenced William Faulkner's Sanctuary and Graham Greene's Brighton Rock. Burnett himself continued to work within the genre and was to produce at least two more major works in High Sierra (1940) and The Asphalt Jungle (1950).

Horace McCoy was another writer who shied away from the conventions of the detective story but remained within the hard-boiled school. McCoy was a graduate of the Black Mask having published his first story in the magazine in 1927. In 1931, however, he arrived in Hollywood in an attempt to find work as a scriptwriter and his experience of life in Southern California produced the setting for his first novel They Shoot Horses Don't
They? (1935) which was set against the background of a depression dance marathon. With its bleak vision of the human condition They Shoot Horses Don't They? was a remarkable achievement which had a profound influence, particularly in France where "Camus, Satre, de Beauvoir and Malraux all saw McCoy's Novel as the first American existentialist Novel".5 McCoy continued to write novel up to the fifties (combining this with a long career in the film industry) producing five more novels including No Pockets in a Shroud and Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye which "like Hammett's Red Harvest, vividly depict the American city of the 1930's as almost totally corrupt, with violence and depravity as the casual by-products of everyday existence".6

James M. Cain was probably the most influential of the non detective hard-boiled writers who emerged in the 1930's. Cain's crime novels are squarely within the hard-boiled tradition ("the twenty-minute egg" according to David Madden7) and often employ the first person narrative technique so favoured of the writers of hard-boiled detective stories. It is through his choice of the character who provides the narration, however, that Cain gained his original and influential style, for the narrator is generally found in the person of a doomed criminal and Cain "intuitively identified with the criminal, and by doing so tapped into the popular subconscious and spotlit the sex appeal of crime".8 Cain's first novel The Postman Always Rings Twice was an instant and considerable success and proved to be an influence on Albert Camus' L'Etranger9 which provides an indication of the importance Cain was to have for a variety of later writers (particularly in the 1950's). In a writing
career that continued until his death in 1977 James M. Cain produced many other highpoints in the hard-boiled tradition including Serenade (1937), Mildred Pierce (1943) and Double Indemnity (1944), all of which show his particular themes of doomed men being destroyed by their own desire for strong and ruthless women.

IV. Raymond Chandler and the second generation of hard-boiled detective writers.

The next major development in the hard-boiled tradition came with the appearance of Raymond Chandler. Chandler's background was considerably different to that of previous hard-boiled writers as he had received an English public school education at Dulwich College before the first world war and he consequently brought to the character of the private eye a code of ethics which had not been present in the figure before. Chandler's first short story, Blackmailers Don't Shoot was published in Black Mask in December 1933 and over the next six years he developed the prototype for the figure of Phillip Marlowe who was to appear in The Big Sleep, Chandler's first novel published in 1939. Shaw found in Chandler's work the ideal replacement for Hammett and "frequently used" it "as a model to illustrate what could be done with style". Chandler, for his part, used Black Mask as a vehicle to develop his skills while being paid for it and in his novels incorporated many of the plot devices which he had first employed in his short stories.

With the publication of The Big Sleep Chandler introduced his fully realised private eye Phillip Marlowe. Marlowe differs from his predecessors in that his "cynicism is a defence against his
own doggish incorruptibility" and his hard-boiled exterior serves to hide a sensitive, educated, idealistic and, above all, moral interior. In his use of language Chandler also helped to develop the hard-boiled style in that "he gave the hard-boiled novel its distinctive sound by embellishing Hammett's tough-guy prose with colourful similes, barbed wisecracks, comic exaggerations, and witty dialogue". The Big Sleep was a success as a mystery novel and in the next two decades Chandler produced six more novels which displayed his "almost perfect ear for dialogue" and which comprise "the single most important body of hard-boiled series fiction".

Chandler's influence was to be enormous and his work found considerable success in both America and Britain. By 1953 and in failing health Chandler produced his last great work The Long Goodbye which elevated the hard-boiled novel to new heights of literary and psychological complexity: "In The Long Goodbye Chandler came closest to writing the mystery novel that isn't a mystery novel, the realistic novel with a couple of murders in which character is more important than anything, except style". Chandler thus bridged the gap between the hard-boiled writers of the thirties and the more sophisticated writers who were to appear in the post-war period. He was not the only writer to be working in the genre in the 1940's, many of the pulp writers of the '30's continued to write and were joined by some new writers such as Howard Browne and Leigh Brackett, but it was Chandler who proved that the style could be used to produce fiction of serious intent which incorporated both the zest and direct use of idiomatic language that had characterised the first generation of hard-boiled writers with a more
sophisticated understanding of psychological complexity and social consciousness which were necessary if the hard-boiled tradition was to have any validity in the more complex environment of the post-war world.


The first and second generations of hard-boiled writers were the product of the depression and the pulp magazines. After World War Two, however, the pulps went into a decline from which they never recovered. The new field which provided a market for the next generation of hard-boiled writers was that of the paperback originals. Initially the paperback field had been secured by Pocket Books who had begun publishing on June 19, 1939. Pocket Books specialised in reprints of a variety of different types of material which ranged from lightweight entertainment to classic works of literature. This new venture was a major success and during the course of the '40's a number of competitors emerged, the first being Avon in 1941 which was followed in quick succession by Popular Library (1942), Dell (1943), Bantam (1945), Graphic (1948), and Pyramid (1949). While the types of material which Pocket Books had printed had been varied it had also been of consistently high quality. The new paperback houses, however, tended towards sensationalism in their approach and hard-boiled writers were often seen as providing ideal material for this market with their comparatively high quotient of violence and sex. By the 1950's the paperback houses were no longer content to merely republish
previously printed works (although they always continued to do so, often repackaging, or even retitling, many a staid work in a garish cover and with suitably dramatic cover-copy) and they soon overtook the pulps as the major market for genre fiction of all types.

Many of the early writers of paperback originals had been pulp writers or had been published in hardback before the rise of the paperbacks. Cornell Woolrich was a case in point; he had started his crime writing career by contributing short stories to the pulps (including Black Mask in the 1930's\(^3\)), graduated to hard cover novels (producing his "Black Series" which was to have a major influence on later writers and the development of \textit{film noir}) which were then reprinted together with collections of his short stories in paperback, finally he produced directly for the paperback market. David Goodis followed a similar pattern, his first five novels were originally published in hardback between 1939 and 1950 (his second Dark Passage was also serialised in the Saturday Evening Post and was made into a film in 1946\(^4\)). From 1951, however, Goodis produced directly for the paperback market, publishing thirteen originals before his death in 1967. Goodis also provides an interesting example of the new kinds of themes which were emerging in the paperback field during these years. His work is uniformly concerned with society's losers ("the wounded and the slain"\(^5\)) and combines the \textit{noir} atmosphere of Woolrich with the doomed central character (and usually narrator) after the pattern of James M. Cain.

The writer who really proved that the hard-boiled novel could combine with the paperback market to staggering effect (no or
at least in terms of sales) was Mickey Spillaine. All of Spillaine's Mike Hammer novels were originally published in hardback but were produced with the re-print market very much in mind. Spillaine's success was enormous, at one time he had "written seven of the all-time ten fiction (not just mystery) bestsellers" and in terms of paperback sales *Signet* could claim as early as 1953 that "over 15,000,000 copies of his books have been published in *Signet* editions". In terms of their characterisation and plot Spillaine's books such as *I, The Jury* (1947) and *Vengeance Is Mine!* (1950) did little or nothing to further the hard-boiled tradition or form. Indeed, in many ways Mike Hammer was closer to Carroll John Daly's Race Williams than to Sam Spade or Phillip Marlowe and Spillaine, while a gifted storyteller, was never in danger of competing with Hammett or Chandler as a writer. The real importance of the Mike Hammer books for the genre was that they showed that the public was eager for much higher levels of sex and violence than had before been the case and that when these were presented to them in a cheap and accessible form then they were ready to respond by purchasing in their millions.

One writer who exploited the new opportunities presented by the more open standards available in the paperback era was Jim Thompson. In a career of writing almost exclusively for the paperback market Thompson produced twenty nine novels between 1942 and 1972. It has been said that "Jim Thompson is to James M. Cain as Raymond Chandler is to Dashiell Hammett ...Thompson's talent and skills are worthy of his predecessor, but ...he brings them to bear on areas his predecessor did not explore, in a voice uniquely his
Thompson's achievement was to take the method of Cain and Goodis (the first person narrative of the doomed loser) and apply it to the character of an amoral psychopath without ever making that character unbelievable or wholly repellent (although their actions are often distinctly unpleasant and disturbing). In such novels as *Pop. 1280* (1964) and *The Killer Inside Me* (1953) Thompson produced "exactly what the French enthusiasts for existential American Violence were looking for in the works of Dashiell Hammett, Horace McCoy and Raymond Chandler" and, together with David Goodis he "fills a significant gap in the continuity of post-war American fiction, a link between popular literature and the avant-garde".

Two other hard-boiled writers who emerged from the paperback period were Richard Stark (Donald E. Westlake) and John D. Macdonald. Richard Stark's books featuring Parker, a violent professional thief, were all produced for the paperback market and in their level of violence had clearly learnt the lesson of Mickey Spillaine's success. Stark, however, is a more skilful writer than Spillaine and the Parker books contain a "cold harshness that makes them transcendent the genre". John D. Macdonald was another writer who spend most of his career writing for the paperback market and in one of his early novels *The Neon Jungle* (1953) even went so far as to have one of his characters pay tribute to Mike Hammer. Macdonald was, however, to develop a much more complex and sympathetic character than Hammer in his Travis McGee novels from 1964 onwards. McGee represents the beginnings of the development of a more human private detective, he certainly owes a great deal to Phillip Marlowe in terms of his incorruptibility, toughness and
humour but also represents the start of a new trend by his concern for social issues and for a growing tendency for the private eye to become emotionally and psychologically involved with his clients and their problems (although this process can be seen to have begun in Chandler's *The Long Goodbye*). In this John D. Macdonald paralleled the emergence of his namesake Ross Macdonald in the 1960's; a writer who came to be seen as the inheritor of Raymond Chandler's crown as the next truly significant writer in the field.

VI. Ross Macdonald and the 1960's.

The tradition of the hard-boiled private eye, after the pattern of Phillip Marlowe rather than Mike Hammer, had been kept alive throughout the 1950's by a number of writers other than Chandler himself. William Campbell Gault, Wade Miller and many others helped to provide an antidote some of the excesses which had come to the fore after the success of Spillaine & Co. It was the work of Ross Macdonald (originally published as John Macdonald, then John Ross Macdonald and finally as Ross Macdonald to prevent confusion with John D. Macdonald), however, that was primarily responsible for modernising the hard-boiled private eye and preventing the figure from becoming an anachronism in the 1960's and 1970's.

Macdonald's first novel featuring private eye Lew Archer (the surname being taken from Sam Spade's partner in the *Maltese Falcon*) was *The Moving Target*, published in 1949 (four other early works were also published under the author's real name, Kenneth Miller, but none of these featured Archer). During the 1950's,
'60's and '70's Macdonald produced a further sixteen Archer novels and established his place as one of the genre's masters. One feature of Macdonald's achievement is "he offers a nonviolent, liberal-humanist detective in sharp contrast to bloodthirsty hitmen like Mike Hammer"¹, and that "Archer's innovation in the genre is his questioning conscience".² Certainly, Macdonald owed much to Chandler in this but Archer's conscience is of a different type and in a different context to that of Marlowe (although they share the same Californian locale). Archer has a tendency to become more emotionally involved in his cases than his predecessors and this is combined with "Macdonald's sensitivity to people who are caught in the conflicts of social change" which "is apparent throughout his fiction".³ It was these concerns which enabled Macdonald to mirror the changes that took place in American society in the 1960's and '70's. In novels such as The Instant Enemy (1968) and The Far Side of the Dollar (1965) Macdonald reflected the changes that had overtaken family life and what was then known as "the generation gap". Such considerations, however, were never handled in a trite, glib or sensationalist manner and "the guilt that emerges in the novels is rarely traced to one person, but usually involves the full or partial commitments of several people at one stage or another".⁴ Such a view of American society struck a resonant chord with a nation deep in introspection over the fallout of the 1960's (Vietnam, Watergate, etc.) and by the early '70's Ross Macdonald was being considered a major novelist by many critics; Richard Sale commented that Macdonald had "become the best writer we have about California".⁵ In the 1970's Macdonald continued to explore themes which examined the dislocation of American family life but in books
like *The Underground Man* (1971) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1973) he also incorporated themes reflecting concern over social issues such as ecology which showed the extent to which the classic hard-boiled detective had been developed and made a part of the contemporary environment.

VII. The 1970's and 1980's.

In the 1970's a whole new crop of writers emerged who took up the style of the hard-boiled detective story, either in fairly direct descent from the Hammett-Chandler-Macdonald tradition or by adding new elements to the already established pattern. George Baxt and Joseph Hansen both introduced homosexual detectives and George C. Chesbro created Robert Fredericson "a dwarf with a doctorate in criminology and a black belt in Karate".¹ Most writers, however, have been content to stay closer to the classic central figure of the hard-boiled tradition while introducing contemporary themes and locations in the cases which their protagonists set out to solve. There have, however, also been attempts to solve the problems of dealing with the contemporary world in hard-boiled fiction not by modernising the character but rather by setting novels in the private eye hayday of the 1930's, '40's and '50's. The most prominent of the writers to follow this path has been Andrew Bergman who in two novels in the 1970's introduced Jack Levine, a fat and bald New York detective who benefits from both the classic setting of the 1940's and his creators (and the readers) consciousness of the course that American history was to take. Levine was introduced in *The Big Kiss Off of*
1944 (1974) and his career was continued in Hollywood and Levine (1976). The latter of these concerned the House Un-American Activities Committee and has Richard Nixon as one of its main characters. In this way Bergman managed to combine the advantages of producing works which "read as if they were written in the 1940's" with a post Watergate consciousness which allows him to comment on America in both the '40's and '70's. These were the only two novels which Bergman produced in the genre but other writers have used his technique including Max Allan Collins (True Detective, 1983) Joe Gores (Hammett: A Novel, 1975) and Stuart Kaminsky.

A different approach was taken by Roger L. Simon who produced three novels in the '70's which featured Moses Wine, a detective who shares much common ground with his predecessors in the tradition but is also an ex student radical who is more inclined to smoke grass than to hit the office bottle. In his three novels The Big Fix (1973), Wild Turkey (1976) and Peking Duck (1979) Simon also introduced a much greater level of political consciousness into the figure of the hard-boiled detective (in contrast with previous eras where hard-boiled novels had often contained a political sub-text but where the protagonists had generally been too cynical to follow any particular ideology unless it was in totally negative terms such as Mike Hammer's anti-communism).

Most writers in the 1970's, however, were more content to accept the basic archetypes of the tradition and then expand them through the continued development of the central character and his experiences (a la Macdonald). Michael Z. Lewin, Michael Collins and Arthur Lyon all followed this pattern to some considerable effect.
but probably the most consistently successful of this type of writer has been Robert B. Parker. From his debut in *The Godwulf Manuscript* in 1974 Parker's character Spenser (spelt like the poet as Marlowe is spelt like the playwright) has developed in complexity to the extent that Parker has been identified as "the most significant exponent of the private eye today". While Spenser is very much in the Spade/Marlowe/Archer tradition he is also a man of the modern age, indeed, at times he is almost a parody of the "new man", being understanding of the feminist viewpoint, a gifted cook and health fanatic who is also unafraid of showing his feelings. In this he follows the pattern of Lew Archer in Macdonald's work by becoming very much personally involved in his cases, in Spenser's case, however, this is offset by the fact that with his sometime helper Hawk (a black ex-boxing opponent who now hires out as a hit man) Spenser often becomes involved in the sort of violent confrontations with his opponents that were often missing from Macdonald's work. This, however, often leads to even greater self examination in Spenser as he tries to come to terms with the emotional and ethical implications of what he has had to do.

In the 1980's Parker had continued to flourish as, indeed, has the genre. Other non detective writers emerged who also added considerably to the continued development of the hard-boiled tradition. Elmore Leonard had been "discovered" in the 1980's, despite the fact that he has been writing crime fiction since 1969, and other writers such as George V. Higgins and K.C. Constantine have worked against backgrounds of criminals, policemen and lawyers to produce novels which, while clearly within the tradition, have
abandoned many of its more obvious conventions. What seems to be common to all writers in the field now is a definite sense of place (a development which is primarily due to the continued influence of Chandler) and virtually every series character may be identified with a particular (and real) city; Parker and Higgins use Boston as their setting, Leonard and Loren D. Estleman Detroit, Jonathan Valin Cincinnati, etc. It may now be that in terms of quantity at least the hard-boiled school is healthier now than in any other period since the demise of the pulps.

Finally, it remains to detail the latest developments in the genre as personified by three writers to have come to prominence in the 1980's: Jerome Charyn, Sara Paretsky and James Ellroy. Jerome Charyn entered the field after a respected career in mainstream fiction and academic writing. He entered the genre after having discovered Ross Macdonald in 1973 and soon produced the first of four novels (Blue Eyes, 1975) which came to be known as the Issac Quartet. In the 1980's he has continued to work in the field producing, among others, War Cries Over Avenue C (1985), Metropolis (1986) and Paradise Man (1987). Charyn is a serious novelist and he presents his vision of contemporary New York and America by the skilful use of the conventions of the genre "within the context of current and recent American literary experimentation with narrative and form".

Sara Paretsky has also attempted to do something different within the genre but her methods have had less to do with "narrative and form" (indeed, in this respect she is quite solidly within the traditional pattern) and more to do with the fact that
her central character is a woman. There have been women hard-boiled writers before (Leigh Brackett) and women hard-boiled detectives (such as Jerry Wheeler as created by Cornell Woolrich) but Paretsky combines the two in the first post feminist hard-boiled character who is "refusing to accept that there's a place where a woman can't be". Her detective, V. I. Warshawski, is not just a single issue character, however, and the novels featuring her work effectively as examples of the hard-boiled tradition regardless of their protagonists sex. Paretsky has continued to grow in success and by the end of the 1980's was approaching the level of achievement of Robert B. Parker.

Finally, there remains James Ellroy who seemed to appear from nowhere with Browns Requiem (1981), which won the Shamus Award for outstanding private eye novel of the year, and continued to produce high quality crime fiction of all sorts throughout the decade. Fine as Ellroy's work was little could prepare the reader for the achievement of The Black Dahlia (1988) and The Big Nowhere (1989) in which Ellroy used many different elements from sources throughout the hard-boiled tradition. Both are period pieces set in the 1940's and 1950's and thus owe something to Andrew Bergman. In narrative form they own much to the detective novel of the past but each also presents a horrific vision of a corrupt and loathsome society using mechanisms which are strongly reminiscent of the work of Jim Thompson and the best of the noir writers of the '50's. Ellroy thus may be seen to have re-unified the two major hard-boiled traditions, the followers of Raymond Chandler and those of James M. Cain and such an achievement can only augur well for the survival
and development of hard-boiled writing into the 1990's and beyond.

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IV.


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Section II
The Growth of Critical examination, Re-Discovery and Re-Publishing of Hard-boiled American Crime Fiction

Recently an interesting aspect of the continued development of the hard-boiled tradition in American crime fiction has been the parallel development of a body of published critical work concerning the genre. The serious consideration of hard-boiled writing as literature began primarily in France where the *Serie Noir* imprint, which published many of the major and minor works of the genre, has long enjoyed considerable success and respect. The degree to which such works have been respected by the French intelligentsia is reflected by the influence hard-boiled writers have had on modern French letters (Cain's influence on Camus for example) and cinema (Francois Truffaut, Bertrand Travernier, Jean-Jacques Beineix and Claude Miller all having filmed hard-boiled works at various points). Similarly, in Britain Hammett and, especially, Chandler have received widespread critical acclaim and attention. In the United States, however, serious critical attention was much longer in coming, perhaps because the proximity if the subject matter made it more difficult for the American critic to distance himself properly from the material.

The first major work which attempted to address this imbalance came in 1968 with the publication of *Tough Guy Writers of the Thirties* by the Southern Illinois University press in which a number of academics turned their attention to a variety of hard-boiled writers such as Hammett, Chandler, Cain, McCoy and (in a
section on "descendants") Jim Thompson and John D Macdonald. In addition to individual hard-boiled writers the influence of Hemingway was considered, the literary antecedence of the genre and the Black Mask school. Taken as a whole Tough Guy Writers of the Thirties did a great deal to establish the fact that hard-boiled novels could be considered as a separate category of fiction rather than just as a sub-genre of crime or mystery fiction.

Similarly, Geoffrey O'Brien's Hardboiled America: The Lurid Years of the Paperbacks (1981) helped to highlight the post-war development of the genre. In this work O'Brien examined a number of writers such as Hammett, Chandler, Cain, Thompson, Goodis and Spillane. O'Brien's particular achievement was to present such writers within the context of the market for which they produced their work and to show how this market reflected the social changes that took place in America immediately after the Second World War. While his work is both scholarly and intelligent O'Brien also manages to convey a sense of his own enthusiasm and affection for the subject at hand.

In America in the 1970's and early 80's a number of works appeared which, either in part or in whole, concerned themselves with the hard-boiled tradition. Stoddart Martin's book Californian Writers (1983), for example, examined Hammett, Cain and Chandler in some detail within a wider consideration of the west coast literary tradition while William Ruehlmann's Saint with a Gun: The Unlawful American Private Eye (1974) compared the conventions of the private eye within the reality of American society and law enforcement in the period. David Geherin's Sons of Sam Spade: The Private Eye in
the 70's (1980) critically examined the work of Robert B. Parker, Roger L. Simon and Andrew Bergman. In The Craft of Crime: Conversations with Crime Writers (1983) John C. Carr allowed a number of writers, including Robert B. Parker, Gregory Macdonald and Ed McBain to have their own say on the genre in which they work.

Meanwhile, in Britain a considerable body of work appeared devoted to the study of Raymond Chandler and his work. Miriam Gross collected a series of essays on Chandler's work in the film industry in Raymond Chandler in Hollywood (1982) while Edward Thorp attempted to place Chandler's work in its proper geographic and historical context in Chandler's Town (1983). Also in Britain American Crime Fiction appeared in 1988. Edited by Brian Docherty this collection of academic critical essays examined such writers as Hammett, Chandler, Spillane, George V. Higgins and Jerome Charyne in what was a useful, if slightly less ambitious and successful, supplement to Tough Guy Writers of the Thirties and Hardboiled America.

Whilst it would seem that most serious writers and critics seem to shy away from critical examination of the genre as a whole this has not been the case among biographers. Serious biographies, including much critical discussion of the individual author's work, have appeared on many hard-boiled writers. As early as 1963 Philip Durham had produced a work on Chandler Down These Streets a Man Must Go, while in 1976 Frank Macshane produced his superb The Life of Raymond Chandler and in 1981 Jerry Spei's rather superfluous Raymond Chandler was published. Diane Johnson's The Life of Dashiell Hammett (1984) was another excellent biography and
was swiftly joined by Private Investigations: The Novels of Dashiell Hammett by Sinda Gregory in 1985. David Madden's James M. Cain appeared in 1970 while Mathew J. Bruccoli's Ross Macdonald appeared in 1984 and in the same year, in France, the biography of David Goodis Goodis: La Vie En Noir Et Blanc by Philippe Garnier appeared. These works are of a uniformly high standard and when taken as a whole they combine to provide the nearest thing available to a comprehensive critical history of hard-boiled writing.

Another development which reflected the growth of interest in hard-boiled writing has been the rediscovery and reprinting of a number of genre authors from the past. In America this process was largely undertaken by the Creative Book Company with the Black Lizard imprint which throughout the 1980's reprinted the works of many authors including Jim Thompson, Harry Whittington, Paul Cain, Frederic Brown and David Goodis. In Britain a similar project was undertaken by Zomba Books with their Black Box Thriller series in the early 1980's which included omnibus editions of the work of Horace McCoy, Jim Thompson, W.R. Burnett, Frederic Brown, David Goodis and Cornell Wollrich. Unfortunately Zomba folded in 1984 and the series came to an end, but in many ways its work has been continued by the No Exit Press which has republished works by, among others, Bart Spicer, William Campbell Gault, Arthur Lyon, Howard Brown and Raoul Whitfield. Mainstream publishing houses have also begun to republish many of the works for which they hold the rights; Simon and Schuster with their Blue Murder imprint, and Allison and Busby with their American Crime Series have been particularly active in this field. In addition to this authors such as Jim Thompson are
now being repackaged and republished in paperback (in Thompson's case by Corgi) as publishers realise the potential cult audience for such writers. When these trends are taken as a whole it is probably fair to say that it is now easier to build up a substantial and reasonably comprehensive collection of American hard-boiled fiction than at any time in the past.
Section III
A Bibliography of Critical and Biographical Literature Relating to
Hard-Boiled American Crime Fiction

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COLLINS, Max Allan & Ed Gorman. Jin Thompson: The Killer Inside HIM,

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DURHAM, Philip. Down These Mean Streets a Man Must Go. Raymond
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GEHERIN, David. The American Private Eye. New York: Frederic Ungar,
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Section IV

A-Z Entries

The entries that follow consist of a brief biographical sketch and a note pointing particular themes and items of interest or importance in the author's work. If # appears before the author's name at the head of the entry then this denotes him to be of outstanding merit or influence. A bibliography is then given (in chronological order) with annotation for works of particular interest. * preceding a bibliographic entry denotes the work to be a particularly good or representative example of the author's work or of particular interest to the development of the genre as of particular interest to the development of the genre as a whole. ** preceding an entry indicates this work to be an outstanding example of the genre. Where a particular work is followed by (») and details of another author's work then this denotes that the novel detailed should be of particular interest to those who have enjoyed that which was detailed in the main entry. At the end of the entry details following » are of author's or particular novels which may be of interest to those who have enjoyed the work of the author detailed in the entry.

Suggested further reading is generally but not exclusively confined to other hard-boiled novels or crime fiction in general.

Bibliographic Information is of the first American Edition (except in the few instances where the first edition was
British when both editions are given) and (when available) details are given of any British Editions produced from 1980 onwards. The main sources consulted for the Bibliographic details which follow were:


*Twentieth-Century Crime and Mystery Writers* and *The Writers Directory* were the works most often consulted for bibliographic information and were also the major biographical sources.
Cleve F. Adams (born 1895 died 1949

Adams, a friend and contemporary of Raymond Chandler, began writing in the 1930's after a varied career including a spell as a detective,¹ a distinction that he shared with Dashiell Hammett who was an influence on Adams to such an extent that he continuously re-used Hammett's plot devices throughout his work.² The most interesting aspects of Adams' work today are the facts that his main character appears to be the antithesis of the classic private detective; he is a racist, a fascist, a misogynist and it has been pointed out that his characters "apparent soft heart is itself a shell concealing a brutal and cynical core".³ In this he may be seen as precursor of Mickey Spillaine and other later writers, although his own work is very much a product of its time and enjoyable and atmospheric for that very reason.

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William Ard: (born 1922 died 1920)

Native New Yorker and ex-Marine William Ard is chiefly remembered for the creation of private-eye Timothy Dane who in the 1950's was very much against prevailing genre trends by being "young, naive, tender with women, inept at machismo, incapable of escaping tight spots single-handed, resorting to violence rarely"; 1 In this he was in many ways the predecessor of the more fallible detectives of the '70's and '80's but his Broadway settings and the noir atmosphere of his best work shows him to be as much a product of the '50's as his more brutal and sensationalist contemporaries.

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Don't Come Crying To Me. New York: Rinehart, 1954.


Published under the name Ben Kerr.


Ard's most widely read novel is also considered by many to be his best. Dane is hired by a newspaper to investigate the shooting of a policeman by a young man who claims that he only acted to prevent the rape of his sister. For political reasons the police and local officials decide on a cover up and Dane finds himself being hunted down through New York with nobody willing to believe the evidence he has collected and the police as intent on his death as everybody else.
Published under the name Thomas Wills.


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As Bad As I Am. New York, Rinehart, 1959.


When She Was Bad. New York, Dell, 1960.


Willis Todhunter Ballard (born 1903 died 1980)

W.T. Ballard was a product of the *Black Mask* School of writers, serving his apprenticeship with the magazine between 1933 and 1942.¹ His first series character was Bill Lennox who was not a private detective but rather a "trouble shooter" for a Hollywood Studio. Despite this he shared many of the traits of the creations of Ballard's *Black Mask* contemporaries in that he was tough, cynical and "used violence willingly, but only to combat violence".² Ballard produced three novels featuring Lennox in the 1940's before abandoning the genre for much of the 1950's in order to concentrate on writing westerns. In the 1960's however, Ballard produced a number of genre works, including two more Bill Lennox novels, in which he continued to uphold the traditions of *Black Mask* with tough, entertaining and well written crime novels showing his flair for plotting and the dramatic use of violence.

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Published under the name P.D.Ballard.

Published under the name Neil MacNeil.


Published under the name P.D.Ballard.

Published under the name Nick Carter.

Published under the name P.D.Ballard.

>> Cleve Adams
Robert Leslie Bellem
Norbert Davis
Racoul Whitfield
Bill S. Ballinger (born 1912)

After following careers in advertising and radio scriptwriting, Bill Ballinger turned to mystery writing in the mid-'40s creating private eye Barr Breed, a character set firmly in the tradition of Sam Spade. After producing two Breed novels, however, Ballinger abandoned the hard-boiled tradition in favour of suspense stories utilising the techniques of multi perspective narration the most famous of these being *The Wife Of The Red-Haired Man* (1957).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Novels featuring Barr Breed.


( > Dashiell Hammett. *The Maltese Falcon*).


Howard Browne

Thomas Dewey

Robert Finnegan
References


George Baxt (born 1923)

George Baxt is chiefly known for his trilogy of detective novels featuring detective Pharaoh Love (A Queer Kind Of Death, Swing Low, Sweet Harriet and Topsy and Evil). The character of Love was a major departure from the norm of the classic American detective in that he was black (not unknown but still, in the 1960's, decidely rare) and homosexual. In this Baxt was clearly reflecting the changes in perceptions and attitudes which were overtaking American society in the period and was also laying the groundwork which would allow other writers to develop similar themes (particularly Joseph Hansen).

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Robert Leslie Bellem (born 1902 died 1968)

Following a brief career as a journalist Bellem turned to pulp writing in the 1920's and in the June 1934 issue of Spicy Detective created Dan Turner, the Hollywood Detective.¹ S.J. Perelman said of Turner that he was "the apotheosis of all private detectives, out of Ma Baker by Sam Spade",² the character was also an immediate success and in 1942 was given his own pulp magazine Dan Turner, Hollywood Detective, which ran until 1950.³ Bellem's writing was often zany and always action packed and today his work has considerable period charm. In a career spanning almost thirty years he published over three thousand stories in the pulps⁴ and five novels, two of which were co-authored by Cleve Adams (Bellem also produced short stories with Willis Todhunter Ballard with whom he shared the same Hollywood Locale).
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Andrew Bergman (born 1945)

Bergman is a native of New York and holds a Ph.D in American Intellectual History\(^1\) he wrote two novels in the mid '70's featuring private eye Jack Levine which were set in the '40's. Bergman's two Levine stories are generally considered the best of the sub-genre of period hard-boiled novels which were particularly popular in the '70's, probably because, as Melvyn Barnes has pointed out, the two books work "as affectionate historical novels rather than offensive parodies".\(^2\) After completing a biography of James Cagney in 1975 Bergman turned his talents to screenwriting and has published no more novels since.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**The Big Kiss Off Of 1944.** New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1974. Introduces Jack Levine (who describes himself as "basic 1944 Prole ") a down at heel New York detective. Levine is employed by Kerry Lane who is being blackmailed over some "Stag movies" she once made. As Levine investigates it becomes clear that more is involved than at first seemed the case; various blackmailers are killed and Levine discovers that Kerry Lane is the daughter of one of Republican presidential candidate Thomas E.Dewey's main financial backers who the Democrats are keen to intimidate.

Walter Adrian, who has allegedly committed suicide. Along the way Levine once again becomes involved with historical figures including Humphrey Bogart and Richard M Nixon.

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2. BARNES, Melvyn. Murder In Point. 1986, 120.

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Lawrence Block (born 1938)

Lawrence Block's career as a writer began inauspiciously in the 1950's with his producing soft-core pornography for the paperback original market, although he has said of himself at the time "what I really wanted to do was a detective novel".¹ In this Block soon succeeded, serving a long apprenticeship in the paperback market throughout the 1960's writing crime and spy fiction. It was in the 1970's, however, that Block gained wider recognition, largely through the creation of two series characters: Matt Scudder and
Bernie Rhodenbarr. Scudder is set firmly within the hard-boiled tradition; he is an ex-policeman who has quit the force after his accidental shooting of a child and now finds himself investigating a variety of crimes as well as carrying a serious drink problem. The Rhodenbarr books, on the other hand, are much more lighthearted, detailing the adventures of a professional burglar who through circumstances is forced to investigate crimes to clear his own name. As a writer Block is a wonderful craftsman; his plots are tight, his characterisations believable and his dialogue reflects the best traditions of the wise cracking wit so associated with the genre.

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A couple are attacked while honeymooning in the country and the new bride is brutally raped; rather than report the crime the couple decide to track down their assailants and exact their own justice.
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**Two For Tanner.** New York: Fawcett, 1967.

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Published under the name Paul Kavanagh; all the Kavanagh books feature a shell shocked ex Green Beret who's skills are exploited by a government security agency (so predating the trends for the post Watergate thrillers of the 1970's where good and bad guys use the same methods as well as the returning NAM Vet device which was to become so popular in the 80's with *Rambo* et. al.).


Published under the name Paul Kavanagh

**Make Out With Murder.** New York: Fawcett, 1974.

**Not Comin' Home To You.** New York: Putnam, 1974.

Published under the name Paul Kavanagh.


While In The Midst Of Death was the first Matt Scudder novel published this was the first written and introduces the character by having him hired by the father of a murder victim to investigate the crime.

Probably the best of the Scudder books; the ex cop holds a letter "to be opened in the case of my death" for a petty crook, Spinner. Spinner is murdered and the letter turns out to be details of three people who were being blackmailed. Scudder pretend to be a blackmailer himself so the murderer will be flushed out by coming to kill him as he had Spinner.

The first Bernie Rhodenbarr novel finds "the happy house breaker" hired to steal a specific item from an apartment. He finds himself in the apartment with a corpse and the police about to enter, he has been set up and decides his only course is to escape and find a real killer.
Once again Rhodenbarr finds himself alone with a corpse, this time one murdered while he was hiding in the closet.


Rhodenbarr is intrigued by tales of a lost Kipling poem and decides to use his particular skills to satisfy his curiosity. When he gains entry he finds.... another corpse.1


Another Bernie Rhodenbarr adventure.

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A Matt Scudder novel.

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Fredric Brown
Evan Hunter
E. W. Hornung
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Richard S Prather

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3. REILLY, John M ed. Twentieth Century Crime and Mystery Writers. 1985, 87

Leigh Brackett (pseudonym for Leigh Douglass born, 1915 died 1977)

Leigh Brackett is chiefly remembered for her work as a science fiction and screenplay writer. It was, however, her first crime novel No Good from a Corpse which won her the assignment to co-script (with William Faulkner) the screenplay for Howard Hawks' version of Chandler's The Big Sleep. The reasoning behind this was sound as her detective Ed Cline was squarely in the Hammett/Chandler tradition and Brackett was clearly both knowledgeable of and comfortable with the genre. In her subsequent career Brackett was
only to produce four more novels but continued to work as a scriptwriter producing the scripts for such film classics as *Rio Lobo* as well as for Robert Altman's disappointing 1973 version of Chandler's *The Long Goodbye*. Brackett also deserves to be remembered as the first woman to successfully work within the hard-boiled tradition, forty years before the appearance of the most notable female writer to have used the *genre*, Sara Paretsky.

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  Ghost written for George Saunders and published under his name.


  Republished in UK, London: Blue Murder, 1989. Walter Sherris is attacked and beaten by a group of juvenile delinquents; he sets out to track them down himself.

  (>> Lawrence Block *Deadly Honeymoon*

  Evan Hunter *The Blackboard Jungle*)


Howard Browne
Raymond Chandler
William Campbell Gault
Joanthan Latimer
Sara Paretsky

References


Gil Brewer (Born 1922 died 1983)

Gil Brewer was born in New York State and turned to writing after seeing service with the U.S. Army in France and Belgium during the Second World War. An admirer of such literary giants as Hemmingway and Faulkner, Brewer was discovered by former Black Mask editor Capt. Joseph T Shaw who was, by the '40's, working as a literary agent. Brewer produced many novels, mostly for the pulp and paperback original market and helped to develop the tradition of hard-boiled writing which took its start from Cain's doomed losers as opposed to the more usual Hammett/Chandler style detectives. Brewer's Florida locations also placed him firmly in the emerging
sub-group of Southern hard-boiled writers such as Jim Thompson and John D MacDonald.

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Brewer's greatest success concerns Alex Bland who visits his old wartime friend Verne, only to discover him married to a ruthless and deadly femme fatale.

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Ray Nicholas, down and out and desperate, is picked up while hitchhiking by a couple who turn out to be on the run from the Mob. His real troubles start here.


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4. Ibid.

Frederic Brown (born 1906 died 1972)

Brown was born in Ohio and was self educated\(^1\), although he
eventually attended the University of Cincinnati and Hannover
College in Indiana (but was never awarded a degree)\(^2\). He followed a
career in journalism before taking up pulp writing and moving to the
midwest to facilitate his recovery from a respiratory condition\(^3\).
Brown is chiefly remembered for his mastery of the short story form
(in both the Mystery and Science Fiction *genres*) but his first novel
*The Fabulous Clipjoint* was a considerable success, earning Brown the
Mystery Writers of America Edgar Award and introducing his series characters Ed and Am Hunter. While much of Brown's work was not strictly hard-boiled he was often thought to have "specialised in toughness and sex" and his use of multi perspective narratives and his South-western locales may be seen to have paralleled and influences the work of many other writers such as Jim Thompson and Mickey Spillaine (who claims Brown as "my favourite writer of all time"). Brown's real distinction, however, is as one of the most ingenious plotters of his day and as a thoroughly professional craftsman who's work is consistently entertaining and intriguing.

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Here Comes a Candle. New York, Dutton, 1950.


The Case of The Dancing Sandwiches. New York: Dell, 1951.


One of the first novels to attempt to enter the mind of a mass murderer and show him to be terrifying by his very ordinariness, in this case he is a high school student.

(» Jim Thompson. The Killer Inside Me.)

* We All Killed Grandma. New York: Dell, 1953.


Using no less than ten third person points of view Brown follows a train of events started unintentially but leading to a series of crimes including murder.

(» Jim Thompson The Kill Off.)


Another multi-perspective novel involving a mass murderer, also interesting in presenting a mexican detective, Frank Romas, who is subjected to racial discrimination in his work (an unusual theme for the time).


> Lawrence Block
  John Franklin Bardin
  Jim Thompson
  Mickey Spillaine

N.B. In 1984 Zamba books published The Screaming Mimi, Night Of The Jabberwock, The Fabulous Clipjoint and Knock Three-One-Two in their Black Box Thriller series under the title 4 Novels By Frederick Brown.

References
3. Ibid
4. BARZUN, ref 1.
5. BROWN, Frederic. His Name Was Death, 1982, Jacketcopy.
Howard Browne (born 1908)

Howard Browne was one of the most talented of the
traditional hard-boiled detective story writers who emerged in the
wake of Raymond Chandler. His Chicago detective has been called
"one of the best of the plethora of tough-guy heroes from that era\textsuperscript{1}
and is clearly patterned after Phillip Marlowe (a fact Browne
readily admits\textsuperscript{2}). Browne's works, however, have their own
character and highly original plots which help to make them distinct
from other author's work and so entertaining in their own right.
Browne also followed a career as a magazine editor with Zitt-Davis
and, later, as a screenplay writer in both film and television.\textsuperscript{3}

BIBLIOGRAPHY

* Halo In Blood, Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1946.
Originally published under the name John Evans. This novel
introduces P.I. Paul Pine who literally crashes into a funeral
procession attended by a variety of clergymen, a series of seemingly
unrelated events follow involving gangsters, kidnapping and
counterfeiting.

Originally published under the name John Evans.


Originally published under the name John Evans. The second Paul Pine adventure is caught up in the hunt for a religious artefact, along with the church, the mob and the rest of Chicago's criminal fraternity.


Originally published under the name John Evans. A Paul Pine story.


"This offbeat, violent, exciting tale of Pine's involvement with the lethal Delastone clan, the haunted widow of another private eye, and a most precocious seven year old named Deborah Ellen Frances Thornetreet is surely the cream of the series and may be Browne's most accomplished novel overall."\(^4\)

>> Raymond Chandler

William Cambell Gault

Wade Miller

Robert Finnegan
# W.R. Burnett (born 1899 died 1982).

Burnett is probably now best known for having provided the source material for some of the major crime films of all time (Little Caesar, The Asphalt Jungle and High Sierra). It was as a novelist, however, that Burnett first found fame and "if his novels were to be judged solely for their influence, W.R.Burnett would undeniably be numbered among the most important writers of his time". Indeed, his influence on others may be seen to provide the major handicap that the contemporary reader will find in his work. Burnett's themes have been re-used by later writers and, particularly, film makers, so much that they have now lost most of their originality. When they first appeared, however, his novels of the gangster as tragic hero seemed a revelation and they are still good enough to justify the statement that "he may be the single most successful writer on the notion of the criminal as the emblem of an era". It was this insight that made the films based on Burnett's work, so successful together with his "vivid sense of the criminal milieu" which "suited Hollywood so well".
BIBLIOGRAPHY

The rise and fall of Italian gangster Rico, published on the eve of
the depression, became an epitaph for the 20's and has been credited
with influencing Faulkner and Greene.

 (> Paul Cain. Fast One.
    William Faulkner. Sanctuary.
    Graham Greene. Brighton Rock.)


** High Sierra. New York: Knopf, 1940.
Once again the story of the fall of a doomed gangster, "Mad Dog" Roy
Earle, but a very different one from Rico. Earle is a native
American gangster after the pattern of John Dillinger and the
desperado's of the old West. He is also, however, a product of the
depression and once again Burnett uses the gangster to note the
passing of an era.


The first "heist" or "caper" story, the planning and execution of a robbery and the subsequent double crosses and chaos.


James M. Cain

Dashiell Hammett. Red Harvest.

Eleazar Lipsky. Kiss of Death

Horace McCoy

William McGivern

Peter Rabe

N.B. In 1984 Zamba books published Little Caesar, The Asphalt Jungle, High Sierra and Vanity Row in their Black Box Thriller series under the title 4 Novels By W.R. Burnett.
References

2. Ibid.

Max Byrd

Max Byrd is a member of the English faculty at the University of California at Davis.¹ His first novel California Thriller won the Mystery Writers of America "Best Paperback Original" Award. All three of his novels concern Mike Haller an ex-reporter turned P.I. Haller is very much in the hard-boiled tradition ("I wanted to be nineteen and the grandson of Phillip Marlowe"²) but is also concerned with the ethical implications of his actions and is aware of social issues, rather after the pattern of Robert B. Parker (who Byrd is not above having a gentle dig at in Finders Weepers.³) The Californian location and the persona of Mike Haller, however do show Max Byrd to be following in the footsteps of Chandler and Ross Macdonald, a lofty path from which he only rarely slips with some slightly ludicrous plot devices.

Haller is hired to trace a missing reporter who has been investigating the connections between chemical researchers and a dubious security firm led by a right wing politician. Beware of very silly ending involving a plot to spray Valium from the skies.


While tracing a missing heir Haller is framed for a shooting and has his licence revoked. In an effort to find out why he was framed he continues to investigate the case despite the hostility of the police and two extremely unpleasant porn czars. The best Haller story.


Hired to trace the missing bride of the son of a millionaire Haller follows her path to Cambridge, London and France finding that things are not what they seem with drugs and secrets going back to the Second World War being involved.

Joseph Hansen
Arthur Lyon
Ross Macdonald
Robert B. Parker

References
2. Ibid, 103.
James M. Cain was one of the most successful and influential of the hard-boiled writers of the '30's. The son of a professor and an opera singer he held a B.A. and M.A. from Washington College. After a brief teaching career Cain took up journalism after leaving the army at the end of the First World War. In this he was encouraged by H.L. Mencken the co-founder of *Black Mask* (it is ironic to note that Mencken should have made two such important contributions to the development of hard-boiled fiction when it would seem to represent the antithesis of what he would have hoped for in the development of American letters).\(^1\) Cain's first novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice* was published in 1934 and was a major success. In it Cain explored his favourite and recurring themes of desire leading to acts of violence and eventual doom. Cain displayed the same use of economical style (all his novels are short) combined with a bleak view of American Society as Hammett and Chandler but he abandoned the conventions of the detective story preferring to concentrate his vision on criminals and losers and it was this break with the traditions of crime fiction which was to provide his greatest influence on later writers. In a long career Cain continued to return to the themes he had first utilised in *Postman* and in his best work (such as *Double indemnity* and *Mildred Pierce*) established himself as "one of the foremost story tellers in American popular literature."
\(^2\)
The story of a drifter, Frank Chambers, his affair with his employer's wife, their plans and attempts to commit murder and their eventual fates.

(> Albert Camus. L'Etranger
    David Good's Cassidy's Girl
    Horace McCoy They Shoot Horses Don't They?)


The story of the obsession of a woman to make money so she can attempt to buy the affection of her hostile and contemptuous daughter.


(> Dashiell Hammett. Red Harvest
    Horace McCoy. No Pockets in a Shroud.)

All three of these novels return to the themes which Cain had explored in his earlier work. Double Indemnity is a particularly successful re-working of The Postman Always Rings Twice and has subsequently been re-published in many editions on its own.


- The Butterfly. New York: Knopf, 1947

The Moth. New York: Knopf, 1948


Gil Brewer.

David Goodis.

Horace McCoy.

Jim Thompson.

Nathaniel West

References

1. STEINBRUNNER, Chris & Otto Penzler, eds. Encyclopaedia of Mystery and Detection, 1976, 60.

Paul Cain (no relation to James M. Cain) has been called "the Harper Lee of the pulps" because "he wrote only one novel but its influence on several generations of hard-boiled writers has been immense."\(^1\) This novel was *Fast One* which originally appeared in instalments in *Black Mask* in 1932.\(^2\) It was later published by Doubleday and, with its fast action, hard-boiled prose style and tough central character, came to be seen as, in Raymond Chandler's phrase, "some kind of high point in the ultra hard-boiled manner".\(^3\)

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

** *Fast One*. New York: Doubleday, 1933.**
The story of Gerry Kells, a gangster bent on taking over the L.A. rackets whatever the cost.

>> W.R. Burnett.
Dashiell Hammett.
Jonathan Latimer.
Elazar Lipsky.
Raoul Whitfield.

N.B. Cain also produced a collection of short stories *Seven Slayers* (Hollywood: Saint Enterprises, 1946) which was republished in the U.K. by *NO EXIT PRESS* in 1988. *NO EXIT PRESS* are also publishing a "graphic novel" version of *Fast One* by Granfield and Cain in October 1990.
References.


# Raymond Chandler (born 1888 died 1959)

Raymond Chandler is probably the most influential of the hard-boiled writers (Hammett and Cain are the only other real contenders) and it is in this work that many would claim that the hard-boiled novel reached its peak. Phillip Marlowe, Chandler's detective, with his wise cracking and cynical surface concealing the honourable and sentimental man within, has become an American archetype. In many ways, however, Marlowe's character and Chandler's literary skill may be traced back to the classical education and the values which Chandler was brought up with in England. Chandler was born in Chicago of an American father and an Anglo Irish mother, his father was an alcoholic (as Chandler was to be) and when his parents divorced Chandler returned to Britain with his mother to live with relatives in South London. Eventually Chandler attended Dulwich College a public school which while not of the top flight socially was, then as now, academically of the first order. On leaving Dulwich Chandler briefly entered the Civil Service and then
attempted to make his living as a free-lance writer in London. Failing in this Chandler returned to the United States and followed a variety of paths until joining the Canadian Army in the First World War, serving in the Gordon Highlanders and the R.A.F. After the War Chandler followed a successful career in the oil business rising to become Auditor for the Dubney Oil Syndicate. In 1932, however, a combination of the depression and Chandler's developing alcohol problems resulted in his losing his job. At this point Chandler set about learning to write; he began to publish stories in Black Mask and over the next six years developed the prototype of his character Phillip Marlowe. Marlowe first appeared in The Big Sleep in 1939 and was its feature in all of the other six novels which Chandler was to write. Chandler's great distinction was that he took the formula of the hard-boiled detective story and attempted to turn it into something more through the use of a literate approach to his subject matter with characterisation being as important as plot. As W.H. Arden put it, Chandler's "books should be read and judged, not as escape literature, but as works of art."

Bibliography

** The Big Sleep. New York: Knopf, 1939

Hired to deal with a blackmailer Marlowe becomes embroiled with the Sternwood family whose problems include nymphomania, pornography, gambling and murder. A fiendishly complicated plot in no way
diminishes from one's enjoyment of the first of the Marlowe novels, where the detective is established in his tough, honourable and lonely persona.

** Farewell, My Lovely New York: Knopf, 1940.
Considered by many to be Chandler's best in terms of detection and mystery this concerns Marlowe's investigation of the whereabouts of the estranged girlfriend of the massive Moose Malloy, recently released from prison and quite willing to kill those who get in the way of his finding his Velma.


* The Lady in the Lake. New York: Knopf, 1943

Chandler's acerbic wit and general disgust with Southern California are much in evidence as Marlowe becomes involved in the seemier side of Hollywood (where Chandler had worked after the success of his earlier novels).

** The Long Goodbye. London Hamish Hamilton, 1953
The longest and most ambitious of Chandler's novels was written as Chandler's wife was dying and this is reflected in many of the themes and much of the atmosphere of the book. Marlowe becomes involved with Terry Lennox, a drunk with shattered nerves, and later with Roger Wade, a drunk with writer's block. Both of these characters may be seen as being partially autobiographical and in his examination of them and the tragic pattern of their lives (and deaths) Chandler achieved a turning point in the development of the
hard-boiled novel as literature by introducing a level of psychological complexity in the characters, their motivations and relationships, which had not been seen in a "detective story" before (and seldom so successfully since).


Completed while Chandler's health was failing, this is the weakest of the Marlowe books but is still enjoyable and intelligent. It is also the only one of Chandler's novels to have a truly happy ending.


Chandler's original screenplay for the 1946 film.


NB All Chandler's novels and many of his short stories are available in Penguin. Chandler's unfinished novel Poodle Springs has been completed by Robert B. Parker and is due for British Publication in 1990.

>> Dashiell Hammet.
Ross Macdonald.
Robert B. Parker. et all
# Jerome Charyn (Born 1937)

Jerome Charyn is a native New Yorker who followed a career as an academic at Stamford University, City University and Princeton University whilst also producing a steady stream of mainstream novels since his first, *Once Upon a Droshcy*, in 1964. ¹ In 1973 Charyn "discovered Ross Macdonald" whilst bogged down trying to complete a historical novel ². This discovery prompted Charyn to write *The Issac Quartet*, four novels set around Deputy Police Commissioner Issac Sidel in New York. The style of the novels blended the conventions of genre fiction with the techniques of experimental narrative technique which Charyn had used in his mainstream fiction. The novels were "concerned to construct a vision of Jewish life in modern America" whilst also presenting "a hyperactive vision of New York police procedures, with cops as corrupt as the criminals". ³ Charyn has continued to work the genre
and his critical reputation has continued to grow, particularly in France, where Charyn is considered a major literary figure. 4

BIBLIOGRAPHY

* Blue Eyes. New York: 1975

* The Education of Patrick Silver. New York: 1976

* Marilyn the Wild. New York: 1976

* Secret Isaac. New York: 1979


Sphere: 1989

NB In 1984 Zomba Books published the first four of the above in their Black Box Thriller series under the title The Isaac Quartet.
References


Andrew Coburn (born 1932)

Andrew Coburn was born in New Hampshire and, after serving in the U.S. Army, followed a number of careers before he settled upon journalism which provided his employment throughout the '60's and early '70's. In the mid '70's, however, Coburn turned to fiction and by 1981 was a full time writer. 2 Coburn's work displays his talents for plotting while in atmosphere "the texture of its world is reminiscent of Dashiell Hammett's fiction, though its sensibility and imagery owe more to Raymond Chandler." 3

BIBLIOGRAPHY


>>

Michael Collins

Robert B. Parker.

References


2. Ibid

3. Ibid

Max Allan Collins (born 1948)

Collins divides his time between writing novels and writing the Dick Tracy comic strip. His novels also divide into two distinct groups, those concerned with criminals (series characters Nolar and Avary) and those featuring Nathan Heller, a P.I. who is set firmly in the context of 1930's Chicago and whose cases involve such real life characters as Al Capone and George Raft. The former group may be seen as following in the tradition of Mickey Spillane and Richard Stark while the latter are
among the best of the period piece style of hard-boiled fiction that was primarily created by Andrew Bergman.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Published in UK: London: Sphere, 1984.

The first Nat Heller novel finds him leaving the Chicago police force and becoming involved with many of the leading lights of the heyday of the Prohibition Mobs.

The second Heller story.

The novelization of the film of which the Times commented: "The writing in Dick Tracy is essentially Micky Spillane on auto pilot, and even then, half the one-liners, so much a feature of good detective writing, would have ended up in Mickey's trashcan." 2

>> Andrew Bergman
   James Ellroy
   Mickey Spillane
   Donald Westlake.

References


Michael Collins (pseudonym for Dennis Hynds born 1924)

Dennis Hynds holds degrees from Hafstra College and Syracuse University. Before taking up full time writing, he served in the U.S. Army in Europe in the Second World War and then followed a successful career as a Technical journalist.¹ Hynds writes in a variety of genres under different pseudonyms and in 1967 produced his first crime novel, Act of Fear, under the name Michael Collins. All of the Collins books feature one armed detective Dan Fortune who "brings to his work an inherent courage and the compassion of a thinking man, with a toughness not manifested in brutality but in his ability to face up to many problems and understand them without running away."² Collins is very much in the tradition of Ross Macdonald and acknowledged his debt by dedicating Act of Fear to him, a gesture which Macdonald reciprocated through his praise for the Fortune books.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The mugging of a cop and the disappearance of a local boy who witnessed the act provide Dan Fortune with his entry point into a series of events which leads to murder and the Mafia. Winner of the Edgar Award for Best first novel.
A friend of Fortune is framed for murder.

Fortune's girlfriend is being suited by another man so he sets out to dig up some dirt on him.

Fortune sets out to investigate the murder of a "drop-out".


Published under the name Carl Denver.


Freak. New York: Dodd Mead, 1983

The latest Fortune story finds him on the trail of a missing youth who is involved with Vietnamese refugees.
References


# K.C. Constantine

K.C. Constantine is the pseudonym for a writer who has been careful to guard his anonymity. All of his books feature Mario Balzic the police chief of a small town in Pennsylvania. While Constantine's plots concern police investigations the Balzic books work more in the tradition of the hard-boiled detective story than the police procedural as the central character works mostly on his own, often clashes with authority and becomes emotionally involved with the cases he investigates. Constantine's reputation has grown steadily with each of his books and by the mid '80's his "superb portraits of small-town Middle American eccentrics" were gaining considerable attention and respect from critics on both sides of the Atlantic.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


While on a hunting expedition Balzic and his new boss discover the remains of an unknown man; Balzic investigates and forces a variety of people to face up to some unpleasant facts from the past.


** Always a Body to Trade. Boston: Godine, 1982
Against his better judgment and at the prodding of a naive new mayor, Balzic must take on black underworld chief Reverend Rutherford Feeler.

Balzic is badgered into investigating the shooting of Joey Case by the victim's father. Balzic's seeming inability to do anything about the case increases his anxiety levels which are already high due to his impotence and the effect that this is having on his home life. The best Balzic novel.


George Harmon Coxe (born 1901 died 1984)

Coxe took up writing after abortive careers in journalism and advertising. In the '30's he began writing crime stories and began contributing stories to Black Mask featuring Kent Murdock who was not a detective but rather a newspaper photographer ("number one camera for the Globe"). Many of his novels also featured Murdock, the first being published in 1935 and the latest (The Silent Witness) in 1973. In this way Coxe may be seen as providing a direct and continuous link between the Black Mask generation of hard-boiled writers and their more contemporary equivalents and while he was not of the first rank among his generation he was, in Anthony Boucher's words, a "professional's professional" and in 1963 was awarded the Grand Master Award by the Mystery Writers of America.

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The Barotique Mystery. New York: Knopf, 1936


The Lady is Afraid. New York: Knopf, 1940.


No Time to Kill. New York: Knopf, 1941.


Silent are the Dead. New York: Knopf, 1942.

Alias the Dead. New York: Knopf, 1943.


Murder on their Minds. New York: Knopf, 1957


One Hour to Kill. New York: Knopf, 1963.


>> Willis Todhunter Balland.
   Robert Leslie Bellam
   Jonathan Latimer.
   Raoul Whitefield.

References

1. STEINBRUNNER, Chris & Otto Penzler, eds. Encyclopaedia of Mystery and Detection, 1976, 107


3. STEINBRUNNER, Ref. 1, 108.
James Crumley (born 1939)

Crumley is another of the many hard-boiled writers to have emerged from an academic background in the 1970's (other examples are Jerome Charyn and Robert B. Parker) and he continues to teach English at the university of Texas. Crumley has described himself as "a bastard child of Raymond Chandler", in doing so he is pointing towards the fact that his books are squarely in the Chandler tradition in that they feature a private eye but differ in that the world has changed to the extent that "my detectives are more comfortable around criminals than in the company of solid, middle-class citizens." This change is very much the product of the '60's and the background to Crumley's novels is that of Vietnam, the drug culture, etc. In this Crumley is one of the most successful of the writers who in the 1970's took up where Ross Macdonald left off and attempted to update the figure of the P.I., not just in his setting but also in his perceptions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Robert Stone.

Roger L. Simon.
Carrol John Daly (born 1889 died 1958).

Carrol John Daly was born in Yonkers, New York and attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. He followed a career in acting and subsequently owned a film theatre in Atlantic City.\(^1\) In the early '20's Daly began writing and published a number of stories in *Black Mask* before creating Race Williams, a character widely regarded as "the first fully realised hard-boiled detective"\(^2\). Williams was an enormous success and so established the pattern for the figure of the P.I. that many writers, with greater talent than Daly, were to follow. In the '20's and '30's, however, Daly was one of the most popular of the *Black Mask* writers and the appearance of the name Race Williams on the cover of that magazine would result in a rise in sales of 15 percent.\(^3\) Today Daly's stories have little to recommend them but historical interest for they lack the intelligence and depth of characterisation that were to become hallmarks of the work of many of his contemporaries.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Mr. Strang. New York: Stokes, 1936.


References


3. STEINBRUNNER, Ref. 1.

Richard Deming (born 1915 died 1983)

Richard Deming was educated at Washington University and the University of Iowa and was a commissioned officer in the US Army during the War.¹ Deming's career as a writer was almost entirely devoted to producing novels for the paperback original market in the '50's and '60's. Most of his many novels were in the suspense field but in the '50's he also produced four novels featuring Manny Moon, a one-legged P.I. who was very much in the Hammett/Chandler mould.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Lester Dent (born 1904 died 1959).

Lester Dent was one of the first generation of hard-boiled writers and in his time he "presented a private dick who was as tough as any hero who smashed and ice-picked his way through the pages of Black Mask". Dent, however, waited longer than most of his contemporaries to publish his first crime novel and then failed to find any great success as a hard-boiled novelist. He did, however, write nearly 200 successful Doc Savage adventure novels under the pseudonym of Kenneth Robeson.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


>> Howard Browne
   George Harmon Coxe
   Raoul Whitefield.

References

1. DURHAM, Philip. The Black Mask School. In:-
   MADDEN, David, ed. Tough Guy Writers of the Thirties, 1968,
   73.
Thomas Dewey (born 1915)

Dewey holds a Ph.D. from the University of California and is a former Assistant Professor of English at Arizona State University. In a long career as a writer Dewey has created a number of series characters but the majority of his novels centre around a Chicago P.I. simply known as Mac. Mac is a detective in the Marlowe/Archer mould and while as a writer Dewey is a match for neither Chandler or Ross Macdonald his consistently entertaining private detective stories in the traditional manner place him "at the head of the second rank of the hard-boiled writers".

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The first Mac story.


Published under the name Tom Brandt.


Published under the name Tom Brandt.


>> William Campbell Gault
Bill Pronzini
Bart Spicer.

References


2. Ibid., 269.
David Dodge (born 1910).

In the 1940's David Dodge produced four novels featuring Whit Whitney an accountant who becomes involved in murder investigations. All of these stories were "Very much in the tradition of the screwball comedy mystery style which began with Dashiell Hammett's The Thin Man and reached an apex in the Bill Crane novels of Jonathan Latimer".\(^1\) Dodge then produced three novels featuring hard-boiled detective Al Colby who is only distinguishable from the other P.I.'s of the day by being based in Mexico. After the last Colby book in 1951 Dewey abandoned hard-boiled stories for conventional suspense novels and later became a travel writer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The last Whitney novel.


The first Colby novel.


Dashiell Hammett. *The Thin Man*

Jonathan Latimer. *Murder in the Madhouse*
*Headed for a Hearse*
*The Lady in the Morgue*
*The Dead Don't Care*
*Red Gardenias*

References


James Ellroy first appeared in 1981 with *Brown's Requiem* which won the Shamus Award for outstanding paperback private eye novel of that year. As the '80's progressed Ellroy has consolidated his early reputation producing a string of psychologically complex crime novels, including a trilogy featuring supertough L.A. cop Lloyd Hopkins. In 1987, however, the book appeared which began to establish Ellroy as one of the major writers in the genre; *The Black Dahlia* was set in 1947 and took as its background a real and infamous case of the time. In this the approach owed much to Andrew Bergman and Max Allan Collins but Ellroy used the case as the starting point for "a mesmerising study in psycho-sexual obsession". *The Black Dahlia* was the first in a
trilogy completed by *The Big Nowhere* (set in the days of the Red Scare) and *LA Confidential* (the Hollywood Scandals of the 50's) which together combine to give a mesmerising and often horrific view of the underside of American society in the '40's and '50's in what must be the closest one is ever likely to get to a successful melding of Raymond Chandler and Jim Thompson: "Ellroy is the hot property in crime fiction".³

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


Ellroy's second novel was his first attempt to place his characters in a historical setting, in this case 50's Los Angeles.


The best first person black comic narration of the workings of the mind of a homicidal psychopath since Jim Thompson's heyday.

(> Jim Thompson. *The Killer Inside Me*)

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"Extraordinarily well written; but not for the emotionally or physically squeamish".


(> Andrew Bergman. Hollywood and Levine)


(> Kenneth Anger Hollywood Babylon 1 & II)

>> Andrew Bergman

Max Allan Collins

Jim Thompson

References

4. BERLINS, ref.2.
Loren D Estleman (born 1952).

Estleman began writing fiction after having previously been a reporter in Michigan\(^1\). His first published attempts at crime fiction were not in the hard-boiled form but rather were pastiche Sherlock Holmes stories (*Sherlock Holmes Versus Dracula*, 1978, and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Holmes*, 1979)\(^2\). In 1980, however, Estleman entered the genre with *Motor City Blue* featuring Detroit P.I. Amos Walker. The Walker books are of a uniformly high standard displaying Estleman's "impeccable... ear for diverse patois". which helps to establish him as one of the first division of private detective story writers of the 80's. It has, however, been pointed out that Estleman's reputation as a writer may have been undermined by his sharing of the same Detroit locale with Ellmore Leonard and that "were it not for his fellow Detroiter's surge to best Sellerdom, Estleman would doubtless be known as the poet of the Motor City"\(^3\).

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


Walker is traced to find a man who disappeared nineteen years ago and also to bodyguard a dissident Russian novelist, there is a link!


Devries is released from prison after serving twenty years for helping to steal $200,000. He claims he was innocent and now wants Walker to find the money which he feels he has a moral right to. The investigation leads Walker into the world of the 80's industry and big business.

> Michael Z. Lewin
Rob Kantner
Emore Leonard
Robert B. Parker
Roger Valin.

References

2. Ibid.
Robert Finnegan (pseudonym for Paul William Ryan born 1906 died 1947)

Born in San Francisco Robert Finnegan emerged from a background of involvement with the radical left in the '20's and '30's. He was involved in the Labour movement with the International Londshoreman and Warehouseman's Union and produced such political works as And We Are Millions, The League of Homeless Youth (1933) and The Yanks Are Not Coming (1940). In the 1940's Finnegan began writing hard-boiled crime stories featuring the investigations of Dan Bannion, a journalist recently discharged from the Army. Finnegan produced only three Bannion novels before his early death in 1947 but in all of them he displays "wisecracking dialogue worthy of Raymond Chandler" set within "backgrounds of low and high life... with the atmosphere of the immediate post war years."

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Bruno Fischer (born 1908)

Bruno Fischer was born in Germany but moved to New York at an early age\(^1\). He published his first novel (So Much Blood) in 1939 and embarked on a career as a pulp and paperback original writer in the '40's and '50's. Fischer worked mainly in the horror and mystery fields but five of his novels concerned Ben Helm "a likeable private detective who depends more on his wits than his fists".\(^2\)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(N.B. The following consists only of Fischer's Ben Helm books)


>> William Ard
Bill S Ballinger
William Campbell Gault.

References
2. Ibid, 315.

Brian Garfield (born 1939).

Brian Garfield is most widely known for Death Wish (1972) which is probably the best of the sub-genre of vigilante hard-boiled novels. Much of Garfield's other crime fiction does not follow the format of most hard-boiled fiction (it is often concerned with organised crime or espionage) but in its common themes revenge and the moral questions raised by the use of violence it may be seen as belonging to the tough-guy tradition. Garfield also writes Historical Romances and Westerns!
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Paul Benjamin becomes a vigilante after an attack on his wife and daughter: "In this powerful study of the paranoia of big city life, New York becomes the lone man's private battleground".2

(> Joe Gores. A Time of Predators.)


Written with Donald E. Westlake.


Published under the name Drew Mallory.

The sequel to Death Wish.


Published under the name John Ines.

Published under the name John Ines.


Lawrence Block
Joe Gores
Richard Stark

References
1. ST JAMES PRESS. The Writers Directory, 1988, 341.
William Campbell Gault (born 1910).

Gault was one of the best writers of traditional hard-boiled detective stories to emerge in the 1950's. His two detectives Brock Callahan and Joe Puma are both in the Spade/Marlowe/Archer pattern and are "memorable, believable characters, notable for their directness, integrity and - atypically for most 1950's private eyes - healthy, non-satire-like relationships with women".¹ Anthony Boucher commented of Gault that he was "a fresh voice - a writer who sounds like nobody else who has ideas of his own and his own way of uttering them".² In 1963 Gault gave up writing crime fiction in favour of his more lucrative work in the field of juvenile fiction. In the '80's, however, Gault has returned to the genre producing three new novels featuring an aged Brock Callahan.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The first Joe Puma novel published under the name Roney Scott.


The first Brock Callahan novel.


Ex-pro football player turned P.I. Brock "the rock" Callahan is called back to his old team to investigate the blackmailing of one of the team who is subsequently murdered.

Published under the name Will Duke.


Brock Callahan comes out of retirement to investigate the apparent suicide of a friend.


The Dead Seed. 1985.

>> Howard Browne.

Ross Macdonald.

Wade Miller.

Bill Pronzini.

References.

1. REILLY, John M., ed. Twentieth Century Crime and Mystery Writers, 1985, 368.

2. Ibid.

Donald Goines (born 1937, died 1974).

Donald Goines is one of the few black writers to have worked within the tough guy genre. Like Chester Himes (the major black writer in the field) he began writing whilst serving a prison sentence.¹ Goines' work reflects his own background, centring, as they do, on black criminals and their life in the ghetto. Extremely
violent in their content and often crudely written Goines' work is
nevertheless of considerable interest in presenting the poor black's
view of American society. Goines was murdered in 1974.2

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Published under the name Al C. Clark.


Published under the name Al C. Clark.


Published under the name Al C. Clark.

Published under the name Al C. Clark.


>> Chester Himes.

Ernest Tidyman.

References
2. Ibid., 384.

David Goodis (born 1917 died 1967).

David Goodis was one of the most distinctive of the writers of the '40's and '50's who worked primarily for the paperback original market. Goodis was born in Philadelphia and took a BSc in journalism at Temple University which, he said, taught him "to put down thoughts clearly, simply, to avoid literary embroidery and to arrange ideas in a logical sequence". ¹ In 1939 he published his first novel Retreat from Oblivion, a mainstream novel "of the infidelities of two couples against the background of the wars in Spain and China". ² In 1947 Goodis' second and commercially most successful novel Dark Passage, saw him enter the genre and over the
next twenty years he produced sixteen novels which took their start from the examination of the doomed protagonist's point of view, after the pattern of James M. Cain, but which also displayed "a unique poetry of solitude and fear ... his central image is always that of the wounded man, his strength gone, pulling himself forward, yet sensing at the same time that he won't make it, that it will all have been in vain." These are depressing and, at times, distressing books but often fascinate through the considerable skills of Goodis as a writer: "His characters are not just hard-boiled, they're pickled and then deep frozen."4

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The story of a man on the run who changes his identity and his face.


The story of a man on the run, accused of a murder he cannot remember which "in retrospect seems an almost perfect book ... in Nightfall Goodis creates an atmosphere where everything is symbolic ... and at the same time densely literal."5


The story of a disgraced ex-pilot who is married to an overbearing woman, in love with a drunk and heading for the gutter.


123


"The Burglar stands out for its evocation of a Romantic death-wish in the context of low-grade crooks coming unravelled in the wake of a bungled break-in". 6


A drunk goes in search of a drink, relives his past as a singer, prevents a race riot and returns to the gutter.


>> James M. Cain.
Jim Thompson.
Cornell Woolrich.
N.B. In 1983 Zomba books published *Nightfall, Down There, Dark Passage* and *The Moon in the Gutter* in their *Black Box Thriller* series under the title *4 Novels by David Goodis*.

**References**

2. Ibid.
4. WALLINGTON, ref. 1., v.
6. Ibid., x.

Joe Gores (born 1931)

Joe Gores' fiction falls into three broad categories: his first book (*A Time of Predators*) was one of the best of the sub-genre of vigilante hard-boiled novels, there then followed three novels featuring the investigative team of Dan Kearney Associates and finally the ambitious *Hammett: A Novel* which used the historical setting method of Andrew Bergman and Max Allan Collins but added it's own twist by making the investigator in the story hard-boiled pioneer and master Dashiell Hammett. Gores was well equipped for this project for, like Hammett, he is a former private detective as well as being a highly versatile and talented writer.

Curt Halstead, a sociology professor, seeks revenge after his wife is gang raped and subsequently commits suicide: "The pacing and development are superb, but the questions it raises are very important - can there be moral justification for violence".2

(> Lawrence Block. Deadly Honeymoon.
Brian Garfield. Death Wish.)


Max Allan Collins. True Detective.


>> Andrew Bergman.
Max Allan Collins.
Bill Pronzini.
References


Stephen Greenleaf (born 1942)

Greenleaf was an attorney in California and then Professor of Trial Advocacy at the University of Iowa. 1 All of his novels feature detective John Marshall, a figure who is very much in the tradition of Southern California detectives such as Lew Archer and Phillip Marlowe.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


References


Richard Hallas (Pseudonym for Eric Knight).

As Richard Hallas Eric Knight produced only one hard-boiled novel which "has never received the respect it deserves, probably because Eric Knight also wrote *Lassie, Come Home*" but which deserves its place in the history of the genre for its examination of its central character who is "in the tradition of the flawed rouge-hero often encountered in hard-boiled literature".

BIBLIOGRAPHY

*You Play the Black and the Red Comes Up*. 1938.


"The sorry life of a drifter who comes to the Promised land and finds something different".

James M. Cain.
#Dashiell Hammett (born 1894 died 1961)

Dashiell Hammett is "the undisputed father" of hard-boiled fiction.¹ In his *Continental Op* stories in *Black Mask* he virtually invented the formula of the hard-boiled P.I. and in his longer fiction he included "remarkable passages which open his work up to realms untrodden by other crime writers"² and in terms of their quality showed what crime fiction was capable of. Hammett's life was in many ways as remarkable as his fiction; a former Pinkerton detective he served in the U.S. Army in both world wars (despite his lifelong affliction with T.B.) and in later life he served a prison term for refusing to testify to the House Un American Activities Commission during the Communist witch hunts of the '50's.³ Hammett has influenced virtually all subsequent American Crime writers and anybody with any interest at all in the hard-boiled tradition should read his first four novels.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


The Continental Op sets out to clean up a corrupt city.

One of the most famous crime novels of all time starts with Sam Spade investigating the death of his partner.

Generally considered to be Hammett's greatest novel: "The world of gambling, of gangsters and of politics is all here, in a manner which suggests most vividly that guilt and innocence are relative terms and there is often a thin dividing line".4

(> William Faulkner. Sanctuary.5)


(> J. Sheridan Le Fanu. Wylder's Hand)6.

>> Paul Cain. Fast One.

Raymond Chandler.

Ernest Hemingway.

Jonathan Latimer.

Ross Macdonald. et al.
References


4. BARNES, Ref. 1, 105.


6. Ibid., 61.

Joseph Hansen (born 1923)

Joseph Hansen is particularly notable as the first author to create a fully realised hard-boiled detective who is also a homosexual (although George Baxt also produced some pioneering work with this theme). Hansen's Dave Brandstetter novels, however, are also fine examples of the tradition of Southern California detective stories (although Brandstetter is an insurance investigator and not a private eye) and while his work often leads him into the gay subculture the novels can be read and enjoyed without the character's sexuality being too intrusive for "Brandstetter is a real person rather than the stereotype homosexual of fiction".1

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Brandstetter investigates the death of a man who has died when his car had plunged into a river; he clears a young man of the crime and he becomes his lover.

Brandstetter investigates the death of a gay bar owner and once again clears the name of an innocent young gay man.


Investigating a suspicious death Brandstetter becomes drawn into the sordid world of pornography, drugs and Californian religious groups.


>> George Baxt.
Max Byrd.
Sara Paretsky.
Roger L. Simon.

N.B. Fadeout, Death Claims, Skinflick, The Man Everybody Was Afraid Of, Gravedigger and Nightwork were all published in paperback in the U.K. by Grafton Books in the 1980's.
#George V. Higgins (born 1939)

Higgins' background is in journalism and the legal profession (between 1970 and 1973 he was U.S. Attorney for the District of Massachusetts).\(^1\) In 1972 he produced his first novel *The Friends of Eddie Coyle* and since then has continued to produce notable novels which use "reliance on dialogue for the revelation of plot, character, and theme".\(^2\) Higgins' work is often set among the blue collar Irish communities of Boston showing the criminality and violence of his character's lives with a gripping realism which is also often tempered with sympathy and humour. Higgins' reputation has continued to grow and in the late '80's he began to be considered as a major American novelist who had transcended the genre from which he had sprung.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Eddie Coyle an arms dealer is wrongfully thought to have tipped off the police over a series of bank robberies and so becomes a marked man.

Digger, a small time crook, loses $18,000 in Las Vegas and is now in debt to a loan shark. Somehow, he must pay off the debt.


The story of arsonists in Boston; a return to the style and themes of Higgins’ first two novels.


The story of a group of urban terrorists from the '60's onwards.

(> Elmore Leonard. Freaky Deaky.)

   K.C. Constantine.

>> Elmore Leonard.
   Robert B. Parker.
# Chester Himes (born 1909 died 1984)

Chester Himes began writing in the '30's while serving a prison sentence for armed robbery: "I'd been reading stories by Dashiell Hammett in Black Mask and I thought I could do them just as well. When my stories finally appeared, the other convicts thought exactly the same thing". In the 1950's Marcel Duchamel, editor of the Série Noire, discovered Himes and commissioned him to write detective stories and his first La Reine des Pommes (For Love of Imabelle) won the Prix de Litterature Policiere of 1958. While his Harlem locations and Black central characters proved enormously attractive to the French, Himes has tended to be overlooked in America where he was often considered (and marketed) only as an example of Black exploitation fiction. This is unfortunate for Himes was not only the best of the small group of black writers to have worked within the genre but also a good enough writer to bear comparison with any hard-boiled writer, regardless of race.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


>> Raymond Chandler.

Donald Goines.

Dashiell Hammett.

Ed Lacy.

Ernest Tidyman.

References

2. Ibid.
Richard Hoyt (born 1941)

In his stories featuring private eye Paul Denson, Richard Hoyt has attempted to update the figure of the traditional American P.I. Denson differs from his forebears in that he lacks their cynicism and is fully integrated into modern society. In his prose style and reliance on the use of witty dialogue, however, Hoyt is firmly within the traditions of the genre.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


>> Gregory Mcdonald.

Roger L. Simon.
Richard Johnson (born 1937)

An inmate of Stillwater State Prison where he wrote all his novels Johnson was "one of the best talents that appeared during the 1960's and 1970's".¹ He used his own experience to give an "uncompromising insider's view of the dark underbelly of American life by working in the tradition of the hard-boiled genre, but adding his own unique insights to it".²

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The Cardinalli Contract.

>> Chester Himes
References

2. Ibid

Stuart Kaminsky (born 1934)

Stuart Kaminsky is Professor of Radio, Television and Film at North-western University. In the late '70's and early '80's Kaminsky produced eight novels featuring private eye Toby Peters which, in many ways, may be seen to take up where Andrew Bergman left off. All of his novels are set in California in the 30's and 40's and feature guest appearances by real figures such as Howard Hughes, Bela Lugosi and Judy Garland. Kaminsky has described these novels as "first person trips into a comic and nostalgic world of the hard-boiled private eye" and as such they take their place along with the works of Andrew Bergman, Max Allen Collins and Joe Gores in attempting to combine the classic figure of the '30's and '40's hard-boiled dick with a more modern and knowing sensibility.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


> Andrew Bergman *The Big Kiss Off of 1944*

Hollywood and Levine

Max Allen Collins *True Detective*

Joe Gores *Hammett: A Novel*

References


Frank Kane (born 1912 died 1968)

In a long career starting in the pulps and progressing to the paperback original market Frank Kane produced numerous novels featuring run of the mill hard-boiled P.I. Johnny Liddle.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Due or Die. New York: Dell, 1961.


Robert Leslie Bellem
George Harmon Coxe
Richard Deming
Henry Kane
Mickey Spillaine
Henry Kane (born 1918)

Henry Kane is a long standing veteran in the paperback original market. Over twenty two years he produced numerous novels featuring Peter Chambers "a thoroughly likeable private eye, with a tendency to indulge in much wry self-deprecation". The post 1969 Chambers novels however, contain much higher levels of sex and a general tendency towards the sensational.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Richard Deming
Frank Kane
Bill Pronzini
Mickey Spillaine

References

Thomas Kyd (Pseudonym for Alfred Harbage born 1901 died 1976)

Alfred Harbage was a genuine oddity among the ranks of the hard-boiled writers of the '40's; a noted Shakespearian scholar he produced four novels which set realistic blue collar detectives within the context of murder among members of the educated elite and "combine in a unique way the essence of the hard-boiled school with a tone of academic persiflage". In the '50's Harbage returned to his more usual subject matter producing such works as Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions (1952) and never again produced crime fiction of any kind. It is difficult to know exactly where to place "the hard-boiled academic" in the history of the genre but he surely deserves a place if only for the unique nature of his approach and also as probably the first of a long line of academics who have subsequently turned to the form (Robert B. Parker, Jerome Charyn, Stuart Kaminsky, James Crumley, etc.)
BIBLIOGRAPHY


References


2. Ibid.
Ed Lacy (pseudonym for Len Zinberd born 1911 died 1968)

In a career spanning almost twenty years Ed Lacy produced almost thirty mystery novels, many of them set within the hard-boiled tradition. Lacy is chiefly remembered, however, for two books which featured what was probably the first black private eye Toussaint Moore (Room to Swing and Moment of Untruth). Moore is "often out of work or filling in as a postal worker" and often has to face racial prejudice and his creation "was a considerable risk before private eyes and policemen from ethnic minorities became almost a commonplace". ¹

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The first Moore novel won the Mystery Writers of America Award for the best crime novel²


Jonathan Latimer (born 1906 died 1983)

Jonathan Latimer was a follower of Hammett in the 30's but his novels, particularly those featuring near alcoholic detective Bill Crane, were distinguished by Latimer's "deadpan black humour"¹ and "an irresponsible gaiety that marks out his work from the ordinary competent hard-boiled novel".² In the five Crane novels Latimer provided a greatly entertaining mix of humour and the more usual elements of fast paced action, violence and sex which, as examples of the screwball comedy style of the '30's, are probably more effective than Hammett's more famous The Thin Man. As a literary stylist Latimer was also of interest as he "could make
music with that distinctive "thing-language" of the hard-boiled novel".\

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The first Bill Crane story finds the detective being committed to an asylum in order to protect one of the genuine inmates.

The second Crane story.

Republished in UK; Harpenden; No Exit Press, 1988.  
Generally considered the best of Latimer's novels this story finds Crane searching out the identity and whereabouts of a corpse stolen from the Chicago morgue.

Originally published under the name Peter Coffin.

Crane investigating kidnapping and murder in Florida.

The last Crane story.
** Solomon's Vineyard. London: Methuen, 1941.
This novel used two of Hammett's plot devices; the investigation of a partner's murder (The Maltese Falcon) and a bogus religious sect (The Dain Curse). Latimer, however, approached these themes with much larger doses of sex and violence, thus foreshadowing the trends in hard-boiled fiction which were to emerge after the war,

>> Paul Cain Fast One
Daniel Dodge
Dashiell Hammett
Raoul Whitfield

References

2. SYMONS, Julian Bloody Murder, 1972, 146.
3. O'BRIEN, ref 1.
Elmore Leonard (born 1925)

Elmore Leonard has been writing crime fiction since 1969 (and westerns since the early '50's) but it was not until the '80's that he really began to receive serious critical attention and massive sales. In this Leonard was undoubtedly deserving for he is a gifted story teller, a master of dialogue and a skilful constructor of plots. Good as he is, however, once the initial thrill of discovering Leonard's novels wears off the reader is often left feeling his work is slightly lacking in terms of theme and motivation, especially when compared with such genre giants as Chandler and Ross Macdonald, or, as Julian Symons put it "Elmore Leonard is a good, knowledgeable craftsman, nothing more. He is fit to polish the shoes of the masters' but not to wear them". ¹

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The first of Leonard's novels to really showcase the quality of his style is a story of blackmail in Detroit.

An effective thriller concerning terrorism and a man hiding who is
traced to Israel.

The sleazily effective story of a process server who becomes
involved with an alcoholic girl and some unexpected trouble.

One of the best of Leonard's Detroit novels uses the motor city as a
particularly effective backdrop for a kidnap story with genuinely
satisfying twist in it's tail.

Police Lieutenant Raymond Cruz is determined to nail a killer who
escaped justice two years before.


When a mobster dies he leaves his wife $4 million with the proviso that she must remain chaste for the rest of her life: she is not, however, to be taken on trust and is watched by an employee of her late husband.


The intertwined fates of a wounded cop and an oedipal rapist-killer in Atlantic City.
A self consciously up to the minute story of a desperate group (ex nun, ex cop, ex bankrobber, and ex thief) who set out to con a particularly unlikeable contra leader.

    London: Viking, 1988
Originally written in 1977 and rejected by a number of publishers² this is a very strange and also consistently enjoyable novel concerning an ordinary man who can literally work miracles.

A collection of '60's radicals and drop outs reunite for cons and blackmail in Leonard's first Detroit based novel for some years.

(> George V. Higgins Outlaws)

Get Shorty New York: Delacorte, 1990

>> K.C. Constantine
    Loren D. Estleman
    George V. Higgins
    Rob Kanter.
References

1. SYMONS, Julian, This is the World of the Scam. Sunday Times, 1987, April 5, 23.


Michael Z. Lewin (born 1942)

Harvard graduate Michael Z. Lewin is now based in England but continues to write crime fiction with an American setting. Particularly notable are his stories featuring Indianapolis P.I. Albert Samson who is firmly in the Marlowe/Archer tradition, the latter being particularly so as Lewin has clearly been influenced by Ross Macdonald in that his stories often involve Samson in investigating families whose histories hold some particularly unpleasant secrets (this is particularly true of Ask the Right Questions, The Enemies Within and Out of Time).

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Albert Samson is asked by a 16 year old girl to trace her biological father.


The second Samson story.

The murder investigations of nocturnal Indianapolis cop Leroy Parker; Albert Samson also turns up to help with a case.

Samson takes on a dope ring.


The second novel to feature Leroy Parker.

Samson is hired by Douglas Belter who wants to know what his wife's true background is when her birth certificate is found to be a fake. Samson investigates her family history and uncovers a mass of unknown facts in a novel which is consistently entertaining except at the end when it is let down by an unsatisfactory denouement.

Adele Buffington, head of an Indianapolis Social Agency, investigates the murder of a former employee.

References


Eleazar Lipsky (born 1911)

Lipsky is chiefly remembered for writing *The Kiss of Death* which was made into a classic crime film in 1947. In this novel Lipsky established himself as one of the small number of hard-boiled writers who concentrated their attention on the figure of the gangster rather than the private eye or small time loser.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The story of Vanni Bianco, a hardened criminal who becomes an informer and thus a marked man: "an exciting story of hard men, and yet one of the most poignant crime novels one is likely to come across."


>> W.R. Burnett
James W. Cain
William McGivern
William Wiegand At Last, Mr Tolliver

References
1. CROWTHER, Bruce Film Noir, 1988, 77.
2. BARNES, Melvyn, Murder in Print, 1986. 110.

Arthur Lyons (born 1946)

Arthur Lyons is one of the best writers of hard-boiled private detective stories working in the field today. He is squarely in the Hammett/Chandler/Macdonald tradition but his detective Jacob Asche is a genuinely good addition to the ranks of the hard-boiled P.I.'s who also manages to be a believable contemporary figure without the self consciousness of the creations of some of Lyon's fellow detective story writers such as Robert B. Parker and Max Byrd. Lyons is a native son of California and owns a restaurant in Palm Springs, he is also well qualified to comment on the darker side of American culture as his first published work was the non fiction The Second Coming: Satanism in America (1970)."
BIBLIOGRAPHY

* The Dead Are Discreet. New York: Mason & Lipscomb, 1974
   Harpenden: No Exit Press, 1990
Asche's first case reflects Lyon's non-fiction research dealing, as it does, with a gang of Satanists.

This time Asche is up against a religious cult and a gang of bikers.

 (> Dashiell Hammett The Dain Curse
    Jonathan Latimer Solomon's Vineyard)

The mafia and meatpackers.

   London: Hale, 1983
Prostitution and boxing.

   Harpenden: No Exit Press, 1989

London: Hale, 1984

Harpenden: No Exit Press, 1988

Asche becomes involved in an investigation which takes him into the worlds of Southern California politics and the gay subculture.

(> Lawrence Block *A Time to Murder and Create*

Dashiell Hammett *The Glass Key*

Joseph Hansen)


Asche in the world of sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll.

>> Max Byrd

Michael Collins

Loren D.Estleman

A.E.Maxwell

Robert B.Parker

Reference

1. ST JAMES PRESS *The Writers Directory* 1985, 599.

John D. Macdonald was a graduate in Business Administration from Syracuse University and also held an MBA from Harvard Business School. During the war he served with the Office of Strategic Services (forerunner of the C.I.A.) in Ceylon. After the war he embarked on a career as a writer for the paperback original market producing numerous novels throughout the 1950's (The Damned probably being the best and most successful of his novels from this period) where he "proved himself from the start the kind of perfect storyteller who makes all other aesthetic considerations meaningless". It was in 1963, however, that Macdonald created Travis McGee, his most successful character who, over the next twenty years was to be the mainstay of his fiction and was also to make Macdonald one of the most popular novelists of his time. McGee is not a detective but rather a salvage consultant. Despite this, however, he invariably comes to the aid of his clients in their times of trouble and often also becomes emotionally involved with them. In this he was developing a style which was not dissimilar to that of his namesake Ross Macdonald who emerged over the same period. John D. Macdonald, however, had a unique voice of his own which he often interposed into the narrative, or as James Ellroy rather more prosaically put it, "John D. Macdonald was the only writer out there who could stop a hot-blooded narrative to run a discourse on politics, or economics or ecology - and not piss you off". 
BIBLIOGRAPHY


All these Condemned. New York: Fawcett, 1954.


The first Travis McGee novel.


>> Gill Brewer.
   Ross Macdonald.
   Harry Whittington.
References


2. Ibid.


Ross Macdonald (also known as John Macdonald and John Ross Macdonald; pseudonyms for Kenneth Miller; born 1915 died 1983)

Kenneth Miller was born in America but educated in Canada. After seeing service with the United States Navy during the Second World War Miller began writing crime stories under his own name before creating his famous detective, Lew Archer, in The Moving Target in 1949. Over the next twenty five years (first under the name John Ross Macdonald and then simply as Ross Macdonald) Miller continued to produce high quality detective fiction which established him as one of three greats of hard-boiled detective fiction, together with Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. The Archer stories show the complexities of Miller's characterisation for while Archer can be "sympathetic and compassionate" he can also "be bitterly cynical of the ugliness in society and the attitudes which pass from one generation to another". ¹ Thus it is that in
Macdonald's fiction "the shadow of guilt that flits from character to character is usually more than an illusion. He makes this credible by focusing on families and on the transference of emotional traumas within them."² It was for this reason that Macdonald struck such a chord with American readers of the '60's and '70's where the traditions of family life had come under attack and the values of the past seemed to have been rejected by many of the young.

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The Dark Tunnel. New York: Dodd Mead, 1944.
Published under the name Kenneth Miller.

Published under the name Kenneth Miller.

Published under the name Kenneth Miller.

Published under the name John Macdonald. This was the first Lew Archer novel concerning the disappearance of a billionaire.
Published under the name John Ross Macdonald. Archer investigates murder among the rich and beautiful.

Published under the name John Ross Macdonald.

Published under the name John Ross Macdonald.


Published under the name John Ross Macdonald.

Published under the name John Ross Macdonald.

Published under the name John Ross Macdonald.


Archer investigates the disappearance of a newly-wed woman and discovers a number of unpleasant secrets from the past.


Archer is employed to investigate a man who claims to be a French aristocrat and O.A.S. member who is on the run but all is not what it seems.


Archer investigates the circumstances of children who have gone off the rails and discovers that the reason for their behaviour lies close to home.


* Sleeping Beauty.


The last of Macdonald's books was also the last Lew Archer novel and was dedicated to William Campbell Gault.

>> Raymond Chandler.

Michael Collins.

William Campbell Gault.

Dashiell Hammett.

Robert B. Parker, et al.
# Horace McCoy (born 1897 died 1955)

Horace McCoy was born in Pegram Tennessee and worked as a newsboy and taxi driver before enlisting in the Army Air Corps in the First World War.¹ After the war McCoy worked as a newspaperman and also began to contribute to numerous pulp magazines, among them Black Mask.² In 1931 McCoy moved to Hollywood to attempt to find work writing for the film industry.³ In this, McCoy was to be successful but before he achieved success he gained experience of life in depression struck Southern California which he was to use to great effect in his first novel. They Shoot Horses Don't They? has been called "one of the most original works of contemporary American fiction"⁴ and with its use of the dancehall marathon as background for the story of doomed losers it remains one of the most memorable novels of the depression. In the rest of his career McCoy published only five more novels, most of them tales of big city corruption after the pattern of Hammett's Red Harvest, but he did find the success he sought in the film industry and contributed to the scripts of numerous films.
** They Shoot Horses Don't They?. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1935.
"Its grotesque and morbid fantasia has echoed with meaning through
the literal and spiritual undergounds of the past quarter century -
among the existentialists of occupied France, the disaffiliated of
postwar America". 5

* No Pockets In a Shroud. London: Barker, 1937.
The story of a journalist who attacks corruption and comes up
against a Ku Klux Klan style organisation.

Another savage portrayal of pre war Hollywood in all its corruption
and decadence.

(> W.R. Burnett. Little Ceasar.)

The violent rise of a gangster which is possible because of the
corruption of the police and civic officials.


McCoy's screenplay version of his novel, edited by Bruce S.
Kupelnick.
W.R. Burnett.
James M. Cain.
John Steinbeck.
Nathaniel West.

N.B. In 1983 Zomba books published They Shoot Horses Don't They?, Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye, No Pockets in a Shroud, and I Should Have Stayed Home in their Black Box Thriller series under the title 4 novels by Horace McCoy.

References

1. BUCK, Paul. Introduction. 4 Novels by Horace McCoy, 1983, v,

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. STURAK, Thomas. Horace McCoy's objective lyricism. In:-
   MADDEN, David, ed. Tough Guy Writers of the Thirties, 1968, 162.

5. Ibid.

Gregory McDonald (born 1937

Gregory McDonald was one of the most refreshing and entertaining American crime novelists to emerge in the 1970's. His novels featuring investigative reporter Irwin Fletcher and Boston cop Flyn are characterised by their finely constructed plots and consistently witty dialogue.
BIBLIOGRAPHY.

** Fletch. Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1974.
Winners of the Edgar Award.


>> Lawrence Block.
Roger L. Simon.
William McGuier (born 1920 died 1982)

William McGuier followed in the footsteps of Dashiell Hammett and W.R. Burnett in examining American big city corruption. McGuier, however, often examined the moral paradox that "prejudice and corruption exists on both sides of the law, but still the law must survive as the final arbiter if, the city is not to degenerate into a human jungle."\(^1\)

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Probably McGuier's most famous novel, largely due to the fact that it was made into a classic film in 1953,\(^2\) this is the story of incorruptible cop Dave Bannion and his battle with organised crime in Philadelphia.


The story of two brothers, both are cops but one is honest and the other is corrupt: "Mr. Guiern presents a masterly story of revenge and mounting suspense combined with a fine and compassionate eye for human relationships".3


>> W.R. Burnett.
Brian Garfield.
Dashiell Hammett.

References


2. CROWTHER, Bruce, Film Noir, 1988, 43.

3. BARNES, Ref. 1,110.

Wade Miller (Pseudonym for bob Wade, born 1920, and Bill Miller, born 1920 died 1961)

Both Wade and Miller were natives of California and met at Woodrow Wilson Junior High School in San Diego.¹ They began collaborating in this period and continued to do so at San Diego State College and by post when they both served in the Air Force during the Second World War.² Their second novel Guilty Trespasser featured Max Thursday, a San Diego P.I. who is in the tradition of Hammett’s Sam Spade and who featured in many of the Wade Miller novels up to 1951. The Max Thursday stories may be seen to place Wade Miller at the top of the second division of ’40’s hard-boiled
writers with their use of "the pace and violence of Hammett, without his inherent commentary upon the corruption which he sees around" providing consistent entertainment. After Bill Miller's death Bob Wade continued writing under his own name and under the pseudonym of Whit Masterson.

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  * **Pop Goes the Queen.** New York: Farrar Straus, 1947. Published under the names Bob Wade and Bill Miller.


* **Murder Charge.** New York: Farrar Straus, 1950


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>> Howard Browne

Robert Finnegan

William Campbell Gault

Dashiell Hammett
Marcia Muller (born 1944)

Marcia Muller is one of the few women to have worked within the private eye genre. She has stated that she is "attempting to portray a contemporary American woman who also happens to be a private investigator". In this Muller is clearly working in a similar field to Sara Paretsky but her settings tend to be less urban and squalid and thus "a delightful change from the back-alley, whiskey-bottle-in-the-bottom-drawer, clobbered-on-the-back-of-the-hard motif that permeate other attempts in the field". It is also interesting to note that Muller has collaborated with veteran private eye story writer Bill Pronzini in editing three short story collections, writing short stories and writing one of the novels to feature her series character Sharon McCone.

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Co-Authored with Bill Pronzini.

Co-Authored with Bill Pronzini.

Co-Authored with Bill Pronzini.

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2. Ibid, 664.
Frederic Nebel (born 1903 died 1967)

Frederic Nebel was one of the first generation of hard-boiled writers who emerged in Black Mask Magazine.¹ He wrote two novels in the '30's in which he displayed "a sound working definition of realism which was not at all hindered by his lack of feeling for humanity".²

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"A novel of murder and intrigue in politics in which the action is governed by the toughness and weakness in men... me cannot really make the grade, but if he gives it a good try he may get some of what is coming to him if only for the wrong reasons."³


>> W T Ballard  
Paul Cain Fast One  
George Harmon Coxe  
Raoul Whitfield

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1. DURHAM, Philip, The Black Mask School. In:-  
MADDEN, David, ed. Tough Guy Writers of the Thirties, 1968, 71.  
2. Ibid  
3. Ibid., 72.
William Nolan is most notable for having combined the private detective and science fiction genres in two novels (*Space for Hire* and *Look Out For Space*). In the 60's he also produced two conventional P/I. stories, featuring detective Bart Challis, which were "set against a surreal, gaudily modern Southern California background, abrim with bullets and blondes". Nolan has also produced straight science fiction novels the most famous of which is *Logan's Run* (1967).

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>>> Isaac Asimov  
*The Caves of Steel*  
*The Naked Sun*  
*The Robots of Dawn*  

Leigh Brackett  

Frederic Brown
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2. Ibid., 678.

#Sara Paretsky (born 1943)

Sara Paretsky was born into an academic family in Kansas and she herself holds a Ph d in history from Chicago University.1 Her importance to the genre is that she is the first woman to work successfully in the field with a female protagonist, V.I. Warshawski, who is independent and as tough as she needs to be. The feminist implications of such an approach are reinforced by the nature of her detective's cases and friendships; particularly in Lotte Herschel a doctor and mother figure who often becomes involved in her cases (particularly so in Bitter Medicine). For all her originality (both in terms of gender and attitude) Warshawski does remain firmly a part of the tradition of the hard-boiled private eye through her toughness, wit and incorruptibility and it is probably because of her skilful combination of the traditional with the modern that Paretsky has found such success and acclaim (voted Woman of the Year in 1987 by Ms magazine and in 1988 awarded the Silver Dagger for crime fiction).2
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V.I. Warshawski is hired by a corrupt union official to find his
missing daughter who turns out to be in serious trouble.

* Deadlock. London: Gollancy, 1984

Warshawski's cousin dies and as she investigates she becomes more
and more convinced that he was murdered.


As she investigates the theft of $3 million from a local Dominican
priory V.I. Warshawski encounters Vatican politics, the Mafia and
various other forms of corruption.


Some unpalatable truths emerge about the medical profession when
Warshawski becomes involved, by chance, with a private hospital.


Warshawski investigates the past of a friend and discovers some dark secrets about the Xerxes chemical plant and its activities.

"its local election time, and Warshawski is reluctantly drawn in to an old friend's tainted candidature".3

>> Leigh Brackett.
Joseph Hansen.
Marcia Muller.
Promised Land.
Cornell Woolrich. Angel Face (short story).

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2. Ibid.

Robert B. Parker has been called "the most significant exponent of the private eye novel today". He was born in Massachusetts and after service with the Army in Korea he undertook a career in advertising. In the '60s he returned to education and gained a Ph d from Boston University before taking up an academic post at Northeastern University and beginning to write crime fiction. It was entirely appropriate that Parker's doctoral dissertation examined the work of Dashiell Hammett, Ross Macdonald and Raymond Chandler for Parker's own detective, Spenser, is very much in the Spade/Marlowe/Archer tradition. Parker, however, has done much to modernise the figure of the P.I. and his character is strongly concerned with the place of the individual in contemporary society. Tough as he is he also shows compassion and understanding and even though he can take part in some very violent actions (especially when teamed up with his long term friend Hawk) he is the antithesis of the kind of tough guy found in the works of Mickey Spillaine or Richard Prather. Essentially Parker is concerned with ideals of honour and manhood and how they can be applied to the modern world; in his best books he achieves this synthesis brilliantly but, while all his work is entertaining, it's quality does vary and at times Spenser's self analysis and introspection can become intrusive. Generally, however, Parker has created one of the most consistently pleasing of the contemporary P.I.'s and undoubtedly deserves his success and recognition as the inheritor of the Hammett/Chandler/Macdonald mantle.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

   Spenser is hired to recover a fourteenth century illuminated manuscript but the trial leads to drugs and organised crime.

   Spenser is hired to trace a runaway fourteen year old boy, this he does but in his clash with the homosexual protector of the boy he shows compassion which tempers the brutal methods he is compelled to use.

   Spenser is called in to investigate a baseball player who is thought to be throwing games; he finds out that he is but only due to blackmail and determines to help.

   The book that brought Parker widespread success. Spenser is hired to trace a runaway wife, this he does but finds her to be in serious trouble and disillusioned with life at home. Spenser eventually reunites them through a combination of toughness, understanding and compassion.


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Hired to protect a feminist lesbian writer Spenser is sacked for his attitudes and manner but when she is abducted he sets out to rescue her and in the process they learn more about each other and themselves.


Hired by a right wing fundamentalist Christian politician to be his head of security, Spenser finds many of his preconceptions to be wrong, some for good and some for ill.


Spenser is suffering from depression as he has been abandoned by his girlfriend and finds the case that he is involved with mirrors many of his feelings. He endures, however, and finds some resolution through physical action.


Spenser's estranged girlfriend is in trouble and he comes to the rescue but finds that his motives and methods are not as straightforward as he would like.


Spenser is brought in to aid in the hunt for a serial killer whom he eventually tracks down in an interesting and slightly different story which gives some of the narrative over to the killer so enabling the reader to understand and sympathise with him to a greater degree than is usually so.


Co-authored with Raymond Chandler. Left uncompleted by Chandler at his death. Parker was chosen to finish the story of Marlowe's first case as a married man: "I grew up wanting to be Raymond Chandler and now, in a sense, I am."5
Talmage Powell (born 1920)

Talmage Powell began his career writing for the pulps and then progressed to the paperback original market.¹ In the '50's and '60's Powell produced five novels which featured private detective Ed Rivers "a far more memorable creation than the bulk of the paperback private eyes".² He also produced four novels as Ellery Queen³ (not included in Bibliography).

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>> Richard Deming.

Thomas Devney.

Bruno Fischer.

Frank Kane.

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2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 723.
Bill Pronzini (born 1943)

Bill Pronzini has been writing private eye fiction throughout the '70's and '80's but has failed to gain the sales or attention of some of his contemporaries such as Robert B. Parker. This is hard to understand as Pronzini's work has been "of a uniformly high standard"¹ and his unnamed (or occasionally called Bill) San Francisco P.I. has consistently been one of the genre's most entertaining and intelligent characters. Pronzini has also been active in collaborating with other writers in the field (such as Collin Willcox and Marcia Muller), an activity which one would imagine to be in keeping with his position as a member of the board of directors of the Mystery Writers of America.²

BIBLIOGRAPHY

  Nominated for a mystery writers of America Edgar Award.³

  The first story to feature Pronzini's nameless detective.


A marvellous story where we learn that the nameless detective is a collector of pulp magazines and paperback originals which feature hard-boiled dicks; the unnamed P.I. is following a man who is murdered and the only clue is an old paperback crime novel, when this evidence is stolen the detective traces down the author who, being a hard living hack, cannot remember the plot of his book!

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Co-authored with Barry N. Malzberg. The story of four men, "one of whom is a homicidal maniac": "a wholly professional product, and his versatility is quite remarkable".4

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Co-authored with Barry N. Malzberg.

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Co-authored with Colin Wilcox. An interesting combination of subgenres as Pronzini's private eye teams up with Wilcox's character Lieutenant Frank Hastings on a case.5

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Co-authored with Barry N. Malzberg.


  The winner of the 1981 Private Eye Writers of America award for Best Novel concerns a "locked-room puzzle set at a pulp collector's convention".6


  Co-authored with Jeff Wallmann and published under the name William Jeffrey.


  Co-authored with Marcia Muller.


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Co-authored with Marcia Muller.

Howard Browne.
Michael Collins.
William Campbell Gault.
Loren D. Estleman.
Robert B. Parker.

References


3. Ibid., 739.

4. BARNES, Ref. 1.

5. Ibid.

6. REILLY, Ref. 1, 739.
Peter Rabe

Rabe emerged in the 1950's in the paperback original market. A large amount of his early work "recalls the great gangster novels of an earlier era" while some of his later work falls within the more modern gangster novel tradition which grew up in the wake of Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*.2

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The Spy who was Three Feet Tall. New York: Fawcett, 1966.


>> W.R. Burnett. Little Caesar.

Dashiell Hammett. Red Harvest.

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Mario Puzo. The Godfather.

References


2. Ibid., 748.
Robert J. Randisi (born 1951)

Randisi's main importance to the genre is probably a co-founder (with Bill Pronzini) of the Private Eye Writers of America.¹ He has, however, written four novels featuring Miles Jacoby who is an investigator for the New York State Racing Club, and has commented of his attitude to the private eye novel that "my aim has been to elevate this field from a sub-genre of the mystery to a genre of its own".² He is also a prolific writer in the Western and Adventure fields.

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Co-authored with Warren Murphy.


Stephen Dobyns. Saratoga Bestiary.

Saratoga Longshot.

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Dick Francis.

Bill Pronzini.
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2. Ibid.

Joseph T. Shaw

Captain Shaw was one of the most important figures in the development of the hard-boiled tradition, through his inspired editing of *Black Mask* magazine. ¹ He also produced two novels of his own, but these have little to recommend them. In 1949, however, he edited *The Hard-Boiled Omnibus* which contained "stories from Black Mask, dating from 1929 to 1936 and including good ones by Hammett, Chandler, and Raoul Whitfield" ² as well as an introduction by Shaw which set out the philosophy that lay behind the magazine.

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Roger L. Simon (born 1943)

Simon was born in New York and holds a B.A. in English from Dartmouth College and an M.A. from Yale. ¹ His first two works Heir (1968) and The Mamma Tass Manifesto (1970) were mainstream novels but during the '70's he went on to produce four detective novels featuring private eye Moses Wine who is an ex student radical, a dope smoker, a Marxist and a pacifist. In creating such a character Simon was clearly setting out to modernise the figure of the traditional Southern Californian P.I. and in this he was largely successful: Ross Macdonald commented that Simon was "the most brilliant new writer of private detective fiction in years".² It is ironic to note, however, that the '60's

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sensibilities of Wine which were taken at the time to be so "contemporary", are now every bit as dated as those of Sam Spade and Phillip Marlowe.

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Winner of the Mystery Writers of America Special Award and the John Creasy Award for best first crime novel of the year. Moses Wine is persuaded to help a democratic presidential nominee by an old girlfriend from his student days. At first Wine is unhappy about becoming involved but he becomes committed when his former girlfriend is murdered and goes on to investigate the dirty side of American politics in a way that shows "on almost every page the differences between the old and new manifestations of the hard-boiled mystery story".

Wine becomes involved in an investigation of the murder of a television reporter, largely through the influences of Dr Gunther Thomas (a thinly disguised Hunter S Thompson, King of gonzo journalism).

(>) Hunter S Thompson. Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas
The Great Shark Hunt
Hells Angels)

Wine travels to China to solve the mystery of a missing gold duck and come to terms with his political roots.

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1. GEHERIN, David. Sons of Sam Spade, 1980, 83.
2. Ibid
3. Ibid

Bart Spicer (born 1918)

Spicer was born in Virginia and began writing after having served in the Second World War and then working as a journalist. 1 In the '50's Spicer produced six novels featuring Philadelphia private eye Carney Wilde as "an admirable, believable hero, not the formularized caricature that can be found in too many tough guy series of the period". 2 In the '60's and '70's Spicer continued to write but moved away from the private eye tradition and produced fiction "aimed at the bestseller market rather than the specialised mystery readership". 3
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   Carney Wilde investigates the death of jazz legend Harold Morton prince.


> Howard Browne
William Campbell Gault
Wade Miller

References

3. Ibid.
Mickey Spillane (born 1918)

Spillane became a publishing sensation in the '50's when his novels featuring Mike Hammer, "the toughest of the tough guy dicks", sold in their millions. The Hammer stories were characterised by extremely high levels of sex, violence and a vigorous anti communist stance. Spillane turned out a whole string of Hammer novels in the '50's and '60's which were all exiting reading but which did nothing to enhance the hard-boiled tradition (he could also, at times, be unintentionally funny: "You don't kill a fat man and see a girl die because of the look on your face and get involved with a Commie organisation all in two days without feeling your mind sink into a soggy ooze".). In the mid-sixties Spillane produced a number of spy novels featuring Tiger Man before returning to writing Mike Hammer novels in the late '60's. During the '70's and '80's Spillane was largely silent but in 1990 Mike Hammer returned in The Killing Man which received the usual critical dismissals and large sales that have characterised most of his fiction. The real importance of Mickey Spillane's work has been that it proved that hard-boiled fiction could achieve best seller status and that high levels of sex and violence helped in achieving this (it should be added, however, that in France Spillane has received a great deal of serious critical attention, the most ridiculous example of this being "Towards a Semiotic Reading of Mickey Spillane" by Odette L'Henry Evans).
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(> Dashiell Hammett The Maltese Falcon)


* Vengeance is Mine! New York: Dutton, 1950.

(> Dashiell Hammett The Maltese Falcon)


>> Max Allen Collins
Carroll John Daly
Donald Pendleton
Richard Stark.
Richard Stark (pseudonym for Donald E Westlake, born 1933)

Under the name Richard Stark, Donald E Westlake has produced a number of novels featuring Parker, an extremely violent criminal who is single-mindedly determined to exact revenge and renumeration from "the Outfit" after he has been double crossed. The level of violence found in the Stark novels shows the influence of Mickey Spillaine but Westlake is a better writer who displays "a passion for process and mechanics" through his "brilliant invention" Parker. Westlake also writes comedy mysteries under his own name and under the pseudonym Tucker Coe.

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The Seventh. New York: Pocket Books, 1966


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Kurt Steel (Pseudonym for Rudolf Hornaday Kagey, born 1904, died 1946)

Steel was one of the first in a long line of academics to have written hard-boiled detective stories. He was a member of the philosophy department of New York University and held a PHD from Colombia.¹ In the '30's and '40's he produced nine novels featuring new York P.I. Rudolf Kagey who is very much in the tradition of Hammett's Continental Op and Sam Spade.

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* * *


* Dead of Night. Boston: Little Brown, 1940.


>> Dashiell Hammett

Thomas Kyd

Jonathan Latimer

References

#Jim Thompson (born 1906 died 1976)

Thompson was born on the Kiowa-Caddo-Comanche reservation in Oklahoma where his father was U.S. Marshal. In the '30's he was director of the Federal Writers Project in Oklahoma and at this time began contributing to pulp detective magazines. In the '40's Thompson began a long career producing novels for the paperback original market and he continued this career until his death in 1976. Thompson was one of the most original and disturbing of the hard-boiled writers to appear after the war; he took James M. Cain's approach of identifying with the first person voice of the criminal but Thompson's criminals were of a different sort to Cain's, being articulate and believable psychopaths rather than doomed petty
criminals spurred on to greater crimes by lust. Thompson's work was largely ignored in his lifetime but since his death his reputation has begun to grow and he has attracted something of a cult status. Violent but also very funny Thompson's books are quite unique and he deserves his belated addition to the top rank of American crime writers: "Dashiell Hammett, Horace McCoy and Raymond Chandler. None of these men ever wrote a book within a mile of Thompson".3

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Stanley Kubrick said of this novel that it "was probably the most chilling and believable first-person story of a criminally warped mind that I have ever encountered".4


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* A Swell Looking Babe. Lion, 1954.


 (> Frederic Brown. His Name Was Death.)


James M. Cain.
David Goodis.

N.B. In 1983 Zomba books published *The Getaway, The Killer Inside Me, The Grifters* and *Pop. 1280* in their Black Box Thriller series under the title *4 Novels by Jim Thompson.*

References

2. Ibid., 120.

**Ernest Tidyman (born 1928)**

Tidyman is the creator of John Shaft the most successful black detective who was enormously popular during the "blacksploitation" craze of the early '70's.
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>> Donald Goines.
Chester Himes.
Mickey Spillaine.

Jonathan Valin (born 1947)

Valin took up writing after having previously followed a career as an academic lecturing in English at the University of Cincinnati and at Washington University.1 All his novels feature private detective Harry Stoner who follows in the tradition of the hard-boiled detectives of the past, particularly Macdonald's Lew Archer with whom he shares the habit of becoming involved with the problems of middle class families (although Valin's books are set in
Cincinnati rather than the traditional Southern California of Macdonald's work). All of Valin's novels are of a very high standard and Peter Straub has said of him that he is "in the very small class of people who transcend the noble ghosts of Chandler and Hammett".  

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Arthur Lyon.
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Raoul Whitfield (born 1898 died 1945)

Whitfield was one of the first of the *Black Mask* writers to progress to writing novels in the '30's. His stories often had Hollywood settings and his best work stands up well to comparison with the work of other first generation hard-boiled writers.

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The first person narrative of an ex sing sing inmate who is determined to fight organised crime and corruption.

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Published under the name Temple Field.
Harry Whittington (born 1915)

Whittington began writing during the depression but was not published until after the second world war. He was one of the most prolific of the writers who produced for the paperback original market in the 1950's. Whittington was also one of the best of the writers of the period and his work stands up well today. In France Whittington is considered "one of the greats of the second generation" of hard-boiled writers and the critical attention that they have devoted to him has helped to facilitate his rediscovery and re-publishing in America recently.

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>> Gill Brewer.
  John D. Macdonald.
  Jim Thompson.

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2. Ibid.
Cornell Woolrich (born 1903 died 1968)

Woolrich was born in New York city but spent much of his youth travelling in Latin America with his father. He started writing while still a student at Columbia University. Woolrich's work always ingeniously plotted but the real interest of his work is the way in which they display "despair and the longing for extinction", an attitude which helped to establish the *noir* atmosphere of so much of the crime fiction of the '40's and '50's. Woolrich was capable of producing "an atmosphere of terror" that "has been equalled only by Edgar Allan Poe" and his best works were some of the most memorable and influential of all the American crime fiction produced in the '40's.

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 Conclusion

One of the chief characteristics which distinguishes genre fiction from mainstream fiction is that genre works share common conventions and form an ongoing tradition so that, unlike the work of mainstream novelists, few genre authors can claim that their work stands in isolation from the work of other writers in the same field. Certainly, each individual author will hope to discover their own distinctive voice and approach to the chosen genre but in deciding to work within a specific form they, consciously or unconsciously, must take into account the established conventions of that form (even if only to rebel against or subvert them). Thus it is that the most distinguished exponent of a given genre may be seen to share something with the talent-free hack who is working in the same form; their finished products may work to staggeringly different effect but they share a common starting point.

Discussing crime or mystery fiction, however, presents certain problems which may not be found in the examination of other genres. Other forms, such as science fiction, espionage fiction or westerns, certainly contain different themes and sub-genres but they are invariably formed by different authors developing the genre in an individual way from a common tradition. Crime fiction whilst also having many sub-genres (locked room mysteries, police procedurals, country house murders etc) may be seen to be divided into two quite separate traditions: the naturalistic crime story (of which hard-boiled fiction, of one sort or another, forms the major part) and the classic story of detection. The distinctions which
exist between these two traditions may not be accounted for simply by the fact that the former grouping is largely made up of American fiction and the latter by English fiction. Rather, the two schools have distinct and different origins; the classic detective story owes its origin to the nineteenth century whilst the naturalistic crime story originated in the twentieth century and more specifically from the social and literary trends which emerged from the past first world war period and then the depression. The differences which emerged from this lack of common origin were vast (and in their own way as profound as the differences between nineteenth century and twentieth century poets or novelists) and were immediately apparent in the divergent approaches that the two schools took for their subject matter (the American naturalistic school using violence and idiomatic language whilst the classical English school used the examination of social conventions combined with complex plotting). It was not only in the work of the writers that these differences became apparent, however, as the two schools had separate readerships, a fact shown by the different markets which appeared for their works; the American naturalists emerging from the pulp magazines and moving on to paperback originals while the classical English detective story emerged from such nineteenth century slick paper publications as *The Strand Magazine* and moved on to hardback publication.

Today the differences remain. American writers who are following in the tradition of Hammett, Chandler and Cain have as little in common with the successors of Christie and Sayers as their illustrious predecessors did in the '30's. Despite this, however,
publishers and the public library services continue to class crime fiction as one distinct type. In the course of conducting research for this dissertation the author had cause to use three county library services: Leicestershire, Oxfordshire and Surrey. All had extensive stocks of crime fiction and it was gratifying to find that in each the proportion of American hard-boiled crime fiction was relatively high. In each case, however, no distinction was made between differing types of crime fiction, often different types of genre fiction were housed separately (crime, science fiction, thrillers, etc) but within each group no sub-sections were allowed for. Thus the reader with an interest in crime fiction could be directed to a given area but if he did not have pre-knowledge of the genre there was no way of distinguishing which type of crime novel would appeal, or, if the reader had already decided on a type of novel then there was no indication as to which authors fitted within this style.

It was my hope and intention in writing this dissertation to try and help and eliminate part of the problem outlined above. If librarians have such works as this at their disposal then the reader can be directed to such a source and can then be expected to gain more from the stock of crime fiction by being better able to find works which are likely to entertain and also by being less likely to be drawn towards works which will not. Obviously, this work only addresses part of the genre; ideally a companion work dealing with the Classic detective story would be produced. Indeed, it could well be that other genres contain distinctive styles and traditions of which the author is unaware and would profit from a
similar examination. It may be that libraries and publishers, by choosing too broad categories for fiction, are serving the public poorly by alienating some would-be readers by providing them with inappropriate works. The author became aware of this problem through the development of his reading habits (and, more particularly, an interest in hard-boiled fiction) and has attempted to provide a partial solution in this work. Others with different interests and tastes could do the same with other genres and sub-genres but perhaps the best starting point for future work in the area would be a study to identify what proportion of readers are drawn towards books of a particular type or theme (as opposed to the more general types being used) and what problems they face when attempting to find them.
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