

BACK NUMBERS CAN BE EASILY PROCURED

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Corrections:

I should have known that Merril Library is in Toronto as opposed to the way it was spelled last issue. I also managed to mistype Donald Barr Chidsey's name, twice, which doesn't say much for my proofing skills.

Cleve F. Adams is the author of the Violet McDade stories in Clues.

Mike Chomko sold me "The Classic Era of American Pulp Fiction" for \$39.95. The Vintage Library is carrying it for the same price.

Golden Perils issue 22 was the Fall 2001 issue.

Uninformed readers should have been uninformed readers.

Back Issue Fulfillment Department:

Missed Deadlines

I had good intentions of getting out an issue for the January mailing, but as the deadline approached, I realized that the issue was not ready to submit. I decided I'd rather skip a mailing than submit something I didn't feel was ready. When I found a typo in the corrections, I knew that the issue needed more work.

I thought about doing a double issue this time and numbering it 2/3 but that would only cause confusion, for me if for no one else, down the road. This issue is thicker than a "normal" issue, though, as I've had six months to work on it and I'm trying to catch up on reviews.

Last Issue's Follies

Hopefully this issue will be a bit easier to read. When I put together the last issue I didn't have a mailing to look at and the inside margins were not set properly. I'm also trying for fewer typos and stupid errors, but that's probably a forlorn hope.

One thing I want to apologize for is the generally poor color of the scan on the back cover. I was running late and I didn't realize how badly the color had shifted on the scanner I was using. That's what I get for proofing in black and white and running my copies at the last minute.

Looking over the review of Golden Perils 22 I found that I hadn't given enough space to allow for an adequate review. Golden Perils is a very good product and its pulp newslines are invaluable. I think perhaps I was too critical without describing the good points.

Distribution

I've been impressed with Howard Hopkins' idea to distribute Golden Perils over the internet in PDF format. Since I work with Acrobat files on a daily basis, it's not a problem for me to convert an issue of Back Numbers into a screen-resolution PDF.

With this issue, I am going to start distributing the prior issue via email in PDF format. In other words, when the members of PEAPS get this issue, issue one will be made available on the Pulpmags newsgroup to those who want to request it.

There will be a few minor changes to Volume 1.1, however. I am going to remove the comic strips that ran on page two. The decision to run them in the first place was a close one. I decided that sending a copyrighted comic strip to a small group of friends was questionable, but acceptable. Publishing copyrighted material in a publication that is widely distributed to a large group of people

through the internet is not appropriate. I'll probably use the extra space to run a copyright notice and other editorial items.

I probably won't get around to rescanning the back cover, but the other corrections listed on page one will be fixed.

I will be taking out personal information, such as my home phone number and address and adding copyright information.

While it could certainly have been a better look at the subject, Fredric Wertham's book on Fanzines (see Recent Reading on page 38) has some interesting comments on how fanzines operate. One of the most interesting is about how fanzine editors distribute complimentary copies. After thinking it over, I've come up with the following for Back Numbers:

Members of PEAPS get a hard copy through the quarterly PEAPS mailing. Contributors, if any, will also be provided a hard copy.

Anyone who sends me a copy of their fanzine or has a published letter of comment will be sent a PDF of the current issue once the mailing reaches the PEAPS membership. PDFs will also be sent to "friends of Back Numbers" and to PEAPS waitlisters if I have their email addresses.

Anyone who is active in pulp fandom and who has a project reviewed in Back Numbers will also be provided a copy in PDF format if they can be contacted. I feel it only fair to allow them the opportunity to respond, if they desire, in the next issue.

After the most recent issue is received by PEAPS members, the previous issues will be offered via email on the Pulpmags newsgroup and alt.pulp. I don't want to release the current issue because I think there should be an incentive to those who create their own zines and participate in PEAPS.

This sounds complicated, hopefully in practice it won't be.

APAZine vs. Fanzine

Since I'm going to be distributing this zine beyond the PEAPS mailing, I've come upon a problem. Some readers who are not PEAPS members have commented that I am clearly writing for a certain audience and some of my references aren't clear to them.

This is caused by the fact that I am writing this as an APA mailing, which causes me to have a different intent than if I were doing this primarily as a normal zine

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aimed at a general readership.

When I'm writing I make the assumption that my target audience is very knowledgeable about pulps. I assume that everyone in PEAPS knows more about pulps than I do, so I don't spend a lot of space or time in covering what I consider the "basics."

As a result, I don't "fill in the blanks" when I'm writing. For example, I tend to use last names only without any other identification for well-known writers. I just assume that when I refer to Howard, everyone knows I'm talking about Robert E. Howard, creator of Conan.

Even a PEAPS member commented that he would have spent twice as much space on an article than I did. I see his point, but this is already a 60 page issue, and I think that's enough. If I footnoted or expanded on every pulp reference this would have been a 120 page issue.

Because the mailings are a sort of conversation between members, some of the contents of Back Numbers may be difficult to follow. I may be responding to a mailing comment or an article that appeared in another PEAPS contribution. I may be referring to an in-joke, or engaging in a little good-natured ribbing of my fellow members. I'm often hoping to spark a conversation or get the input of the other PEAPS members. So my writing tends to be more conversational or informal.

There is really no way around this. I don't want to compete with Golden Perils, Purple Prose, Pulp Adventures or any other "regular" fanzine.

"Hoarding"

I've been thinking about the comments of some members of Pulpmags about the "hoarding" of information in PEAPS mailings. I suppose that addressing that perception, along with egobo, is the reason I'm publishing Back Numbers in PDF format.

I think these comments are off base however. A cursory look at the last few mailings shows that *Eldorado* and *Hidalgo* are both available for sale, *Sulf* is available for trade, for sale or for a published letter of comment, pulp index material from Larry Estep is on CD, the contents of a recent issue of *Pulpmonger* is available in Pulp Masters, 2nd edition and Rick Hall writes that for additional copies of *Not Worth ¼ Cent a Word* one should ask. Many of the other members seem to be using their mailings to prepare work that will eventually be published elsewhere.

I would guess at least half of every mailing should eventually be available to outsiders in one format or another.

What these folks don't seem to realize is that PEAPS is available to everyone for a price. The price is joining the waitlist, waiting for a space to open up and contributing six pages every other mailing once you become a member. If the information in PEAPS isn't worth the price to them, that's hardly our fault.

I showed a copy of the September mailing to a

friend and he couldn't believe what a bargain it was for a \$9 per year membership. Of course, the "subscription" also requires 12 pages to be contributed each year, but I obviously don't think that is a burden.

I know that if I could buy a copy of the mailing without being a member of the waitlist for \$6, I wouldn't have any incentive to turn out Back Numbers. As much as I admire Golden Perils, Purple Prose and Pulp Adventures, I've never submitted to those magazines. Being a member of PEAPS requires a commitment to produce work, not just consume it.

APAs

Reading Wertham's book brought up a question about APAs. I wonder just how many APAs are still in operation. I think of them as somewhat archaic with the advent of the internet age, but I recall that somebody in PEAPS said they are a member of three APAs. Offhand I could only think of PEAPS and REHUPA, but a little research shows that there are still a number of comic, gaming and science fiction APAs running as well as literary ones.

So, in what other APAs are the members of PEAPS active? Do the members on more than one group do different zines for each one, or do they send the same mailing to multiple groups?

Is FAPA still in existence? What does the F stand for? Fantasy, I would assume. Is this the same one that Don Wolheim founded in the 1930s?

I ran across a reference to a detective fiction APA, DAPA-em, in the pulp fiction issue of Clues from Bowling Green University. I found some internet references to people who used to be members or were members for long periods, but not a lot on current membership or rules or where to write for more information.


There's a three-year-old reference on the internet to a guide to more than 250 APAs. I'm amazed that there are still that many in existence, and disappointed that there are only a handful that have some sort of web presence.

How do these other APAs compare with PEAPS?

I see that there is an APA for down-under SF fans, but Graham Stone isn't listed as a member.

One APA the Robert-E-Howard APA (not to be confused with the print APA REHUPA) combines old fashioned APA rules with internet distribution. It's an interesting experiment, but I wonder how rules designed for one medium will work in another.

Internet mailing lists may be taking the place of APAs for some, but I know that I tend to write quick, short posts for mailing lists, while I spend a lot of time working on my PEAPS mailing trying to get it right.

APAs seem to be thriving more than I would have thought, but they also seem to be "underground" in that if you don't know about them, you won't ever find out about them. 

Letters of Comment:

Hi Warren,

I was looking over the PEAPS issue. A very nice production and I like the set up.

Couple comments on the GP review of 22. That issue was not password protected and I allowed print. I just went back and checked my file to make sure and it had print enabled, so I do not quite understand why the reviewer couldn't print it. However, the present issue, 23 does have print locked because I am offering print copies for sale and the mag is basically an emag. It is not meant to compete with PA's mag format.

The font criticism I respectfully disagree with as well. I set the issue up to basically imitate a pulp, with double columns and the aim to imitate a typewriter to look more pulpish. (also the original 20 print issues were in Courier ten font so there was a bit of nostalgia involved) I asked folks about the courier font and only two people didn't care for it. I also tried a poll to replace it with Times, and opinion was divided almost equally. I tried the Times for the present issue as an experiment. So far no one has made mention, so I am assuming it was ok.

What font did the Peaps issue use? That one looks nice and clean. I assume the headers are Arial or something like that? I also like the layout. What program is used?

Anyway, thanks again for the issue and write up!

Best, Howard (Hopkins)
(via email)

Howard:

Perhaps I made a mistake in my review, I thought that you had disabled printing on issue 22 and that I had requested, and you provided, a copy to me that wasn't protected. I may have confused that with issue 23 that did have security features.

I hadn't realized, although I should have, that the authorship of the articles was unclear. Because Back Numbers is prepared for the somewhat informal setting of a PEAPS mailing, I failed to consider that readers seeing it as a normal fanzine might think that there was more than one person involved. And since then, I've seen PEAPS mailings that have contributions by non-members. In PEAPS, the assumption is that the work is done by the member submitting the pages unless otherwise stated. For the record, everything in Back Numbers is written by myself unless it clearly states authorship by another person, such as the article by Ray Skirsky this issue. Material reprinted from other sources, such as biographical data from pulp magazines, will always be labeled and have original publication data included.

I would welcome contributions and letters of comment, but my experiences in the past as an editor is that if I waited for

contributors, the issue would never get out.

The font I use for my headlines is Bembo Bold, and my body copy is Bembo. My title font, also used for some stock header copy, is Romic, replacing Decotura that I used for the same kind of thing last issue. Back Numbers is prepared on Adobe Pagemaker 6.5.

Dear Warren,

I just finished the first issue of Back Numbers and I am impressed. You have good, detailed reviews and articles and a nice overall layout.

After reading the premiere issue, it seems that pulp fiction is starting to get the undeserved reputation as being low-brow and vulgar. First, we have Peter Haining implying that collectors only seek pulps for their racy covers and sexual content. It's too bad he decided to squander such a golden opportunity to do a good, comprehensive work on the development of pulp fiction in America as the title suggests. Instead Haining portrayed us as perverts. Thanks, Pete.

Then we have Margaret Atwood and the notion of a "Literary Pulp." So now the literati have to make "traditional" pulps more palatable for their discerning tastes. Give me a break! In college, I was surrounded by these book snobs. To me, a good story is a good story, no matter the source. Also, Atwood's comment of the pulp writing style as "pretty condensed" stuck me as rather funny. Is she saying that a pulp writer could tell a story in, say, 40 pages, but it would take her 200?


In your "Back Cover" article, you spoke highly of a McDade story by Tinsley. Is this the same author that made the insufferable Major John Tattersall Lacy? In "The Scarlet Ace," Lacy fails to apprehend the title villain but he still proclaims victory over the criminal. I was surprised he didn't demand a Roman Triumph through the streets of New York.

I am eagerly anticipating the next issue.

Richard J. Berman
Battle Mountain, NV

Gremlins, it must be gremlins. That's the only excuse I have for saying Tinsley was the author of a Violet McDade story last issue when I know good and well that Cleve Adams wrote that series. Tinsley's female detective was Carrie Cashin.

Tinsley was a competent second-string pulp writer who is best remembered today for writing some of the Shadow novels as Maxwell Grant. Adams is a completely different writer who is known mostly for his detective stories. I prefer Adams to Tinsley myself, but the Lacy stories may not be Tinsley's best work.

For those interested in reading three of Tinsley's Lacy adventures, including the one Rich mentions, as he goes up against "The Scarlet Ace" they are available as PDFs at pulpgen.com. You can also find many other excellent pulp stories there. 

Windy City: An Informal Convention Report

By Ray Skirsky

The show (the Windy City Pulp and Paperback Show, held in Illinois in March) was excellent, with several pulp dealers who don't come to Pulpcon, and a lot of paperback dealers who also don't come to Pulpcon.

I found a lot of good stuff, including about 35 of the remaining 66 Argosies that I needed to finish the 30s. There were also about 10 more that I needed but didn't buy because of condition or price.

There was one dealer, Toad Hall Books, that had three long comic-boxes of Argosy, whose condition was much better than usual. The prices were also higher, but not outrageously so. The books we normally want to buy for \$5 were \$7 or \$8, the \$7 books were \$10, and the \$10 books were \$12 to \$15. I did bite the bullet and buy several ERB and Hubbard Argosies. Many of the ones I still need have these authors, so I'll just have to get used to it.

There was a lot of art there, much more than at Pulpcon, including lots of paperback cover art.

I did buy two paintings from Joel F. Naprstek: a cover from the new Phantom comic (#2 if you go to comics shops), and a Shadow painting he did for the auction.

On the paperback front, I found a somewhat reasonably priced Man From UNCLE #23 (\$45), which completes my collection. I also got a couple of British Danger Man, and a whole slew of '60s and '70s TV tie-in paperbacks. There was one dealer who only dealt in this stuff, but his prices were outrageous. For example, he wanted \$200 for his copy of Man From UNCLE #23, and it was in no better condition than the one I bought. He was complaining that the show sucked. I wanted to tell him the show was great, it's his prices, but I refrained. From Art Hackathorn I bought a handful of really nice Gold Medal paperbacks. These were collector quality, but I bought them to read.

I also bought about a dozen detective pulps—mostly Thrilling Detective with Oriental Menace covers, but also some Dime Detective and Detective Short Stories and a few other titles. Add in a handful of Short Stories, Adventure, and one romance pulp, and you have my acquisitions. Oh, I also bought two Avenger pulps. I almost bought a really high grade—at least the cover was high-grade, the paper was a little more yellow than you would expect from the cover, which still had full gloss—of the Shadow issue “Teeth of the Dragon,” but Dave Smith wouldn't deal, even a little. I kept pointing to the page color, he kept pointing to the cover gloss. If the pages had been creamy-white, I'd have bought it, but the pages were a little bit darker than dead grass. Not bad, just not up to the cover and the price.

The auction was a bit of a bust, with most of the

stuff not meeting reserve. I got outbid on a Wide World with the KKK cover, and immediately regretted it, but all-in-all it was a successful con for me.

The movie track was very popular, but I personally only went to one movie: The Smart Blonde, from 1937. It was funny, but not exactly hard-boiled, or noir, or pulpy. Okay, maybe it was pulpy. There were a couple of others I wanted to see but didn't remember them when they were on. Oh well.


The con suite was quite active until after 5 a.m. both nights, so if you didn't need sleep you could stay there. I was one of the last people on Friday night—leaving about 6 a.m.—but left at about 3 a.m. on Saturday. What can I say? I'm getting old.

Jim Steranko's art show was amazing, and had pretty good crowds for most of the weekend, including a lot of folk who were just at the hotel but not at the show. He had two paintings I'd go into debt to own. He also spent a lot of time in the con suite, talking to all and sundry, so he is one of the better guests-of-honor I've seen.

The facility was out in the middle of nowhere, which meant that if you didn't have a car you were pretty much stuck with eating at the hotel. Even if you had a car, there wasn't really anything much close by. There were some complaints about that, especially since the hotel restaurant and bar both closed pretty early.

The hotel is nowhere near as nice as the Pulpcon hotel, and it was only 20 bucks cheaper per night. They say that next year they're going to move to a hotel with better facilities nearer to town. It was \$36 bucks each way via airport shuttle. I got a rental car for the entire stay for \$86, so that was definitely the way to go. Of course, I ended up spending another \$17 for gas, but that was because I went exploring on Friday before the show and on Sunday after the show, and drove over a hundred miles each day. If you were budgeting expenses, my hotel bill was about \$225, if you shared, it would be half. The car was \$100, and food, etc. would have run about another \$50. Not exactly cheap, but less than Pulpcon. Of course, Pulpcon is four days. Also, I stayed one extra day in the hotel, and rented the car for an extra day.

The weather was bad, which held down the attendance. Also, the weather people were saying there would be a nasty snow-storm on Saturday night, Sunday morning, which caused two dealers to pack up and leave on Saturday afternoon, and probably kept some attendees away. The snow really didn't come until Sunday night, and even then it was just flurries with almost no accumulation. But it was windy and bitterly cold the entire weekend. The snow was worse—about 3 inches—to the south, and I think John DeWalt and others got caught in it on the way home.

I'm definitely planning on going back next year. 

A Few Random Thoughts on Anthologies

I have a confession to make: I don't really like anthologies, and I never have.

I find anthologies are intimidating. Often they are thick slabs of books, like the Mammoth series by Carroll and Graf. At more than 600 pages, I know I won't get through one in a night, or even several. To finish it, I'll have to work, dedicating several nights to plowing through it. I've had "The Mammoth Book of Private Eye Stories" sitting on my shelf for years. Every once in a while I'll flip through it, take a look at the table of contents, and then place it back, picking up a novel or single author collection instead. I started on "The Mammoth Book of Pulp Fiction" several times. I got stuck about a hundred pages in and couldn't seem to get started again until buying the sequel prodded me into finishing it.

I find anthologies are distracting. They are full of short stories, some of which I won't like, by different authors, some of whom I won't like. Just when I get going on a really good story by a good author it ends, and I have to start at the beginning of the next one, perhaps one not as good. Or I have to suffer through a bad story, until I finally get through it or give up on it. I hate getting into the mood and setting of one story, only to have it end and be thrown into something completely different.

I find anthologies are uneven. Reading "From Unknown Worlds" I found many stories I liked very much, and some that I didn't like. Oh, they were well-written stories, but they just weren't my kind of stories. I'll breeze through a story by an author I like, then find the next story is by an author I don't care for.

Sometimes I'll get partway through the story and then the Siren song of the next story calls me to it. I tell myself that I'll come back in just a bit, to finish the not-so-good story. Pretty soon, I've got three or four bookmarks in the anthology, marking stories that I'm partway through. Then I've read all the good stories and I'm left with the dregs. I'm just 25 pages away from finishing "From Unknown Worlds" but I just can't finish "The Wheels of If." I'm sure it's a classic, but I just can't read more than a few pages at a time, before some other book calls out to me to pick it up and enjoy.

While I realize that one can just skip the stories that aren't appealing, I dislike doing this as it doesn't really feel like I've "finished" the book. With a novel, I've either finished it, or I've decided after the first chapter or two that it's not worth reading at all.

At least with a single-author collection, if you like the author, you'll like most of the stories, and many author collections are collection of series stories or similar work so you can go from one to the next like eating popcorn. Maybe one piece of popcorn has more butter than another, but it's still popcorn. Anthologies are like eating

jelly beans in the dark, one minute you've got a good flavor, the next you've got one of those nasty black licorice ones.

I find anthologies redundant. A mystery anthology, to be a good one, must have a Hammett. But I have all the major Hammetts. Even the rare ones, even the poor ones. How many copies of "One Hour" do I need? Or Howard's "Names in the Black Book" or Lovecraft's "The Music of Eric Zahn" or Paul Cain's "Black." Often I'll get part way through a story and it will start to sound familiar and I'll realize that I've read this story, perhaps many years before, and I know how it ends. Or I'll buy a new book and find out that half the stories are stories I've got sitting on my shelf. I bought "The Unknown" and enjoyed it. I found "From Unknown Worlds" and quickly discovered that many of the stories were in the first anthology. And I hadn't even finished it when I brought home "The Unknown Five." At least that anthology didn't intimidate me, three quick stories and I was done, I'd already read the two long ones. Hard-boiled mystery anthologies are the same: while "Sail" and "Angelfish" are great stories, I think they've been anthologized enough.

I find that editors "salt" the contents of anthologies. To sell an anthology to the general public, I suppose that you need to have easily recognizable names to grab attention. I know this works on me. If I don't know and like at least half of the authors, at least by reputation, I'll probably pass. I think a lot of mediocre stories by famous authors get anthologized just because of the name recognition and because they can be shoe-horned into the theme of the anthology. Howard's "Names in the Black Book" comes to mind. Marginally a detective story, it's not one of Howard's best and not one that deserves to be anthologized nearly as often as it is. I can see that editors are including it just to broaden the readership base.

How many science fiction anthologies have stories by Poe or Kipling or Twain, wedged in to get a big name for the contents page and to "prove" that science fiction is "literature".

I find anthologies are a poor guide to authors. I was overjoyed when I saw that Pronzini and Adrian's "Hardboiled" had a short story by Chester Himes, one of my favorite novelists. Yet I was disappointed in that story, and if I hadn't already been a fan, I wouldn't have known to look for his longer work. Short stories by Jim Thompson have kept me from starting any of his books. Spillane's "The Girl Beyond The Hedge" is so implausible that I'd never have picked up any of his books. (Ok, Spillane's books are implausible, but he carries it off better in the novel format.) On the other hand, when an anthology is clicking with me, I don't really notice which writer I'm reading. I've read John D. MacDonald for many years in many

anthologies, but I never realized how good he was until I picked up “The Good Old Stuff” and “More Good Old Stuff.”

I find anthologies are a poor guide to their subjects. I have the three aforementioned Unknown anthologies, and not one of them has my favorite Unknown story: Norvell W. Page’s “But Without Horns.” These Unknown anthologies all choose their stories based on showing how John W. Campbell’s theories influenced the development of modern fantasy. As a result, they don’t print some of the more traditional stories, such as Page’s Prester John stories. Sure these are too long for an anthology, but if Page was printing historical sword and sorcery in Unknown, doesn’t it stand to reason that others were too? How about the Lankmar stories of Fritz Leiber? These clearly aren’t in the same sub-genre of fantasy as Ted Sturgeon’s “The Hag Selenite.”

Several anthologies try to take one story a year from the run of the magazine. Is there really only one great story from each year? Is the best story from 1948 really better than the second best story from 1938? I know that most anthologies only have one story per author, for much the same reason that the pulps used house names for a second story by an author in one issue. But isn’t the second best story by Norbert Davis or Frederick Nebel better than the best story by D.L. Champion? Anthologies also tend to avoid long works, an understandable practice, but one that skews the material toward shorter works. A welcome exception to this was Gorman, Greenberg and Pronzini’s “Pure Pulp” which reprints Peter Rabe’s novel “The Box.” Even though it was as long as several short stories, it was the high point of the anthology. Too often, though, there just isn’t room for the best work in a given field.

“Best of” anthologies end up being the best of the stories that the editor had access to, or could clear the copyrights for. Shaw’s *Hardboiled Omnibus*, for example, doesn’t have Gardner or Nebel.

I find anthologies are misleading. They claim to be about a certain subject, but the authors try so hard to be clever and original that they forget to put in any of the type of stories they are promising. “Murder is My Business” edited by Max Allan Collins and Mickey Spillane is a good case in point. Instead of writing about hitmen, the authors have stories that seem to be about hitmen but really aren’t. They were trying so hard to have stories that contained a clever twist on the hitman theme, that they neglected to have stories about hitmen. While a little variety is a good thing, anthologists often go too far. “The Mammoth Book of Sword and Honor” edited by Mike Ashley is another case in point, where Ashley tries so hard to select stories that reflect on variations on the theme, that he is short of stories about people using swords who act honorably.

I find that anthologies are dishonest. I’m always

suspicious when I see an editor has included one of his or her stories in an anthology. Of course, the editor was presumably chosen because he is known for working in the field the anthology covers. But I know that some editors must be printing stories by their friends, relatives and drinking buddies. Vic Ghidalia is guilty of this. He edited a horror anthology, “Feast of Fear” that had many good stories by name authors, and one horrible one by Roberta Ghidalia. Are we not supposed to notice that the only story that is original to the anthology, the only one not by a name author, and the only one that sucked was written by someone with the same last name as the editor?

All that being said, I have accumulated quite a number of anthologies. The prime reason is that they collect stories that are unavailable elsewhere. The aforementioned Unknown collections are a case in point. I can’t afford to collect the entire run of Unknown. I picked up all three for far less than one Unknown pulp.

Also I wouldn’t know to look for stories by authors I don’t regularly read unless I saw their work in anthologies. Paul Cain, one of my favorite writers, was introduced to me by “The Black Mask Boys,” one anthology that I didn’t have a bit of trouble getting through and wanting more.

It’s hard to say what philosophy an anthology editor should use when deciding what stories to include.

I used to regularly read the [rec.arts.sf.written](mailto:rec.arts.sf.written@usenet) usenet newsgroup and there were always classic stories that were continually referred to by the more knowledgeable members. I’m an SF fan, and I’ve read more classic SF than many of my contemporaries, but for a long time I felt that there was a core group of classic stories that a dedicated SF fan should have read that I’d missed because I was too young. A basic reading list if you will. I wished that there was an anthology that included all of the stories that were most talked about, the ones that formed this basic reading list. Reading Del Rey’s history of science fiction made me really want to find all of these key stories. I was lucky enough to find a copy of Silverberg’s “Science Fiction Hall of Fame” and it nearly fits the bill. I would have added Clarke’s “The Star,” the first robot story by Asimov, Russell’s “Dear Devil,” Piper’s “Omnilingual” and Shaw’s “The Light of Other Days” and taken out Zelazny’s story. This would have given Asimov and Clarke two stories each, violating the typical rule against multiple stories by a single author, but it would have provided a near-complete list of classic SF stories.

This is the “Greatest Story” theory of how an anthology should be put together. The advantage of this is that it serves to introduce a new reader to the best and most influential stories, but the disadvantage is that it will be full of stories that are reprinted too often and it will be of lesser interest to the dedicated fan of the subject of the anthology. Since the majority of purchasers of an anthology will be those already interested in the subject, the

editor is driving away his best customers.

Now that I've assembled a substantial library that collects most of the timeless classics in at least one volume, I'm more in favor of anthologists collecting "lost" stories. Stories that either have never been reprinted, or are only found in very hard to find sources. I liked that Nolan in "Black Mask Boys" reprinted a Paul Cain story that didn't make it into "Seven Slayers." I really liked the inclusion of the Patent Leather Kid story in "Tough Guys and Dangerous Dames" but I was unhappy that Jakubowski chose to reprint the same one in "The Mammoth Book of Pulp Action." He can't be unaware of the first collection, and he must know that many of the readers of his anthology already have the first one on their shelves at home. It isn't like it's hard to find a good Gardner story in the pulps. I've always wanted to read another Patent Leather Kid story, and he could have found a different one. Or he could have used a Lester Leith, Sidney Zoom or Paul Pry story. With this wealth of unmined material, why use what's already relatively easy to find?

I know that not everyone has tracked down a copy of some of the older anthologies, but just reprinting the same few dozen stories every few years doesn't seem right. And even the hardest anthologies can be found. The hardest one I've had to find was the hardback of "The Hardboiled Omnibus." The abridged paperback isn't too difficult to find if you look in the right places, but the hardback is very expensive. I've found two copies of "Tales of Mystery," the reprint of "The Arbor House Treasury of Great Mystery Stories from the Pulps," in the last two years, and that is only missing one story from the first edition. There is no good reason to reprint stories over and over again. Some anthologists seem to be using other anthologies as their primary sources for material.

Of course, an editor might be going for historical importance, as in my SF example above. But there seems to be fewer identifiable "key" stories in hard-boiled than in SF. You can argue that "The False Burton Combs," "Three Gun Terry," "Knights of the Open Palm" or "The Road Home" are key stories, but then what? Which of Gardner's do you choose? Dent's "Sail" and "Angelfish" are classics, but were they really a turning point? Which of the Kennedy and McBride stories is the best of the series?

Many modern anthologies have gone overboard in using a theme to decide on stories. This has gotten way out of hand, soon we'll be seeing anthologies of Christmas stories by women writers about left handed yak herders who solve crimes on other planets while being assisted by cats. But then again, I only object to themes I'm not interested in. I'd have no trouble with a theme-based anthology of pulp magazine stories featuring newspaper reporters, even if it is a very narrow subject.

One anthology, "Detectives A to Z" by McSherry, Greenberg and Waugh, chooses stories based on the names of the detectives, one story per letter. I didn't think this

was a good idea, but it resulted in several good stories from the pulps being included, among them a Sidney Zoom story from Erle Stanley Gardner and a Trickey Enright story from John K. Butler. In trying to fit the theme, the editors were forced to use obscure pulp characters to get a main character who happened to be named appropriately. It ended up being a good anthology, despite being a dumb idea and having some poor stories.

The survey of a magazine theme seems to work for the first collection, then you get into the problem of repetition again. Too often the best of a given magazine has already been reprinted, and these "best of" collections are mostly common stories. I bought a Weird Tales anthology that I could swear I didn't have, but every story in it seemed familiar. I don't know if I have this anthology in storage in Reno, or if I have just read every single story in other anthologies. I'd check in Brian's index, but I know that's in storage in Reno.

One thing I like is when editors add value to the anthology. "The Black Mask Boys" is an excellent example, with a history of the magazine, biographical data on authors and lists of series character appearances all adding to what would have been an excellent anthology without them. In fact, I bought "Under the Moons of Mars" recently just to read the essay in back on the history of the Munsey magazines. Of the "real" contents of the book, many stories were only sections of novels and not self-contained stories at all. I have no desire to read the first part of a novel that I have no chance of ever finishing. I already have complete versions of "Under the Moons of Mars" and "The Moon Pool" and the first installment of "Polaris of the Dog Star Pack." In this case, the extra material at the end was the whole point of the book for me.

On the other hand, the "Mammoth" books seem to be very light in this regard, and the books suffer for not having any information that would set the stories and authors into historical perspective. "The Mammoth Book of Sword and Honor" does have an introduction and introductory material on each author that helpfully places the story into its historical milieu. But Jakubowski's volumes don't introduce the material or give any information about the authors.

I like to see every story listed with its original appearance, biographical information on the authors and insight into why it was important enough to include. I can't stand it when I see a copyright page that only lists the stories still under copyright, or that identifies the copyright holder but not where the story appeared. I don't think this is too much to ask for. I also like to see the name of the story and the author's name in the page headers so that if I'm enjoying the story, I can see who wrote it without having to flip back to the contents page or to the start of the story.

Well, I guess I'll go give de Camp another try, only 25 pages to go. 

The 10 Rules of Editing Anthologies

1. No editor shall print a story that has appeared in a widely-distributed anthology, on the same subject, published within the past 20 years. If the story has appeared in a single author collection or in a small press collection, the statute of limitations shall be 10 years.
 Exceptions shall only be granted if the theme of the collection is of such a nature it overrides the interest of the public in getting stories they haven't seen before. Exceptions may be granted for "best of" collections, if the stories are arguably the "best" such stories.
 Exceptions shall also be granted to authors whose entire body of quality work, such as Robert E. Howard and Dashiell Hammett, is readily available and whose stature is such that certain collections would be considered incomplete without them. But editors are strongly encouraged to consider what has been reprinted in other anthologies recently before making their selections in these cases.
 The court will entertain arguments as to the statute of limitations regarding stories available on the internet, but has not yet ruled on this issue.
2. No editor is permitted to reprint a story that has ever been reprinted from a given author if there are stories by that author that have not been reprinted that are of similar quality and that fit the theme of the anthology.
3. If the word "pulp" appears in the title of the anthology, at least 60 percent of the anthology must originate in the pulp magazines. Digests and slicks do not count. The remaining contents may derive from such sources, but must be written by authors who published at least one story in the pulp magazines and must be of a suitably pulpy nature.
 Pronzini's "The Pulp Connection" and "The Man Who Collected the Shadow" and similar stories may also be included. But note that rule one precludes the printing of these stories for an appreciable amount of time. An exception will be granted to "The Pulp Connection" if the anthology includes the two pulp stories named in it.
 Any collection that uses in its title any adjective, such as "pure" or "real" that would indicate that the entire contents of the book are from the pulps must have 100 percent pulp content.
4. No anthology shall have the same name as any other anthology or related book that is already on the market. We are thinking specifically of "Pulp Masters" here and the court will gladly consider an injunction on behalf of James Van Hise. The title "Hardboiled" presents special problems here, and the court will rule on the use of subtitles on a case-by-case basis.
5. Anthologies will adhere to their stated subjects. If a collection is titled "Blood on the Barroom Floor" all stories will take place in a setting where alcohol is served to the public, and there will be violence or the threat of violence that could result in the spilling of blood. Editors are allowed one (1) story per anthology that seems to be about the subject at hand but turns out to be, in a clever twist, about something else.
6. Editors of anthologies will diligently attempt to reprint stories from major series and major authors who have not been completely reprinted. The court is specifically thinking of Frederick Nebel's Kennedy and McBride series. Any anthology of pulp material or of hard-boiled material must include an un-reprinted Kennedy and McBride story until such time as they have all been reprinted. Un-reprinted Paul Cain stories will also be mandatory in such anthologies until "14 Slayers" is released or the remaining 6 stories have been published.
7. No fragments or incomplete stories are permitted in anthologies. They are allowed only in single author collections. Excerpts from novels are not permitted unless they form complete stories without having to reference the greater work.
8. Anthologies shall have introductions that at a minimum provide the reader with, well, an introduction to the material. Editors shall also include a statement as to their philosophy in choosing the stories and will introduce each story individually with information on the author, the series character if the story is from a series, and original publication data. A list of copyright holders of stories still in copyright is not enough.
9. Editors shall not print stories by their friends and relatives or themselves unless the stories are of such superlative quality that no hint of impropriety exists. The court is keeping a very close eye on some of you, and you know who you are.
10. Any appearance of Fredric Brown's "Don't Look Behind You" must always be printed as the last story in a collection or anthology. There will be no exceptions to this rule. 

Books I'd Like to See:

Some suggestions for anthologies:

Deadline: Newspaper Mysteries from the Pulp

Introductory Essay: Newspaper reporter detectives in the pulps and newspaper reporters who became pulp writers.

Stories:

Raoul Whitfield's "Murder—Extra!" from Argosy

Series characters to include:

Frederick Nebel's Kennedy and McBride
Frederick C. Davis's Bill Brent
George Harmon Coxe's Flashgun Casey
Norman Daniels' Candid Camera Kid
Richard Sale's Daffy Dill and Candid Jones
Theodore Tinsley's Jerry Tracy
Fred MacIsaac's Rambler Murphy
Herbert H. Stinson's Ken O'Hara
Whitman Chamber's Katie Blayne
William E. Barrett's Dean Culbert
C.S. Montanye's Johnny Castle

Also newspaper articles by

Whitfield, Gibson, Bellem and other pulp writers who started out as reporters, particularly those who covered crime.

Newspaper stories about:

Hammett (stolen gold case) (article on the bandit that was the prototype for Wilmer in "The Maltese Falcon")

Gardener (Wong Duck case)

Along with Stinson's first Ken O'Hara story from Black Mask, a reprint of L.A. area newspaper articles on the real-life case that inspired it.

The Mammoth Book of Pulp Superheroes

Essay: origins of the superhero in the pulp.

Characters:

Avenger
Domino Lady
Shadow
Spider
Whisperer
Grey Seal
Masked Detective
Red Mask
Zenith Rand
The Bat
The Black Hood
Dr. Satan
Zorro

Patent Leather Kid
Black Bat (Leinster)
Captain Future
Crimson Clown
Crimson Mask
Moon Man
Masked Rider?
Green Lama
Green Ghost (1st and 2nd series)
Don Diavlo
The Ghost (Standard Magazine Version)
Senorita Scorpion
Purple Scar
Gray Phantom
Picaroon
The Man in the Silver Mask
The Road Runner
White Rings
The Thunderbolt
The Spider (by McCulley)
Speed Dash
Doctor Death
Sheena
Kazaar
The Great Merlini
Red Finger
The Skipper
The Griffin
The Scarlet Ace

These are all characters, I think, that have at least one short story, but it might be possible to fit in one short novel.

This list obviously needs work. Not all of these characters really should be reprinted and I'm sure I left out dozens of possible characters. Anyone editing this would have to be careful to balance the types of stories as most of these characters tend to the masked avenger by night/wealthy playboy by day routine.

I'd start with including a Grey Seal as he's an influential and early example of a common archetype. I'd use one of the short stories that became one of the chapters in the first part of "The Adventures of Jimmy Dale."

I'd look at using stories with Sheena, Domino Lady and Senorita Scorpion to have a superheroine or two represented. Sheena is also a widely recognized character to add some name recognition to the table of contents. Domino Lady would present the more risque side of the pulps. Senorita Scorpion would add a western flavor for variety.

I'd have to include an early Zorro for the old west flavor and because he's a big name. Besides, who doesn't like Zorro? Of course, the good early Zorro stories have been reprinted.

I'd use the Shadow story that was printed in Will Murray's Shadow book, "Blackmail Bay," as it's harder to find than The Shadow Scrapbook. I'd also have to include one of the two Spider short stories, although if I had room for a novel, I'd pick a Spider novel. I think the Spider would have to be included even though both of these have been reprinted recently in Pulp Adventures. I think the distribution of those issues was low enough and the Spider important enough to break my rule against recent reprints.

I'd use a Leinster Black Bat story so I could talk about the later Black Bat and Batman and kill three birds with one stone. They are harder to find than the later Black Bat.

Captain Future would represent the SF super hero. Or Zenith Rand. Likewise either George Chance or The Great Merlini could represent the magician detective. Have all the Norgil stories been reprinted?

I like the Patent Leather Kid, so he'd represent Gardner. I've always wanted to read a Thunderbolt story, so he'd represent McCulley. I might reprint more than one hero by these authors, since they were some of the more prolific of the super hero originators.

The Griffin could represent the air war heroes. I'd love to see one of Page's Death Angel stories. Will Murray also lists a second team up between G-8 and Red Falcon that would be a good choice.

Doctor Satan or Doctor Death could represent the SuperVillain genre.

I'd have to include a Moon Man story and the Green Lama as well. They are both recognizably superhero in the comic book sense.

Perhaps it would be fun to include a Mickey Spillane text piece from the comics. Does anyone know if these are any good? It would provide a big name for the contents page, show the interaction between the later pulps and the early comics and reprint some rare Spillane.

Perhaps I could suggest Will Murray as editor of this, or at least have a reprint of his pulp superhero list included. The first part of Murry's great Ultimate Pulp Superhero Index is available at the Adventure House website. I see quite a few heroes listed there that I missed.

The Mammoth Book of Pulp Adventure

Stories by

Donald Barr Chidsey
Harold Lamb (Khilit the Cossack)
Robert E. Howard (El Borak?)
Talbot Mundy
Richard Wetjen
Arthur D. Howden-Smith (Grey Maiden?)
J. Allan Dunn
H. Bedford-Jones

Malcom Wheeler-Nicholson
W. Wirt
George Worts
Gordon MacCreagh
L. Patrick Greene (The Major)
Hugh Cave (Tsaing House)
Ralph R. Perry (Bellow Bill)

This would feature stories from a wide range of types and time periods. South Seas, Crusader, Western, Northwest Mounted Police, Air War, Oriental, Great White Hunter, etc.

An introduction would describe the pulps these stories came from and talk about the different sub-genres represented.

The contents would be at least half from Adventure. The remaining stories would be from Argosy, Blue Book, Short Stories, Thrilling Adventures, with a few stories from other titles as well.

A cover gallery and interior illustrations from the pulp stories would also be included.

The Mammoth Book of Pirate Stories

You can't tell me this isn't a great idea.

This would have, hopefully, a Howard Pyle cover. Stories by

J. Allan Dunn
Raphael Sabatini
Robert E. Howard
H. Bedford-Jones

Stories of pirates, pirate loot, pirate hunters, Oriental pirates, air pirates, buccaneers and privateers. Add in a few historical fact stories and you've got a winner.

Wait, I'm breaking my own rules here. When I think of pirates, I think of the yo ho ho and a bottle of rum, make em walk the plank, pirates. So all of these would be that kind of pirates, with perhaps one South Seas stories with Chinese pirates allowed, but definitely not in a modern setting, and one, and only one that breaks the mold and has an air pirate or some other variant.

I'd want to include illustrations too. Perhaps a cover gallery of pulp covers with pirate themes and each story would have original pulp art included.

The Mammoth Book of Yesterday's War for Tomorrow

Introductory essay on how popular fiction of the 1930's treated the idea of future wars and the prospect of future real life war as WWII approached.

Zagat's Dikar and the Wild Bunch stories

Back Numbers Can Be Easily Procured

Leinster's War of the Purple Gas
A complete Operator 5 novel.
Walter Wood's "The Tunnel Terror"

This one would also have to draw from the science fiction pulps.

Even though I don't like to see excerpts from novels, I might run a chapter or two from Armageddon 2419 A.D. provide I could find chapters that formed a complete story.

The Basic SF Reading List

Bob Shaw: The Light of Other Days
Bradbury: The Sound of Thunder
Clarke: The Star
Piper: Omnilingual
Bates: Farewell to the Master
Russell: Dear Devil
Leinster: First Contact
Campbell: Who Goes There? and Forgetfulness
Cartmill: Deadline
Blish: Surface Tension
Goodwin: The Cold Equations
Leiber: A Pail of Air
Asimov: Nightfall and Reason
van Vogt: The Weapon Shop
Brown: Arena
Smith: Scanners Live In Vain
Kornbluth: The Little Black Bag
Padgett: Mimsey Were the Borogoves
Heinlein: By His Bootstraps
Sturgeon: Microcosmic God and Killdozer
del Rey: Nerves
Sherred: E for Effort
Williamson: With Folded Hands
Knight: To Serve Man

I've tried to come up with a list of what I consider the stories that form the foundation of science fiction. I know that there are a number of stories that I've missed, and I'd like to know what the science fiction members of PEAPS would add to the list. I've kept it to early pulp science fiction. Some of these are stories that I have read and liked, others are titles culled from histories of science fiction, particularly Del Rey's. The problem is that many of these are available, but I want to produce a definitive work that would have all of the basic stories, other than novels and other long works, that form the foundations of modern science fiction. Introductions would describe why these are important stories

The Second Hardboiled Omnibus

In the pulp fiction issue of Clues, Fall/Winter

1981, E. R. Hagemann has a list of the stories that Shaw considered including. About half made the final cut. You would have a very good anthology just by printing the stories in the rest of that list.

We are indebted to Professor Hagemann for the following list.

Dashiell Hammett:	The Main Death
Raymond Chandler:	Fingerman
Frederick Nebel:	Too Young To Die
Roger Torrey:	Private War
H.H. Stinson:	Give The Man Rope
Erle Stanley Gardner:	The Heavenly Rat
	Red Jade
Forrest Rosaire:	Cross by Ximado
Donald Barr Chidsey:	Let Me Tell It
Ed Lybeck:	Silent Heat
Earl and Marian Scott:	Lights Out at Benetti's
Erika Zastrow:	Joe's Woman
Horace McCoy:	Murder in Error
William Chambers:	The Black Bottle
Stewart Sterling:	Two Timer
Norvell Page:	Those Catrini
J. Paul Suter:	Ten Dead Policemen
Anderson McCully:	The Rajah's Bracelet

Others to include would be

Paul Cain (with a story not in Seven Slayers)
Raoul Whitfield (we could probably skip him as
he has two stories in the first book.)

Norbert Davis

George Harmon Coxe

W. Todhunter Ballard

Dwight V. Babcock

William E. Barrett

Eric Taylor

Carroll John Daly (Not a Shaw choice, but
important enough to include.)

Nels Leroy Jorgenson. (Also strangely, not a
Shaw choice)

And while we're at it, an unabridged reprint of "The Hardboiled Omnibus" is certainly in order, perhaps with Shaw's original introductions to the stories included.

Cold-Blooded Stories From The Pulp

This would be filled with the kind of story that has been showing up in "pulp" collections lately. MacDonald, McBain, Paul Cain. It would focus on the noir type of story and try to include the coldest, meanest stories I could find. The kind of story that Gil Brewer or Peter Rabe were doing for Gold Medal. There would be at least 60 percent stories from the

pulps of course, but I'd also draw from Manhunt and the other digests, if I had to.

The stories here would be crime stories but not necessarily detective stories.

Two-Fisted Stories From the Pulp

This would have action packed stories from people like Howard, who would be represented with a Sailor Steve Costigan or El Borak story. Why choose? I'd put in a Costigan and an El Borak. Ralph R. Perry's Bellow Bill Williams is another two-fisted adventurer I'd include. The stories would have lots of action with tough guys who solved things with a right cross or a smoking .45. All stories would be from the pulps.

Hard-Boiled Stories From the Pulp

A continuation of the above series. I'd reprint stories about tough detectives, both private and official. As always, I'd choose stories that hadn't been reprinted if possible, but authors would include Nebel, Hammett, and the other usual suspects. This would be close to, if not 100 percent, from the pulps.

The Best of Manhunt

This digest is always a prime source for stories in hardboiled and it's about time for a thick slab of an anthology made up of stories from here. I'd include a history of the magazine and an introduction talking about how the digests took over from the pulps. An index would also be great, but might be too big to include.

Rivals of Manhunt

Just as "Rivals of Weird Tales" reprinted Weird Tales style stories from pulps that competed with Weird Tales, this would mine Hunted, Wanted, and all of the other early crime digests. Suitable hard-boiled stories from Ellery Queen's, Mike Shane's, Alfred Hitchcock's Edgar Wallace's and Ed McBain's would also be allowed, but would be limited to one or at most two from each, unless the stories were really good.

The Best of Black Mask

The Best of Detective Fiction Weekly

Mammoth Book of Hard-Boiled Stories

Mammoth Book of Noir

Mammoth Book of Black Mask Stories

Some suggestions for collections:

Violet McDade by Cleve F. Adams

Peter the Brazen by Loring Brent
Nebel:

Kennedy and McBride (With stories not printed elsewhere, of course.)
Donahue
Cardigan

Gardner:

Sidney Zoom
Lester Leith

Carroll John Daly

Satan's Vengeance (8 part serial from
Detective Fiction weekly starring
Satan Hall)

Some suggestions for Black Dog Books

A Ralph Perry Bellow Bill collection

A Singapore Sammy collection

Thunder Jim Wade

H. Warner Munn's "Brenrykand and the Master" stories

Some suggestions for Ed Bond Enterprises

The Zorro novels and start with the early ones.

(I see that the next book in the Zorro project is the novel from 1947, when they should have started with "The Further Adventures of Zorro" from 1922.)

Where are they now?


Wildside Press needs to get going on "The Best of Weird Tales: 1924."

And let's not forget the collection of the remaining Paul Cain stories. Whatever happened to this project? (O.K., a search turned up that "14 Slayers" is still in production, but isn't it about time for it to be out? It is still in production, isn't it? And why all 14 instead of "Seven More Slayers"? What are they going to do to justify reprinting the contents of the existing collection? Original art would be a good start. A cover gallery if any of these stories made the cover, or even if they didn't. Introductions to each story providing background would be welcome.)

Novels that need reprinting in affordable editions:

James Reasoner's "Texas Wind"

All of Peter Rabe's novels.

An uncut "Palos of the Dog Star Pack" and sequels.
England's complete "Darkness and Dawn" trilogy. (Ok, I've heard conflicting reports on the quality of this, but I'd like to try it for myself.) 



The War Lord's Gold

By H. Bedford Jones

Black Dog Books

2001

84 pages

\$7.00

The White Shark

By Albert Richard Wetjen

Black Dog Books

2001

76 pages

\$7.00

Tom Robert's Black Dog Books continues to produce good work. For the past several years, Roberts has been filling a niche in the pulp reprint market by publishing small chap books of stories by well-known, but not often reprinted, pulp authors. Many of these stories are not commercially viable for a more upscale publishing company, either because the authors are not well-remembered enough to bring in an audience outside the hard-core pulp community or because the works are in genres the author is not famous for working in.

"The War Lord's Gold" fits this criteria well. While those in the pulp community have long lauded H. Bedford-Jones, his star has faded and he is sadly unrecognized outside of the pulp community. Commercially, there is no successful niche anymore to publish the kind of straight adventure stories he wrote and so Bedford-Jones has not been reprinted much at all in recent years.

This is the second of a series of "H. Bedford-Jones' Pathways to Adventure" booklets and hopefully the series will continue far beyond the proposed third volume. While not quite as good as the story contained in the first booklet in the series "Pearls from Macao," it is still a tight, ac-

tion-packed South Seas adventure with a trio of treasure hunters facing off against the evil machinations of Olga Samaroff and her gang off the coast of an island filled with hostile Chinese.

The heroes, a trio of international fortune hunters and freelance adventurers, benefit from better characterization than the standard pulp adventurer group, Bedford-Jones avoids the extreme stereotyping that so many other authors used. While his Russian is a bit moody and his Englishman is a bit ineffectual, at least we are spared any atrocious attempts at Yiddish or Brooklyn accents.

The plotting is a little loose but thrilling, with the heroes getting captured and escaping, murders, gunfights, traitors and shipwrecks. Bedford-Jones packs a lot of classic pulp themes into his story, with the use of that daring invention the airplane, a treasure hunt, a femme fatale, Chinese pirates, the dark secrets of Russian nobility and intrigue in South Seas ports.

The ending gun battle is quite exciting, with the three men, wounded and down to their last ammo in a grounded boat battling shiploads of Chinese pirates. The ending, however, is a letdown, with the heroes rescued by an American gunboat rather than by their own skill.

The cover is from an issue of *Adventure*, but unrelated to the story, original interior art is reproduced.

Next in the series is "The Ocean Bastille" which will hopefully be printed soon. Tom Roberts is also involved with *Adventure Fiction Press*, which had a Bedford-Jones collection "Pirates' Gold" scheduled for September, 2001. This book has not been seen, but the publisher's website, www.adventurefiction.com, has a number of interesting features, including several excellent biographies. Peter Ruber has an excellent one on Bedford-Jones.

Another sadly forgotten fictioneer is Albert Richard Wetjen, who like Bedford-Jones was a mainstay of the adventure magazines for many years.

"The White Shark" is a collection of tales of South Seas adventure, set on sunny islands filled with menacing natives and scheming traders.

The stories in this collection are not politically correct and thus couldn't be marketed to the general public, even if there were still a market for South Seas adventure stories.

It's great to see someone who is obviously a fan produce these booklets and preserve these stories for an-



other generation. This series of books is obviously a labor of love.

One story is about the efforts of a trader on a South Pacific island who is trying to survive a war between the natives. The title story is about an attempt by a pair of adventurers to hook the great white shark that is the object of worship of an island of cannibals. Another story is about pearling in the South Seas, murder and revenge. There is also a sea story about a man who, due to misfortune and adventure, takes years to sail around the world before he makes it home.

The selection of stories presents of a good variety of themes. These are good solid stories of the sea, even if none of the main characters seem like they could hold down a series. The stories are mainly about a specific situation and the characters who find themselves in it, rather than about a hero who has an adventure.


Wetjen was a slick as well as a pulp writer and this is apparent in his style and the way he tells his stories.

These stories would have seemed at home in the slicks and lack the slam-bang, larger-than-life, action of many of his pulp contemporaries.

The cover and interior art is by Tom Roberts himself and he does a good job of capturing the feel of the stories. I can only assume, based on his previous publishing history, that there were no illustrations accompanying the original publication.

Like most of the Black Dog chapbooks, these contain interesting contemporary biographies of their authors taken from the pulps or other valuable bibliographical or introductory text.

The only problem with Black Dog Books is that they don't publish booklets fast enough. It is an amazing accomplishment that Roberts has managed to publish so many booklets done so well and with such a variety of authors. But for every author he's published, there are a dozen more that deserve the Black Dog Books treatment.

There is the occasional typo. 



Golden Perils Issue 23, Winter 2001

Howard Hopkins seems to have the much-missed Golden Perils back on a regular quarterly publishing schedule. He is taking advantage of the internet to distribute new issues of his long-running fanzine in Adobe Acrobat format.

This issue's lead article is an examination of Doc Savage from a mythic perspective. Author Thomas Fortenberry relates the stories to classic archetypes and uses the theories of Joseph Campbell to compare Doc Savage to the Hero with a Thousand Faces. The article is scholarly in nature and comes with a bibliography.

A second Doc Savage article, by Tom Barnett, traces the Masonic influence on the novels and Dent's involvement in Masonry. It is short, but informative.

This issue seems to be heavy on the Doc Savage articles, as the last one seemed heavy on Captain Future. However, this seems to be a reflection of the interests of Hopkin's contributors, more than any attempt to have a theme issue.

Bill Thom's Golden Perils Newline is the real high point of the issue. This is a thorough listing of recently published pulp-related items from a wide variety of sources. Enough information is provided on each item to know if one should add it to one's want list. Addresses

and ordering information are included as are color scans of the covers.

In addition to books, he lists websites, fan fiction, chapbooks, magazines, pulp-related articles, fanzines and other items of interest. Having one place to check for a current list of all pulp-related items is a valuable service. Because of the rapid distribution available as an internet publication, this list is very current and up-to-date.


This is also where other newsworthy items, such as obituaries are run. Fortunately this issue did not need to run any.

The issue finished up with a number of reviews by a variety of reviewers, including Hopkins and Chuck Juzek. Some items were in the pulp tradition, but they weren't actually pulp reprints.

This issue also benefited from a switch to a variable width font, making it easier to read. Both the front and back "cover" are new, full color images — the front is an image of Doc Savage by Howard Hopkins and the back a jungle action scene by Charles Berlin.

Articles are illustrated with full-color images. The Doc Savage articles have a number of nice thumbnails of Doc Savage covers, the Newline and the review sections have images of the covers of the books and other items.

For those wishing to have a hard copy version of Golden Perils, they are being offered at \$6.00 per issue. Golden Perils is also seeking contributions for future issues.

The Golden Perils website is at <http://members.aol.com/Hhopk15447/page4.htm>. Requests for Acrobat versions of issues 22, 23, and 24 can be sent to yinko2@aol.com. The files are between 1 and 2 megabytes so they cannot be sent to hotmail accounts or other email accounts that cannot accept large files. 

A Double-Helping of Dan Turner

**High Adventure 60:
Dan Turner Hollywood Detective
By Robert Leslie Bellem
Adventure House**

\$7.95

112 pages

2001

**Reckoning in Red:
from the case files of Dan Turner, P.I.
By Robert Leslie Bellem
Black Dog Books**

\$7.00

80 pages

2001

Robert Leslie Bellem's gasper-smoking, bezzie-bashing P.I. is the subject of two recent collections, one a chapbook from Black Dog Books, and the other an issue of High Adventure.

"Reckoning in Red" is an 80-page, half-letter booklet that is part of the series of pulp reprint titles from Tom Roberts' small press.

As with all of Roberts' products, the stories are completely re-typeset for easy reading in a tight, clean package. The cover is yellow cardstock with a pen and ink

drawing taken from an interior illustration from Spicy Detective.

The four stories are taken from four issues of Spicy Detective ranging from 1937 to 1942. All original interior illustrations are also reprinted — a nice touch that too many who reprint pulp stories leave out.

The stories have a great deal of variety, more than Turner stories are often credited for.

The first story, "Star Chamber" has Turner uncovering a revenge-based dope racket, "Murder Claws" has Turner strike-breaking in a caper that turns on how movie star

contracts are written, "Reckoning in Red" pokes fun at Orson Wells while a commie murderer stalks the studio, and "Death in the Doghouse" has crime based on a sly look at period radio gossip columnists.

The Bellem formula is plain here: Turner is hired, a dead body shows up, Turner runs around, Turner gets lucky with some cutie, Turner gets bopped, more bodies show up, Turner shoots it out with the bad guy, Homicide Detective

Donaldson shows up and is handed the answer to the case, and the murderer's cold corpse, by Turner. But in the stories in this volume, Bellem manages to keep it enter-
taining enough that the formula doesn't weary the reader. Turner even uses his head to solve the

case, or to at least know with whom he needs to get into a shootout at the end of the story.

In selecting the stories, Roberts does a good job in picking those that have more than just a chase after a murderer to them. The sly winks at real Hollywood bigshots and Hollywood politics make these more than just cheap, poorly-written porn like so many stories in the Spicy pulps.

The chapbook is subtitled Volume 1 and if Roberts shows as good a judgement on future volumes as with this one, they'll be well worth picking up.

In contrast to "Reckoning in Red," The Dan Turner issue of High Adventure suffers from stories that are too similar to each other, even though they came from a single issue of Dan Turner-Hollywood Detective.

Turner uses the same expressions from story to story. The various ways Turner mangles the English language is a signature of the series, but here it gets wearying to hear the same phrases and slang over and over.

Many of the stories also have similar plots with an apparent kidnapping that's really a cover for murder being the crime du jour. Turner's clients don't get much benefits from his efforts, most of the people he's hired to find end




up dead. Bellem must have been in a rush when he wrote the contents of this issue, he seems to have written one story and then copied it over and over for the rest of the book.

The stories are facsimile and therefore are harder to read than the re-typeset pages of "Reckoning in Red." The reproduction is good, but the letters themselves are not crisp and clean. Story titles are not reproduced on the page headers, instead a generic "Dan Turner Hollywood

Detective" is used on every page.

Interior illustrations are a welcome inclusion and the cover is reproduced in full color. The images are reproduced with care and look good — the simple, cartoony line art of Max Plaisted reproduces especially well, even if he wasn't the best of artists.

An ad promises more Dan Turner from Adventure House, this time as a stand-alone collection edited by John Wooley to be released this year. 



Purple Prose
Issue 14
July 2001
\$5.00
36 Pages

As always, this issue of Purple Prose is packed with excellent articles written by some major names in pulp fandom.

This issue is a mystery and detective issue, mostly featuring the king of detective pulps, Black Mask.

The issue leads off with an informative article by Curt Ladnier detailing the career of E.W. Hornung's Raffles. He traces the character from his early appearances in the 19th century, to his many resurrections through the end of the 20th century.

From early appearances in British magazines, to stories that appeared in the pulps, to novels and collections to the movies, radio and television, Ladnier is a thorough and tireless researcher who hunts down every incarnation of the character.

Particularly interesting is information on how each writer associated with the character used him, and how the character changed over time to meet the expectations of the reading public.

The article could have used a bibliography and more citations of sources used, however.

Next up is Michael Black's look at Dashiell Hammett. Black's article makes good uses of sources and has an excellent and useful list of cited works.

It is nice to have a list of all of Hammett's pulp work and a listing of where these stories can be found. This is a more extensive list than the chart in John DeWalt's "Keys to Other Doors" which only provides information on the Continental Op.

His look at Hammett has a slightly different fla-

vor than many similar articles. He looks at Hammett as a writer of good pulp fiction instead of Hammett as a legendary literary figure.

Lester Dent literary executor Will Murray looks at Dent's Black Mask character Oscar Sail. He looks at how Dent created and wrote the character as well as the publishing history.

As usual, Murray makes good use of his access to Dent's papers to quote extensively from two unfinished Sail stories, one, while titled "Angelfish" is completely different from the finished story of that name.

He quotes from primary sources concerning the way the two finished stories were crafted and how Dent interacted with Black Mask editor Joseph Shaw. He also speculates that Shaw's departure from Black Mask meant the end of what could have been a series of Oscar Sail stories.


Monte Herridge contributes a look at Norman Daniel's The Candid Camera Kid. As usual with Herridge's writing, this is thorough, informative and interesting.

Not only is this a good examination of the character, but also a good look at the use of newspaper detectives in the pulps. He gives information on real life newspaper reporters working in the 1930s and 1940s that provide a solid background to the article. There are excellent notes that even list such items as the Flashgun Casey novels of George Harmon Coxe.

Herridge's article is a good look at a long-running series character who has not had as much attention as he deserved.

The cover is by Neil Mechem and is done in a style reminiscent of many of the Black Mask covers of the 1920s. His image of a tough ganster fades out as it reaches the edge of the illustration, just as many of the Black Mask covers did.

There is also a black and white gallery of Black Mask covers, and covers of related pulps. The reproduction is sharp, and while it would be great to see these in a larger size, it's nice to see a wide range of covers tracing the evolution that took place in cover art over the course of the life of the title.

Covers are white cardstock and there are plenty of illustrations throughout. Production values are high and the articles are all very well written. 



High Adventure:

Issue 56: Weird Menace Special

Issue 57: The Phantom Detective

Issue 58: The Secret Six

Issue 59: Secret Agent X

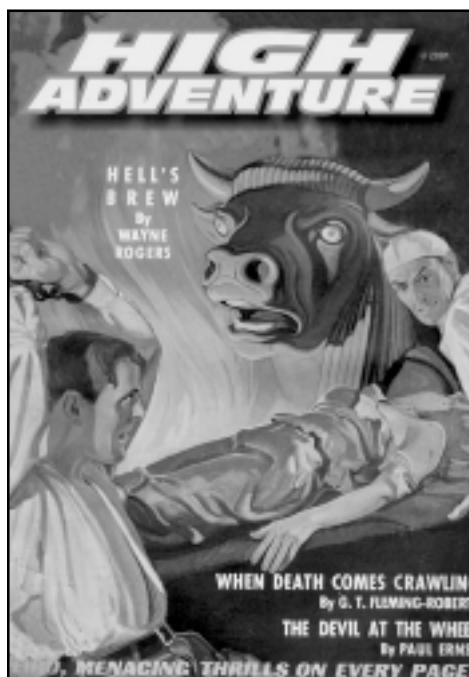
Adventure House

2001

\$7.95 each

There is obviously an audience for weird menace stories, despite their formula approach and the generally poor quality of writing that went into them.

It's hard to understand why the editors of these magazines felt that the readers wanted stories that in tone and style, as well as substance until the last few pages, were horror stories but with plausible or scientific endings. The audience for horror stories should have wanted real horror and shouldn't care if the mummy or werewolf or whatever is real. They could have gotten their money's worth from *Weird Tales* or *Strange Stories* or *Unknown*. Those



that wanted plausible endings where all is explained, or crime stories, or science fiction stories should have been turned off by the horror show trappings.

The Weird Menace issue of *High Adventure* showcases these quirks of the weird menace genre. Many of these stories are nearly unreadable. Even the best, "Devil at the Wheel" by Avenger scribe and prolific pulpster Paul Ernst,

The story is about a bus ride supposedly hijacked to Hell. Ernst does a wonderful job of foreshadowing and building suspense. The idea of the bus driver being replaced by Death, who hijacks it to Hell has eerie overtones when read after September 11. Replace Death with al-Qaida terrorists and the bus with a plane, and it truly is a spooky story, even though it should have been obvious to the bus riders, from the foreshadowing, that they shouldn't get on board the bus.

The ending is anticlimatic however, with the main character admitting that the evil villain's insane plot never would have succeeded.

Ernst has to spend 2 pages after the climax of the story explaining each and every special effect used to create the spooky ride to Hell. The effect is like finding out how a magic trick works — it takes all of the fun out of seeing the performance.

Other stories in the issue are not as convincing and with endings just as improbable. "The Dead and the Damned" by O.M. Cabral trots out the old cliché about the American (or Englishman) who spends the night at an isolated house in the countryside somewhere in Eastern Europe, even though the local peasants act all freaked out about the place. You'd think that "Transylvania on less than \$5 a day" would have a section on this: "Don't drink the water, don't mess with the local girls, don't spend the night at the vampire's lair." This story is one of the ones that really drags. The ending however is less rationalized and more supernatural than the typical weird menace story and would have been a good place to start a *Weird Tales* or an *Unknown* story, but was a poor place to end this one.

The remaining stories in the issue have the same improbable plots, convoluted explanations for the seemingly supernatural events and the stock mad scientists, apes on the rampage, and nutty cultists. These stories could have been much better if the authors had spent as much effort coming up with a decent story as they do coming up with bizarre pseudo-scientific explanations for their "supernatural" plot devices.



Somewhat more entertaining, is the Phantom Detective story in issue 57. This episode of the long-running hero pulp series has an Operator 5/Spider feel as Richard Van Loan takes on a hooded empire plotting terror attacks to bring America to its knees and instill a dictatorship of evil. Reading this gives an appreciation for Norvell Page and Emile C. Tepperman and their ability to carry off this kind of adventure.

There are some nice action scenes and all of the standard hero-pulp fare is present with Richard Van Loan switching disguises, raiding the bad guy's lair, getting captured and escaping by the skin of his teeth. But whoever is the author for this outing of the Phantom doesn't have the style and flair to completely pull it off and Van Loan's Phantom doesn't have half of the personality of Richard Wentworth.

Van Loan's detective skills are of the clairvoyant type—instead of investigating the terrorist events that he's supposed to be working on, he runs off to investigate a seemingly unrelated mater that ends up being the key to the evil plot. Of course it's only the key to the plot because that's the only way the author can think of to lead him to the bad guy's lair.

The adventure is readable only if you don't care that the plot doesn't make any sense. The story has all of the same features that an Operator 5 story or a Spider would have, but lacks the style to pull it off. This kind of story needs a Page or a Tepperman to carry the story along with breathtaking action so as to disguise the weaknesses inherent in this "America at War against a secret army of loonies" kind of story.

The Secret Six issue is a fair outing for the short-lived hero pulp. John Gunnison at Adventure House deserves a lot of credit for trying to completely reprint many of the short run hero pulps.

In the past, High Adventure has reprinted most or all of the runs of the very enjoyable Captain Satan, Wu Fang and Yen Sin along with the legendary Purple Invasion series from the pages of Operator 5.

Unfortunately one of the four Secret Six adventures is out of print from Adventure House, but with this and the 61st issue, Gunnison completes the run of this title.

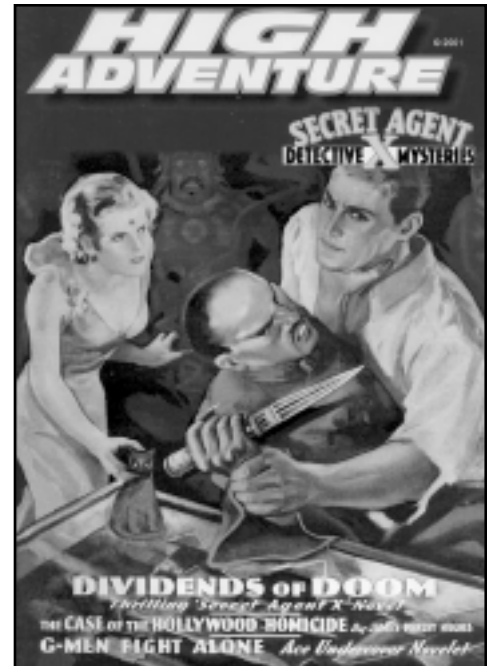
Several of the members of the Secret Six are not given much to do in this story and the series might have done better if some of the members were a little more colorful, or at least

had skills useful during the course of the average adventure. Doc is supposed to be the brilliant scientist type, but all he does in this adventure is remember a medical journal article he'd read and contribute an extra gun in the gunfights. Bishop is just a side-kick and Shakespeare contributes his disguise skill.

For a main character King is a bit dense. The team runs into giant monster-size dogs, but King doesn't connect a too-large to be normal man wearing clothing too small for him with a missing suspect that everyone says is short. He bravely leads the team into a mine complex and manages to get them lost. This particular sequence seems to be Hogan's effort to pad the word count as it doesn't advance the plot, the team doesn't run into the villain and the only threat comes from their own stupidity.

One of the problems is that Hogan doesn't know where he wants to go with this. The story starts out to be an investigation of a blackmail racket. This is abandoned half way through as the story becomes a hunt for a rampaging giant. Hogan goes from a standard crime story with a few weird twists, to a pretty weak monster hunt. The real problem is that there isn't a good villain, at least not one that has a plan and the intelligence to carry it out.

Issue 59 reprints a Secret Agent X adventure, in fact, most of an issue of that title is reprinted here. X has to be one of the least consistent, most generic and least enjoyable of the hero pulp heroes. Different authors at different times radically change his background, from a trusted secret agent to a wanted criminal, and the editors never seemed to know if they wanted him to be an Operator 5 clone or a Spider clone. He has the standard disguise skill, police detective nemesis and girl-reporter sidekick that



are common to many pulp heroes.


In this adventure, X is being hunted by the law, a lone man on the run seeking justice. So just who is he supposed to be an agent for?

The actually villainy in this is just a dressed up pyramid scheme with murder used to protect the con artist. This adventure is a sequel of sorts to "Legion of the Living Dead" with the second appearance of the Leopard Lady, this time as a secondary foil. It starts out with a Chinatown locale, but the author never manages to get enough of the old yellow peril flavor to justify it.

The back up stories here are in many ways superior, with "G-Men fight alone" by Dana R. March at least in the readable category, more so than the main novel. The

Joe Archibald story "Cutting Clue," however, was weak. It was also previously reprinted in the Hanos "Legion of the Living Dead" reprint.

High Adventure seems to be going toward full-count or near-full count reprints of selected issues. While this does provide a good idea of what it was like to read the original pulp, and the variety and quality of all of the contents of the issues, the issues also end up with many stories that don't deserve to be reprinted by authors who have justly been forgotten.

Theme issues with the stories carefully selected from more than a single issue, such as those High Adventure has run in the past, would be a much better way to ensure the best stories are reprinted. 



Purple Prose Issue 13 November 2000 \$4.50

There is only one bad thing about Mike Chomko's Purple Prose — it isn't published often enough.

But Chomko can be excused for taking his time. Each issue is carefully crafted making Purple Prose consistently one of the best zines being published.

Each issue has top-flight articles by some of the best writers in pulp fandom. Each issue is very well put together in a highly professional-looking package.

This issue is no exception, from the nice cardstock covers to the excellent articles and illustrations inside. Too often pulp cover and interior art reproductions in amateur zines are poor-quality or muddled. Not so with Purple Prose. While the design isn't flashy or in color, the black and white printing is nice and crisp. The text is very readable and well-edited.

Frequent Purple Prose contributor Shawn Danowski does his usual thorough job of research in this issue's lead article.

"In the Days Before the Undressed Dames and Drooling Dwarves" takes a look at Dime Mystery Book Magazine before it launched the shudder pulp genre.

This is a very welcome look at a phase of the magazine that has long been overlooked by those who only know of Dime Mystery for its later stories of blood and sex. Danowski gives overview of how the editorial style of the magazine changed during the first year leading up to the launch of the Grand Guignol style that the

magazine is now famous for.

Each issue but one before the change in direction is reviewed critically with a description of art, stories and editorial philosophy. Reading Danowski's article is almost as good as reading the issues. Well, not quite, but he does whet one's interest in getting a hold of some of these issues to read for oneself. He reveals the stinkers as well as the winners among the contents.

He also traces the possible influence of William Corcoran's "The Purple Eye" on the Spider novels of Norvell Page. He provides information on Page's Dime Mystery novel "Dance of the Skeletons."

He shows how the transition toward shudder-style stories was made.

Danowski is one of the best writers working in pulp fandom today. He is serious without being dull, combining a very approachable style with exhaustive research.


The article contains interior art that originally ran in the issues of Dime Mystery covered.

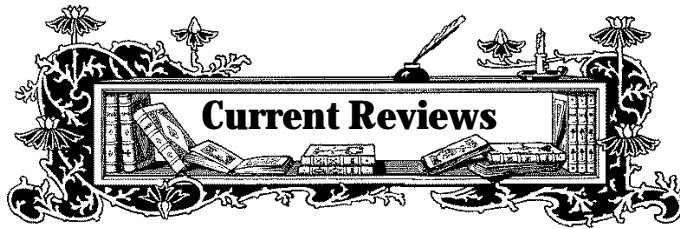
The only question Danowski can't answer about these is why some of these stories, particularly the Page and the Corcoran, haven't been reprinted.

Also a treat in this issue is Monte Herridge's piece on "G.T. Fleming-Roberts' Other Magician Detective." While the subject isn't as monumental as Danowski's, Herridge does a complete and entertaining job describing the exploits of magician detective Jeffery Wren. He compares him with Fleming-Robert's other, similar hero, George Chance and other magician detectives in the pulps. There is also information on Fleming-Robert's in-jokes between the two series.

This is a good, and well-written, look at a hero that has not been studied in this depth before.

The article is illustrated with interior art from some of the pulp stories.

The back cover and inside back cover have a cover gallery of the Dime Mystery issues covered in Danowski's article. 



It's Raining More Corpses In Chinatown
Edited by Don Hutchison
Adventure House
2001
Large paperback 208 pages
\$16.95

Obviously a man who knows a good title when he sees one, Don Hutchison brings out a sequel after many years to his well-regarded anthology "It's Raining Corpses in Chinatown."

As in the first anthology, he collects pulp stories that are set in Chinatown or otherwise have an Oriental theme.

Unfortunately, he repeats a little too much from the first book. The introduction and the series character lists, along with several of the cover illustrations run in the book are the same as in the first volume. While the first book, long out of print from defunct pulp specialty house Starmount, is hard to find, the sequel should have had a new introduction or forgone the introduction for biographical or bibliographical data on the writers included. He does include a number of covers not seen in the first collection.

The repeated illustration do, however, benefit from much improved reproduction over the first collection, but with such a wealth of pulp covers with Oriental themes, it would have been a better choice to show all new covers.

The production values overall are much superior, with better printing, a larger size and a sharp, full color cover. The format is the same as issues of High Adventure, but with more pages. All 10 of the stories are nicely typeset and original illustrations are included.

Hutchison shows good judgement in selecting stories. All of the stories are from the pages of Popular Publications pulps with the exception of "Tong Torture" from the pages of Secret Agent X. It would have been better to have a wider range of pulps represented, but it

probably made acquiring copyrights easier to stick with stories owned by Argosy Communications.

Among the winners are a Jimmy Wentworth story by Sidney Hershell Small and a Rex Longeran story by John K. Butler. Butler's story, "Blood on the Buddha," is set in San Francisco's Chinatown, as are many of the stories here. It has great atmosphere—complete with foggy San Francisco streets, gangsters, and crooked politicians. The Chinese are not the threat here, instead American gangsters and a crooked Russian are the cause of the trouble. It's two-fisted, hard-boiled pulp action—nothing original, but entertaining anyway.


With this and other stories in the collection, Hutchison is good about selecting stories that don't always make the Chinese the villains. Some, as Emile C. Tepperman's "Tong Torture" and William Hines' "Corpses in Chinatown" play with the assumptions of oriental crime, with the villains using anti-Chinese stereotypes to obscure their crimes. Of course in "Tong Torture" the "innocent" Chinese tong hatchetmen do resort to torture to wring out a confession that wouldn't stand up in court even in the 1930s.

Not as good is Dane Gregory's "The Mandarin's Thirty Third Tooth." While it has the trappings, an exotic Chinese beauty, knives in the night and a plot to start a Tong war, it suffers from a merely serviceable and overly elaborate plot. The plot does hinge on then-current world affairs that saves it from being just another Tong war story.

One stinker is Hugh Cave's "The Pain Room," a shudder pulp story that isn't up to Cave's best work. Overwrought, overly hysterical and with a main character that needs a good slap, this story is painful to get through.

The collection ends with "Lead Poison," a Cardigan story by Frederick Nebel. This is a good, tough story that, if not the best in

the long-running series, is an acceptable entry from a great writer. There are characters who just happen to be Chinese, without being stereotyped Chinese characters.

The stories selected are all of the modern, tough-guy detective type and all of the stories take place in the U.S. While this does mean that all of the stories do take place somewhere in a "Chinatown" setting, it would have been nice to see some stories set in more exotic locales, such as the Bellow Bill Williams story printed in the first collection. Perhaps Hutchison should consider doing a companion book just on yellow peril stories or Oriental adventure stories. 





Book of the Dead
E. Hoffmann Price
Arkham House
2001
Hardback 423 pages
\$34.95

E. Hoffmann Price's posthumously published memoirs of pulp writers is both fascinating and frustrating. Fascinating in the wealth of personal information on the pulp writers it covers and frustrating in the information it leaves out.

Price's book is not really memoirs of pulp writers, but memoirs of Price's personal relationships with his friends who were pulp writers. Because of this, the focus is on the dinner parties they attended together more than the stories they wrote or the magazines they worked for.

This focus is the most maddening part of the book. Price doesn't give enough information on the background of the writers and editors he talks about, but will tell you what their favorite drink is and what they thought of such and such Oriental rug. You get a good idea of what these guys were like to party with, but not enough detail about them as writers.

Price also tends to drop a tantalizing tidbit and then fails to follow through. Sometimes this takes the form of gossip "so and so may have slept with a famous writer, but modesty prevents me from naming names" when it would have been better to not mention the gossip at all. Other times he makes oblique references to things that would be interesting to know, such as how the San Francisco chapter of the American Fiction Guild was run and who were members.

On the one hand, he talks about things that nobody else has ever mentioned. On the other hand, he doesn't go into enough details or specifics. In some cases he is so oblique that it is unclear exactly what he is talking about.

He does provide an interesting look at Farnsworth Wright and the Chicago days of *Weird Tales* and this chapter is one of the best in the book. He gives you a feel for what it was like to be one of the *Weird Tales* circle and what it was like to hang out with Wright and the other *Weird Tales* editors and artists.

This is where the book shines, not as a history of pulp fictioneers, but as a history of his friendship with other writers. But this does result in a lack of organization. Information or commentary on one writer will appear in a chapter on another writer.

His chapter on Clark Ashton Smith is also terrific, showing you how and where Smith lived, what sort of person he was and giving a glimpse into his working life. One has to wonder what happened to all of the Cthuloid statues that Smith sculpted and it would have been nice to see photos of some of these artworks.

Since the book is about the people he knew personally, there are a number of memoirs of pulpsters that are not well covered by other sources. Editor Ken White gets a nice treatment, although as with all of the memoirs,

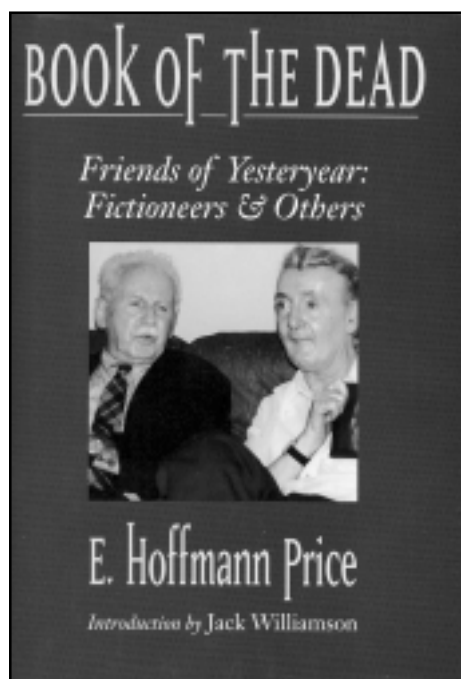
Price raises more questions than he answers. Similarly, Albert Wetjen, a writer who isn't as well known as he should be is featured, but his chapter starts and stops with his association with Price. The few details on Wetjen leave the reader wanting more details but once Price stops going to cocktail parties with him the information on Wetjen ends.

This attention to personal recollections is also a weakness. There is often far too much time spent on the inconsequential, such as what brand of liquor they drank at a certain party.

Some of the chapters are quite good and give a good portrait of the author being discussed, such as Clark Ashton Smith, but in others the author barely appears. The chapter on

Norbert Davis, for example, would have been much improved if there had been more about Davis in it.

One of the less-well-known fictioneers he covers is Milo Ray Phelps. His short chapter on Phelps is interesting, but shows that the information presented must be taken with a grain of salt. The story he tells of Phelps only having one series character, and the trap that represents, is very illustrative of both how a regular series could be a boon and a disadvantage at the same time. The story also shows the pressure of having to regularly come up with a new gimmick to write each story around. However, Phelps had more than one series character running in *Detective Fiction Weekly* so the tale, while illustrative, is not really



true.


There is no attempt to be objective, Price is an opinionated man who lets you know exactly what he thinks. He either tells it to you straight or avoids the subject entirely. This is particularly evident in the chapters on Robert E. Howard and H. P. Lovecraft and on his opinion of various biographers of these two.

Price shows both the good and the bad sides of his subjects. Sometimes this looks petty, but Price avoids the common trap of the pulp biographer who places his subject on a pedestal. If someone drank too much or could be a real ass, Price will let the reader know. Sometimes this makes Price himself look like a jerk. He is also a man who constantly worries about whether he has offended his friends, yet does not apologize for being profane and dif-

ficult.

Extras include an introduction to Price by fellow pulp survivor Jack Williamson, and an introduction to the book by Peter Ruber. There is a bibliography of Price's work by Virgil Utter and a short index. The index contains names of people only, and therefore cannot be used to track down magazine titles or subjects or things like the American Fiction Guild.

Price also has a chapter where he talks about the death of the pulps and gives his opinion on why they died. This is a very interesting chapter as it tells what it was like to be a working writer who suddenly finds his markets collapsing.

While it has some flaws, this is a great book and an important document of pulp history. 



Golden Perils

Issue 24, Spring 2002

\$2.75 in PDF format

\$7.00 in print format

Duane Spurlock leads off this edition of the electronically distributed zine with an 18 page article on Harold A. Davis, concentrating on the minor pulpster's work ghosting Doc Savage for Lester Dent.

Davis was the first of Dent's ghostwriters and Spurlock does a very thorough job of looking into his pulp career and his work with Dent.

He starts out with an overview of Davis's career, both in and out of the pulps and with information on how Davis's friendship with Dent led him to become a pulp author. There is a table included that details Davis' appearances in Doc Savage Magazine, under house names before he ghosted Doc Savage, as Kenneth Robeson on Doc Savage, as Wallace Brooker on the Skipper and under his own name.

Spurlock examines every Doc Savage story written by Davis and compares them with Dent's. He also gives a detailed look at his backup stories that appeared in Doc Savage Magazine and Davis' series character Duke Grant who also appeared there.

The article is illustrated with many color images

of the covers of Davis-penned Doc Savage pulps and paperback reprints and with some interior art from Davis stories.

This looks like the first of a series on authors who ghosted Doc Savage.


Howard Hopkins' cover this time is a Doc Savage cover illustrating "The Purple Dragon" which goes along with Spurlock's lead article.

As usual, Bill Thom has the most complete and up-to-date listing of pulp related items and news in his 16 page Golden Perils Newline.

Sad news this time; as there are obituaries for Gray Morrow, John Buscema, Irish McCalla and Jane Ralston Burroughs. He also has news notes on Phillip José Farmer who is recovering from a stroke.

As for the rest of the newline, if it is a pulp reprint, or of interest to pulp fans, its listed. Everything from books, zines, websites, magazines, conventions and comics is listed. Thom is good about giving contact information and pricing to make it easy to spend lots of money on pulp goodies. Full color cover illustrations of most items are also included, where appropriate.

The issue is rounded out with a number of reviews of small press and print on demand books. Some of these appear to be reprinted from the All About Murder List website, others are by Howard Hopkins. As an editor Hopkins seems to be choosing only reviews of books that are highly rated by the reviewers. No book gets less than four stars or daggers out of a possible five.

While Hopkins lists a \$2.75 price in the issue, he has been sending these out in PDF format to those who email him at yinko2@aol.com. 





The Conan Chronicles

Volume I:

The People of the Black Circle

2000

£ 6.99 (\$19.05 U.K. Import)

The Conan Chronicles

Volume 2:

The Hour of the Dragon

2001

£ 7.99 (\$19.50 U.K. Import)

By Robert E. Howard

Edited by Stephen Jones

Millennium

Large format paperback

An accurate and complete attempt to collect the Conan stories by Robert E. Howard has been needed for many years. Unfortunately this collection falls far short of a definitive collection.

The complete set of stories themselves are all easily available elsewhere, even if in diluted form or mixed with non-Howard efforts. What this collection needed to justify itself is the presentation of these stories.

The first thing that becomes apparent is that this set is marred by the large number of typographical errors. Almost every story has at least one typo, some more than one. Proper names are spelled two different ways in the same story and some sentences are unclear as one word is replaced by a similarly spelled word. It is obvious that the copy editor used optical character recognition software to scan the original documents and then ran a computer spell check without actually doing a line-by-line edit for misspelled words.

Howard readers for years have lamented the lack of a carefully done, authoritative and accurate collection of Howard's work. The Conan stories have only been available in the past 20 years in edited, altered or "completed"

versions. Even the accuracy of the Donald Grant editions, and those based on them, have been called into question. Because of this, there has been no one source available to the Howard collector that provides a complete, unaltered, unexpurgated set of the Conan stories and fragments.

This two volume set supposedly corrects this by printing all of the stories and fragments as Howard originally wrote them.

In an interview published by the Barbarian Keep website, Editor Stephen Jones confirms that the books are aimed at a general audience and not for the Howard purists. If this is the case, why bother to print the fragments? A general Conan reader would be frustrated by the abrupt end to these uncompleted works.

Jones acknowledges the stories have been edited for typography, although judging from the number of typos, not nearly well enough.

Original manuscripts, Jones said, were not used in the preparation of the volume, with the exception of a

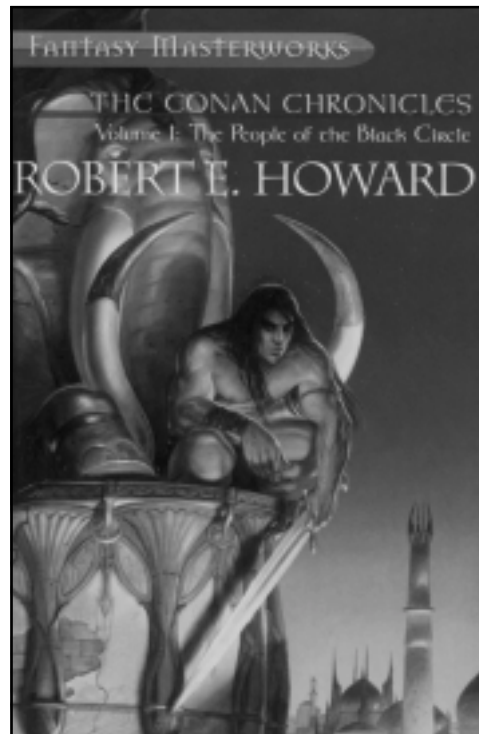
few cases, because of financial constraints. The result of this is that the books are not, despite what some have claimed, a pure text, definitive version of the Conan saga for the use of purists and scholars, but instead a volume aimed at a general readership who has not read Conan before.

The supplemental information one would expect to be printed is lacking. There is no introduction that tells the uninitiated reader why some of the stories are fragments, nor is there any information on the previous history of printing bowdlerized versions.

Even if some of these do prove to be the "pure" Howard stories, it is critical to the Howard collector to know if these are the "pure" stories as they were originally printed in *Weird Tales*, and presumably at least copy edited by

Farnsworth Wright, or if these were taken from the original Howard manuscripts or if they come from later, tainted sources.

Jones has good reason to hide the origin of the text presented. The Barbarian Keep website published a list of the sources used, and it turns out that in several cases the Grant editions were the source. Since recent scholarship has put the Grant editions into question, more accurate sources should have been used. The website's list of sources was provided by Jones, but this should have been printed in the books themselves. The website reports that some of the fragments may also have been taken from



questionable secondary sources and not from the original manuscripts.

The text should have been taken from the original manuscripts, with annotations as to any variations in the original publication. Sadly, this was not done.

Another piece of data missing was the original publication data in list form. This information has to be taken from either the copyright acknowledgment page or sorted out of the afterword. Millennium should have included a history of the publication of the stories, complete with a description of the previous censorship and who later finished the fragments.

This lack of information continues with a failure to place the stories into historical context. Millennium does not show the influence Howard had on *Weird Tales* or on the sword and sorcery publishing boom of the '60s. Nor do they cover those who influenced Howard. An afterword by Jones covers Howard's death, but fails to do much for his life and certainly does not explain the pulp era to the uninitiated. Jones does trace each story in each collection and he gives details on the publication history in *Weird Tales*, but this is a place to start, not the whole story.

Another omission is art. There are no interior illustrations. At the very least they should have reprinted the original interior illustrations and cover art from *Weird Tales*.

The cover art used, by John Howe, is not up to the usual high standard of Conan artists. The cover of the first volume is dull and static. The cover of the second is better, at least showing an action sequence and Howe seems to realize that painting faces is not his strong suit. Conan deserves better art than these paintings given the history of great fantasy artists that have drawn the Cimmerian in the past.

Jones also neglects to place page headers into the books, the story titles should have been printed on every page to make browsing more convenient.

The choice of story order is also poor. The editor has arranged the stories in what appears to be chronological order based on P. Schuyler Miller's "A Probable Outline of Conan's Career." While this is an interesting fanish document, it has been taken as canonical by far too many and has been the basis or justification for too many Conan stories by other hands than Howard. Since Howard himself didn't work from any such outline (although he did make "official" corrections to Miller's work) and wrote

the stories out of chronological sequence, the stories in the volume should have been printed in the probable order in which they were written so as to see Howard's development as a writer.

Another option would have been to print in published order, so one could read the stories in the order that contemporary readers would have enjoyed them, but this would have placed all of the fragments into the end of the second book.

In the aforementioned interview, Jones says that he originally wanted to print the stories in published order, but the publisher insisted on using the Miller-Clark chronology that was published in Glenn Lord's "The Last Celt."


The second volume contains the following quote from Karl Edward Wagner: "This is Conan exactly as Robert E. Howard presented him." It is highly suspicious finding a laudatory quote from an author who died six years before volume one was published.

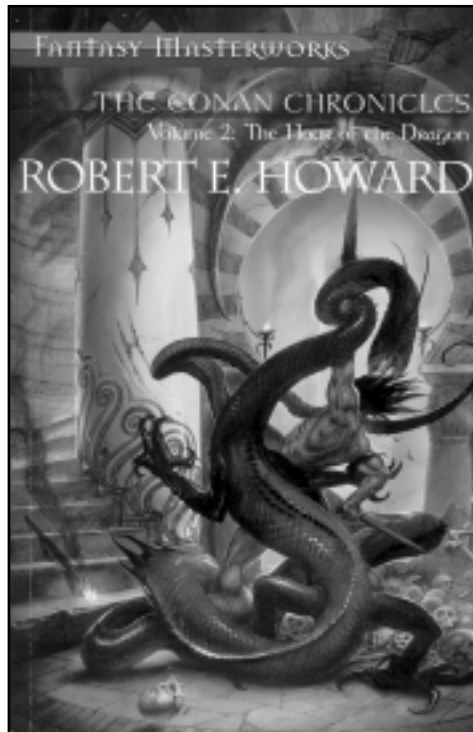
Volume one is dedicated to Wagner "who started this project 23 years ago." Well, no, he started the project that this should have been. For someone whose project is obviously not what Wagner was trying to accomplish, Jones seems to be riding awfully hard on his coat-tails.

One of the strongest points in the books is the excellent list of Howard books included in the front of each volume. While it falls short of a true bibliography, it does give the Howard collector an up-to-date listing of the enormous number of Howard books printed over the years.

In format, the books are similar in size and thickness to the Mammoth series put out by Carroll and Graf. With thin paper that feels cheap and a perfect bind, these volumes may not stand up to repeated readings.

For a general reader, who wants a set of all of the non-pastiche Conan stories in one place, and who doesn't mind overlooking the jarring number of typographical errors, these books might be a reasonable purchase, although at the nearly \$40 import price for the pair in the U.S. would make a trip to the local used bookstore in search of copies of the Wagner-edited books from the 1970s a logical alternative.

The complete interview with Jones, which contains much information that should have been published in an introduction to the books, can be read at the Barbarian Keep website at www.geocities.com/SoHo/6570/index.html. 





Pulp Adventures
Issue 14, Spring 2001
\$3.00
Bold Ventures Press
32 Pages

After a hiatus, Rich Harvey has released a new issue of *Pulp Adventures* that is a large leap ahead for the zine.

Not that *Pulp Adventures* wasn't great before, but with this issue, he is making the leap into a semi-pro quality that is amazing to see in a pulp zine.

The bright, glossy, full color, full bleed cover leaps out at you with a Gloria Stoll Karn cover from *Rangeland Romances*. This cover painting was originally designed to attract attention and sell magazines, and it does the job here.

This is somewhat of a theme issue, with an interview with 2001 Pulpcon guest of honor Stoll Karn and two stories reprinted from the romance pulps.

It's great to see that Harvey is paying attention to these magazines that have been much ignored by the pulp collecting mainstream. For a genre that was one of the most popular and longest lasting, it's been sadly under researched.

Not that Stoll Karn is of interest only to romance collectors, she also did covers for the detective pulps and her interview is of interest to those interested in pulp art and what went on behind-the-scenes in pulp publishing.

John Wooley and Rich Harvey conduct the in-

terview and give a summary of her career and information on how she broke into the pulps and what it was like to work as a cover illustrator for Popular Publications.

Some of her original interior art and covers are used to illustrate the article.

There are a few editing glitches and the article ends abruptly in the middle of a sentence.

The two stories reprinted, both from *Rangeland Romances*, complete with original illustrations, are Velda Johnson's "Valentine in Gunsmoke" and Thelma Knoles' "Little Imp of the Owlhoot."

Both of these are more than just weepy romance stories, there is actually some action to them. The stories are readable and entertaining even to those not interested in the romance genre.


James Van Hise's interview with "lost" pulp fan and Xenophile editor Nils Hardin is also in this issue. Van Hise, a knowledgeable collector of small press publications, does a good job of asking detailed questions about the late Hardin's editorship of the highly influential zine. Van Hise

did the pulp community a service by locating and interviewing Hardin before it was too late.

His interview does bring up the controversy about Orson Welles' supposed authorship of some pulp stories. While it does not solve the debate, a letter from Wells to Hardin is mentioned. The pertinent part of that letter should have been reprinted as well but wasn't.

Will Murray's detective work reveals why there is a plot hole in the Doc Savage novel "The Three Devils" and reprints the missing pages of text that were inadvertently deleted from both the original pulp appearance and the paperback reprint.

The zine ends with first part of a three-

part Nick Carr article on Emperor Rudolf from the Purple Invasion sequence of *Operator 5* novels. At only one page, this really is too short and perhaps all three parts should have been run as one article. 





Long Live The Dead
By Hugh B. Cave
2001
\$16.00
Crippen and Landru
Trade size paperback
240 pages

This is a terrific idea, to have all of the stories from one author that appeared in one pulp collected together, in this case all 10 of the Hugh B. Cave stories that appeared in *Black Mask* Magazine. It doesn't hurt that the pulp in question is the legendary *Black Mask*.

Because of the time period over which these stories were written and published, the reader can see how Cave develops as a writer.

The first story, "Too Many Women" is choppy in its action and plotting, but Cave wrote this story when he was only 23 and he quickly improves.

The second story, "Dead Dog" has a smoother execution and better plot, but still isn't firing on all cylinders. It is, however, a good enough story to stand up with the rest of the collection.

Cave starts to show his sentimental side quickly, a tendency that aided his slick stories, but keeps these from being as hard and brittle as some of his *Black Mask* contemporaries.

By the third story, "Shadow," Cave has worked out how to plot a pulp story, and knows how to put his characters through their paces in what is a typical cop story of the day.

In "Curtain Call," a cop risks his badge to investigate a suicide that, of course, is really a murder. The older

cop who assists in this case is not on stage enough to make the sad ending effective, and it might have made a better story if Cave had told it through this cop's eyes rather than the younger cop. It's still a nice crime story and typical of pulp stories of the time.

The title story is very melodramatic: it's about a former magician who must regain his lost skills to save his life and the life of the girl he loves, but doing so places him in jeopardy of a murder charge. The ending is too pat, and Cave uses coincidence, and the deathbed statement of a madman to save his hero from the electric chair.

"Lost and Found" is a pretty good story, but Cave once again has trouble with his ending. The protagonist is a former newspaper reporter who has to track down the daughter of a millionaire in Florida. The reason for all of the fuss is a stretch and Cave's hero has to rely on the actions of others, and last minute confessions, to succeed in his mission and figure out what is going on.


"Stranger In Town" has a trick ending, and some good bad guys, but the story's hero has to have a helping hand from fate to survive the story.

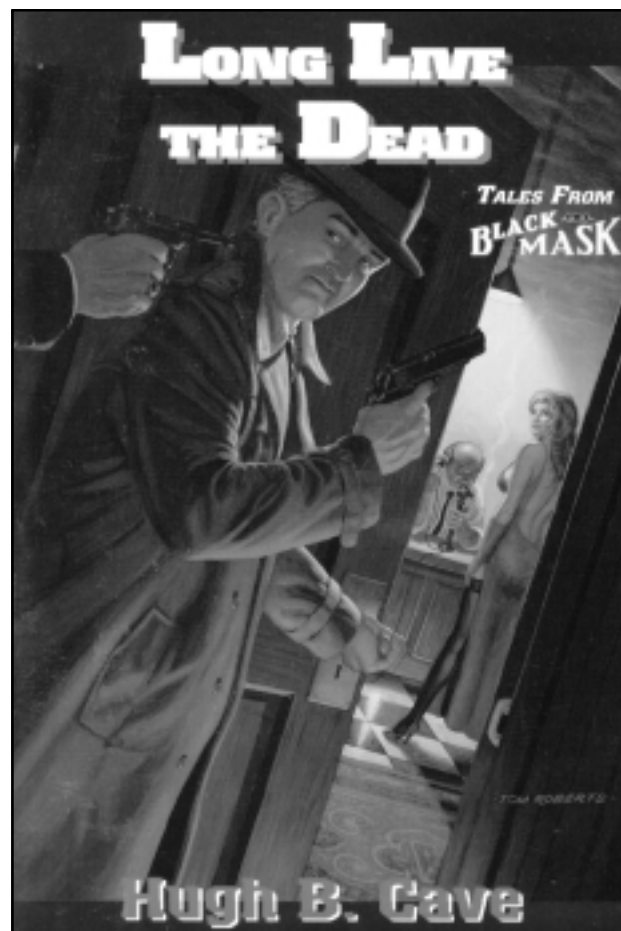
It is interesting to see that, while *Black Mask* is typically thought of as the home of private eyes, that these stories are about cops or civilians and not about the stereotypical P.I. It's also interesting to see that many of his protagonists are short, balding and not at all in the hulking tough-guy mode. His characters are physically competent, however, and can take a beating in the best hard boiled tradition.

The book sports a very nice cover painted by Tom Roberts.

Keith Deutch opens the book with a lengthy interview with Hugh Cave about his pulp career and his experiences writing for three different editors of *Black Mask*, including Joseph Shaw.

Another nice feature is a bibliography of Cave's detective and mystery fiction. Unfortunately, it's admittedly incomplete, owing to the fact that even Cave is not sure of all the stories he's written over his long career.

This is a good book for Cave and *Black Mask* fans, but not the place to begin for somebody just starting to read hard-boiled mysteries 





Nameless Cults: The Cthulhu Mythos Fiction of Robert E. Howard
By Robert E. Howard, et. al.
Chaosium
\$15.95
353 pages
2001

Chaosium's long-promised and long-delayed collection of Robert E. Howard's Cthulhu Mythos has finally arrived.

Chaosium is best known as a role-playing game publisher, having come up with the game, "Call of Cthulhu" that attempts to replicate the experience of Lovecraft's hapless protagonists. For several years, Chaosium has been publishing a very good series of paperback anthologies of stories on the Cthulhu Mythos, containing both new and old stories.

Previously, they have published the Mythos fiction of pulpsters Clark Ashton Smith, Robert Bloch, Hugh Cave and, of course, Lovecraft himself. With "Nameless Cults," they try to assemble all of the stories that Howard wrote intending them to be part of the Mythos, stories that series editor Robert M. Price traces to the influence of Arthur Machen and stories that have ideas that were later absorbed into the Mythos by other writers.

Price is a very serious Lovecraft scholar, on occasion too serious, as he approaches the Mythos with the zeal usually found only in biblical scholars or crazed cultists. His introduction to the volume and to the individual stories reflects this and is interesting for the dedicated Howard scholar, but may be off-putting to the everyday reader. He can't be faulted for incompleteness, but he does tend to

put forth his own theories rather strongly. However, even if you don't agree with every interpretation he has, you can't argue that he doesn't have a firm foundation and the footnotes to prove it.

Much of the contents of this book are a repeat of the Baen Cthulhu Mythos volume from 1990 and most of the works here are available in other collections of Howard's horror work, such as "Pigeons From Hell" or the later Baen series. But this is more a collection of the strictly Mythos tales than a general collection of horror tales.

"Black Caanan" is not here, for example, even though it seems like it fits with the middle section of "The Call of Cthulhu" because no Cthulhu entity is named in that story. A look at the version in "The Skull-Face Omnibus" shows that one reason why it may not have been included is the amount of racially insensitive statements in it.

Strangely "Pigeons From Hell" itself is missing even though that story has a mention of Yig, Father of Serpents, a god that has been subsumed into the Mythos by later writers. Price even acknowledges this and reprints

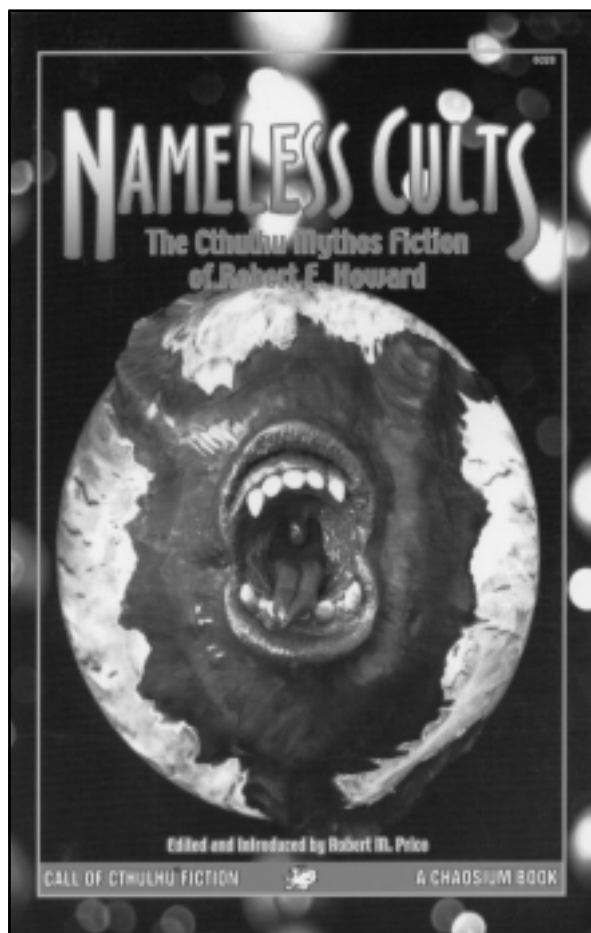
Howard stories featuring the Serpent Men of Valusia.

But many of the expected stories are here, including "The Black Stone," "The Hoofed Thing," and "Dig Me No Grave."

"Skull-Face" is included, even though it really isn't a Cthulhu Mythos work, just because the main villain's name is Kathulos and because Lovecraft later referred to him in his own work as a variant spelling of Cthulhu. "Skull-Face" is not the best Howard, poor Lovecraft, but pretty good Sax Rohmer. It's nice to see a little two-fisted action instead of milksop moaning as in the Fu Manchu and other Rohmer books.

One of the great inclusions, as it is so rare, is the complete round-robin story "The Challenge From Beyond" that Howard wrote with C.L. Moore, A. Merritt, H.P. Lovecraft and Frank Belknap

Long. This first appeared in Fantasy Magazine in 1935. (A chapbook from Necronomicon press is still in print and contains both this and the science fiction round robin of the same name.)



The story itself is not very good, but it was intended for a fannish audience and the fan interest is still enough to justify its publication. It is interesting to see how each of the five *Weird Tales* authors made their chapter a reflection of their individual styles.

Price's inclusion of the stories he associates with Machen's influence on Howard is a continuation of Price's theories about Machen's influence on Lovecraft and the development of the Cthulhu Mythos.

Original publication information is missing. Price claims the stories are complete and unexpurgated but does not detail which sources were used.

Unfortunately, there are four posthumous collaborations, "The Abbey" completed by C.J. Henderson, "The Door to the World" completed by Joseph S. Pulver, "The House in the Oaks" completed by August Derleth, and "Black Eons" completed by Price himself. At least Price reveals in his story introduction where the authentic Howard leaves off.

Henderson's effort is strained. He takes a fragment that is less than two pages and writes an additional six starring a character and a villain that are not in the original fragment. Price erroneously believes that it was obvious where Howard was heading and that Henderson's addition was on target.

Henderson's main character seems almost a parody of a Howard character. He's a sixgun toting, wandering cowboy with Irish roots who has seen it all and done it all before wandering into a lame haunted house scenario. It's not clear where Howard was going with this story, but it sure wasn't where Henderson ends up.

In "The Door to the World" Howard writes his five and a half pages in an elaborate, wordy prose style. This style is a bit odd, but works when Howard does it. Pulver's imitation of it in the remaining 13 pages of the story is jarring to say the least. In his hands, "Justin Geoffrey's" poetry is reduced to silly doggerel.

Pulver also doesn't seem to have thoroughly read the Howard fragment. Howard specifically says that his main character's books are in the realistic mode, but Pulver refers to the main character as having written fantastic novels. Pulver's O'Dare has a more formal education than Howard's O'Dare.

The book turns into Pulver's idea of a Howard sword and sorcery epic, with the main character, O'Dare, running around with a sword, smiting monsters. There is an evil god who appears long enough to menace the hero and then disappears for no reason when Pulver realizes he has no way for O'Dare to survive the encounter.

The man cannot write an action sequence, and his swordfights are quite simply awful. It's embarrassing to see this included here under Howard's name.

"The House in the Oaks" is completed by August Derleth. He's a much more competent writer than Pulver or Henderson, but he also gets off of the correct

path. At least Howard's material is about half of the completed story instead of just the first few pages.

Howard tells the story as it happens, with the plot moving along with a brisk, action pace. Derleth stops the story and then tells the ending through the Lovecraftian standard of having one protagonist be given a manuscript written by the doomed main character. This results in a duller narrative with much less impact and immediacy. Derleth sacrifices one of Howard's series characters, Conrad, where it is fairly obvious that Howard, if he was going to kill off a character, had already set up a non-recurring character to take the hit.


Derleth's effort is effective and readable, but Howard would certainly not have taken it in the direction of Derleth, who ends up doing a similar story to some of his Lovecraft "completions" that weren't based on more than a sentence or two of Lovecraft.

The story completed by Robert Price himself shouldn't be attributed to Howard at all. Only a page and a half were written by Howard, Price adds 14 pages of his own. Howard's contribution is mostly an attempt to place his Hyborian age into historical record. Price decides to make the Allison character in Howard's fragment be the crippled James Allison who experiences past life regression. This is a poor choice as the Allison in the fragment is an adventurer on an archeological dig in Egypt. This is a much more strenuous and active role than Howard's James Allison ever had. This is a poor story and shouldn't be here.

The cover is similar to others in the series, a photograph altered to present a weird but indefinite subject by artist Harry Fassl. In this case what appears to be a photo of a primate mouth, with fangs, slaving lips and prehensile tongue stuck in the middle of an indefinable but organic mass. Considering that Mythos horrors are described as indescribable, the cover art works. It gives the impression of seeing part of something you can't quite describe, but is nasty and unnatural. Interior art is restricted to the contents page frame and stock story headers by Dave Carson. This art similar to that of previous books in the series. There is no original art from the pulps or new art illustrating the stories.

The question this collection raises is whether this book was necessary. The Baen Books "Cthulhu: The Mythos and Kindred Horrors" already provided a similar set of the Howard Cthulhu stories but with a better selection and no posthumous collaborations. While a set of Cthulhu volumes logically should have a Robert E. Howard book, this book doesn't do enough to justify itself as a Howard collection or as a Cthulhu collection.

The format, a large paperback with a glossy cover, is the same as the other books in the series.

In other pulp Chaosium news, the company is working on a Pulp Cthulhu game that features "reckless adventures in the 1930s." Scheduled for Summer 2002. 



Straight From the Fridge, Dad A Dictionary of Hipster Slang

By Max Décharné

Broadway Books

2001

192 pages

\$12.95

For all you Kats and Kittens, Chix and Charlies, this here's a Richardsnary to hep those of the cubistic persuasion in order that they might lay down some platter patter.

Pipe this, 'cause here's the rumble: editor Max Décharné has put out a dictionary of hipster slang.

Combining slang from pulp magazines, hardboiled novels, noir and juvenile delinquent movies, jazz and blues music and beat poets, "Straight From The Fridge, Dad" at first glance looks like a thorough examination of hipster and hard-boiled slang, but a close look reveals the sources cited are too narrow.

For example, a number of entries are taken from a single performance by Dean Martin at the Sands in February 1964. The slang cited consists of Martin's jokes rather than actual slang that might be in use by hipsters.

This book is a real gone gas, man, with lots of interesting examples of hipster speak, but it is more of an entertainment volume rather than a serious slang dictionary.

There are numerous cases where lots of slang terms are taken from the same sources. A handful of movies and books stands in for a vast number of similar works that should have been examined. Searching a Shell Scott novel isn't enough to cover paperback jungle. "High School Confidential" is a fine hunting ground for slang, but it isn't the only juvenile delinquent movie. "On The Road" is not

the only Beat book, or even the only Kerouac. Johnathan Latimer's "Red Gardenias" is cited frequently, with more than a dozen references. This is not to say that he only looked at a few sources, he has entries from short stories, novels, movies, and many different rock, rockabilly, blues, jazz and country songs.

Cited authors of at least passing interest to pulp collectors include: Howard Browne, Frederick Brown, Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, W. R. Burnett, Michael Avallone, Nelson Algren, Mickey Spillane, Donald Westlake, Jim Thompson, Horace McCoy, Erle Stanley Gardner, Frederick Nebel, Paul Cain and Cornell Woolrich.

He cites extensively from Black Mask, but many of the entries are from the titles of the stories and not from the stories themselves. It would appear that the editor drew from the Index to Black Mask rather than from the pulps themselves.

Black Mask authors whose story titles provided slang terms, rather than the stories themselves, include:

Erle Stanley Gardner, Paul Cain, Phillip Ketchum, Dwight V. Babcock, Dale Clark, Cornell Woolrich, Raymond Chandler, Frederick Nebel, John Joseph, Erika Zastrow and Fergus Truslow.

Fergus Truslow? Erika Zastrow? These are some pretty obscure members of the Black Mask School alongside some big names, so editor Décharné is not limiting himself to only the well-known sources.

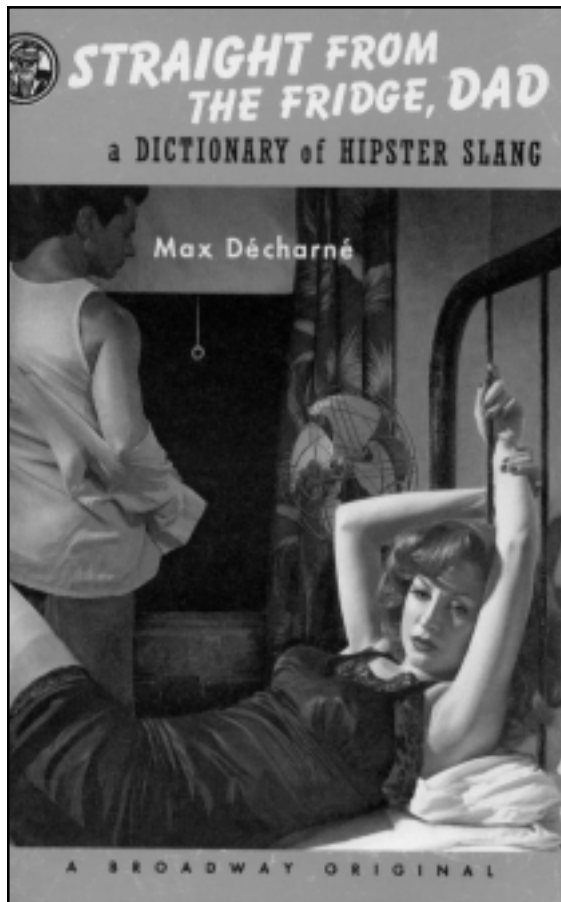
Unhook your ears, Dad, cause there are a number of odd omissions as well. While he draws heavily from the works of Hammett, he misses "Peter Collins" as underworld slang for a nobody.

One interesting choice is that he draws from several Hammett novels and short stories, but cites the movie version of "The Maltese Falcon."

Similarly, a number of items come "From the novel of the screenplay of Ocean's 11"

rather than from the movie itself.

One glaring error is that he identifies Gungel as a gunman without describing its original meaning, even though he cites "The Maltese Falcon" as his source. Similarly he doesn't include the original meaning of punk relating to prison slang for homosexuals. This is obviously not done out of any prudishness on his part as he is quick



to describe every slang term for sex and sexual organs used by blues, jazz and rockabilly musicians from the '20s to the '50s.

The variants are interesting, Décharné uses "If I'm lyin', I'm flyin'" rather than the more common "If I'm lyin', I'm dyin'." Sob sister is listed, but not as meaning a newspaper agony columnist.

He has "grease" (as in bribe), but not the similar "juice," which is early Las Vegas slang for having an "in" or "fix" as in "The fix is in." Décharné thinks real gone things are a "kick" but he doesn't realize you can "kick" dope. He lists a detective as a "peeper" but he doesn't have "peep this." To "off" is to steal, but not to kill.

Peel your eyeballs, Jake: he lists "c-jag" but not "jag." He has hack and hack-jockey, but not hackey. There is no entry for "sign him off" to mean to kill someone.

He doesn't define the slang he uses in the definitions of other slang terms. For example, "upstate guy" is used in one definition to describe a hip dude, but there is no independent entry for "upstate guy" He does the same when he uses "downed" to mean stole, but doesn't have an entry for "downed."

Focus your audio and dig this: Nuns somehow aren't "penguins." Prison guards aren't listed as "Screws" or "Turnkeys." Funky gets the nod as something smelly, but he doesn't trace the term from there to the smoky, reefer-laden jazz clubs to the use of the term for the music played at those "funky" clubs or the hipsters who frequented them. South of the Slot is listed, but no reference is given to its probable Chicago origins.

He doesn't have "Trick Baby" or any other slang from Iceberg Slim, an obvious source if there ever was one. He also neglects to look at anything from Chester Himes. Both of these writers would be an excellent source of authentic black street slang. Some of the more revolutionary literature of the sixties, such as from the Black Panthers and other black militants would have been a good idea to check. I think a glance through Ernest Tidyman's Shaft novels would have also been called for, even though Tidyman himself was white. There are a lot of Blacksploitation films that could have been used as sources as well.

"Heavy" isn't listed as carrying a weapon. Nor is "gear" drugs, or "works" what you shoot "gear" with. You can't "shoot the works" or "give him the works."

But he does list the very entertaining "thin man" as a non-existent worker on the payroll.

He also converts song lyrics into slang. In some cases these blues, jazz and rockabilly songs are legitimate places to find slang, in other cases he's just taking a song writer's poetic license as a citation.

Some citations seem to show that he is confusing an author's writing style with an expression of slang. "I feel like Death Valley" for instance, surprisingly means "I'm thirsty."

A strange entry lists "hungry" as meaning "hungry." Blonde, complete with a quote from "Farewell, My Lovely" means "blonde."

Another omission is that he doesn't address the use of grammar in hipster speak. Even his title, one of the best phrases in the book, isn't really slang, it's just a neat metaphor: Straight from the fridge=cool. So much of hipster speech isn't really slang — either invented words or words used in a way different than their accepted meaning — but a clever way of using words to describe things in a "far out" manner.

This is a one-way-only dictionary—it will hip you to what a back door man is, but if you're coming from English and want to convert your words to hipster, you have to page through the definitions to find one that matches.

So while this isn't for serious scholars of slang, it is an amusing listing of some of the colorful terms and phrases used by the hep cats and swinging chicks. It's more for fun than for serious study.

Another good source of hard-boiled slang, also incomplete, but a good supplement to "Straight From the Fridge, Dad" is William Denton's "Twists, Slugs and Roscoes: A Glossary of Hard Boiled Slang." Originally published by Miskatonic University Press in 1993, an updated version is available on the internet at <http://www.miskatonic.org/slang.html>.

Peep this: Denton's list has quite a few terms that Décharné misses, such as Ameche (telephone) and rhino (Money). Denton's list does not cite where the terms are found as well as Décharné's, but has a tighter focus on written hard-boiled sources. Décharné cites where he found many of his terms, but not all.


Both give the origin of some of their terms, but not all. Denton gives the origin of Baumes rush, (named after Senator Caleb H. Baumes) for instance but not for Ameche (named after Don Ameche).

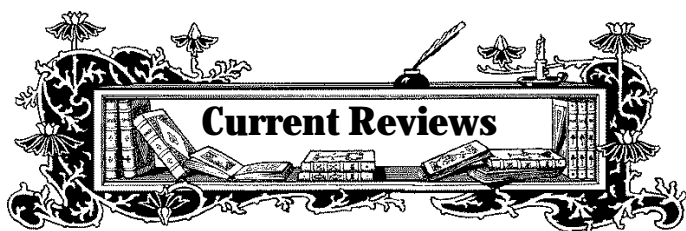
Denton is more limited in his choice of sources, just hard-boiled literature, while Décharné is taking phrases from movies, music and previously published dictionaries of slang.

The difference between these two approaches is that Décharné is providing entertainment and Denton is trying to help those reading hard-boiled novels know what is being said. Both approaches have their uses.

Denton is more complete with racially-based slang, which Décharné shies away from.

The cover used for "Straight From the Fridge, Dad" looks like a lurid, tough-guy paperback cover from the 1960s, but there is no information as to original publication or if it is newly created for this book.

In the final tally, "Straight From the Fridge, Dad" is a fun book, but a book that has a more complete listing of terms and origins while retaining the hip style would belong in everyone's wordsville. 



The Mammoth Book of Pulp Action
Edited by Maxim Jakubowski
Carroll and Graf
2001
630 pages
\$11.95

Jakubowski returns with a sequel to his "The Mammoth Book of Pulp Fiction" that provides more real pulp fiction reprints than the first.

Unfortunately many of these stories, both pulp and otherwise, have been seen before.

While reprints from actual pulp magazines are still less than half of the total number of stories, 10 out of 23, the percentage has increased somewhat from the previous volume and some of the remaining stories hold up well in comparison.

Pulp authors who make the cut include Erle Stanley Gardner with "The Kid Clips A Coupon." This story has been reprinted in recent times in "Tough Guys and Dangerous Dames," and there is no reason why Jakubowski shouldn't know this and choose one of the many unreprinted Gardner stories. The story is a good one, but with such a rich field to choose from, reprinting a story that has been reprinted before, and recently, is a serious flaw.

Steve Fisher's "Goodbye Hanna" has also been reprinted, but not for 50 years since it was in "Tough Enough" and so its inclusion is not as big a crime. Similarly Frank Grubber's "Death at the Main" appeared in "Brass Knuckles" but as this was a single author collection from some years ago, it can be forgiven.

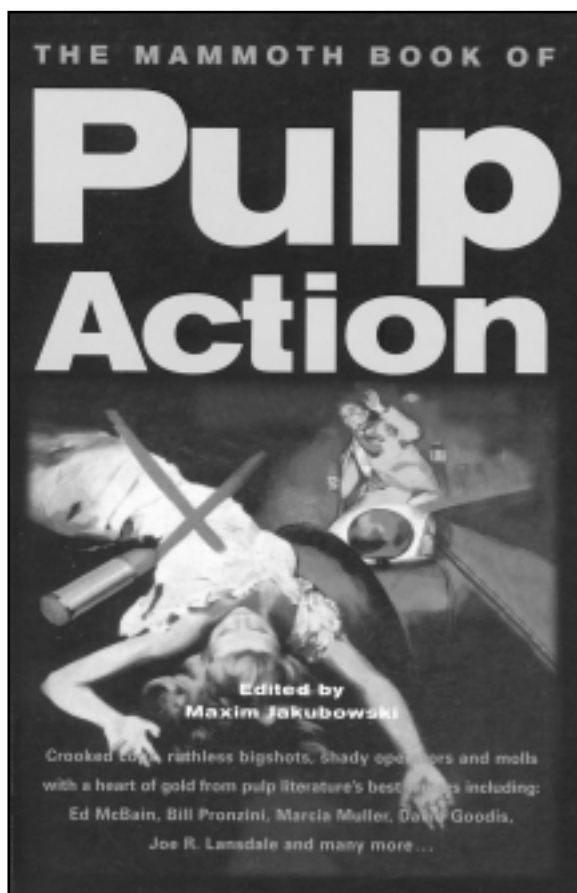
Three of the five Black Mask stories, Norbert Davis' "Red Goose," Roger Torrey's "Clean Sweep" and Thomas Walsh's "Best Man" were reprinted in Shaw's

"Hardboiled Omnibus." All of these stories were in both the hard-to-find hardback and the more easily found abridged paperback. If it was really necessary to mine other anthologies for story ideas, Jakubowski could have at least reprinted the three that didn't make the paperback.

Originally printed in the one of the most commonly found noir anthologies, "Black Lizard Anthology of Crime Fiction," is Joe R. Lansdale's "The Pit." As usual with Lansdale, the effort is professional, but unsettling and disturbing.

One story that has not appeared elsewhere is the early Raoul Whitfield story "Sinner's Paradise" from the pages of Breezy Stories. It's an unexpected pleasure to have a story from such an unusual source. While not the strongest story in the book, nor Whitfield's best, it does fit the crime story genre as well or better than many others included while also giving a good idea of what kind of fiction Breezy Stories printed.

Of the non-pulp stories, Evan Hunter's is a puzzler. Like the inclusion of Donald Westlake's "Ordo" in the prior volume, "Motel" is a "slick" story (it originally appeared in the German edition of Playboy) that is well-written but out of place in a pulp collection. Jakubowski seems intent on expanding the definition of "Pulp" to include slick stories with a psychological bent by authors known for their crime work, even if such work is not in the crime-fiction field. At the same time he is restricting his definition of "Pulp" to exclude most of the genres represented by magazine pulp fiction. There are any number of Hunter/McBain stories that could have been included in this volume, including some that appeared in real pulps, but instead Jakubowski choose to include one that has no violence, no crime, and, strangely



for a book called "Pulp Action," no action. It's a long story that takes up space that could have been used for far more on-topic choices.

Jakubowski puts forward the idea that pulp stories are "stories where action and thrills are paramount and the reader is trapped in a whirlwind of adventure and suspense." It's too bad that he didn't use this criteria for choosing some of the stories here. In his choices, he seems to be narrowing the definition of pulp fiction to crime

and suspense stories, but then he expands it to include slick-style stories.

On the other hand, Bruno Fischer has a story from *Detective Tales* that is atmospheric and filled with psychological suspense, but has supernatural overtones that put it into the horror or fantasy realm. The story is from 1950, which according to “The Adventure House Guide to the Pulp” places it too late to be from the pulp version of the title.

Bill Pronzini has “The Pulp Connection” starring his Nameless Detective that at least has real pulp magazines in it even if it isn’t “pure pulp.” He mentions several specific issues and authors, including Roger Torrey and Cleve Adams. Jakubowski should have reprinted the stories mentioned by those two authors in this anthology. Torrey is represented by a different story from *Black Mask* and Adams is absent. The trick used in Pronzini’s story to create the locked-room mystery—like those of most locked room mysteries—is too elaborate to work dependably in real life, but at least the solution of the crime is dependent on clues left with pulp magazines. A little editorial commentary here about the origins of the story would have been welcome. Is this story based on a real pulp collection? Say Frank Robinson’s? We’re not told here, nor are we told about Pronzini’s pulp collecting hobby.

Jakubowski’s decision to print “The First Five In Line” by Charles Willeford is such a horrible example of how not to edit an anthology that it almost ruins the entire collection.

In the first place, this is an awful story. The only reason to keep reading it is that it seems to promise a trick ending. There is no action. The characters don’t even cross the street, that’s how little action there is. The characters are thoroughly fleshed out, which just shows how uninteresting they are. Half of the story is told through the device of memos back and forth from smarmy television executives.

This story is available in another anthology “Orange Pulp” so it isn’t even a never-before-seen story.

Then we get to the ending. And we find there isn’t one. Even Willeford didn’t think this story was worth the effort to finish. Jakubowski seems to think he’s doing a service by printing an unfinished piece of crap that doesn’t even have an ending. The reader is led to believe that if they stick with the story long enough, there will be a payoff. The only payoff here is in frustration.

Another inexcusable error that Jakubowski makes is that he does not print Fredric Brown’s “Don’t Look Behind You” as the last story in the book. This is a fine story and typical of Brown’s off-kilter style, but for the gimmick to work right, the story has to be printed as the last story in the book. This is really a no-brainer for anyone who’s read the story and it shouldn’t have been a difficult task to print it in the right place.

At least he has the wit to include a John D.

MacDonald story. However he chooses “College-Cut Kill,” reprinted within the past year in the anthology “Pulp Masters.” This is an early MacDonald and his ending is not a well constructed as his later work would become. However his skill as a writer and his smooth style that is almost too good to be considered pulp writing is evident here. But there are any number of pulp and digest stories by MacDonald that could have been used rather than pick one so recently reprinted.

Marcia Muller has a quite solid private investigator story in “The Lost Coast.” It follows MacDonald’s story, always a tough place in an anthology and holds its own. While the detective does find a dead body, it’s because the murderer set her up to find it.


Hugh B. Cave has a fun story, that amazingly is from a pulp and reads like a pulp story. His occult detective, king-of-the-flesh-wounds Martin Lane, uncovers a fake haunting. “The Lady Who Left Her Coffin.” is light and entertaining even if the hero shrugs off gunshot wounds and concussion.

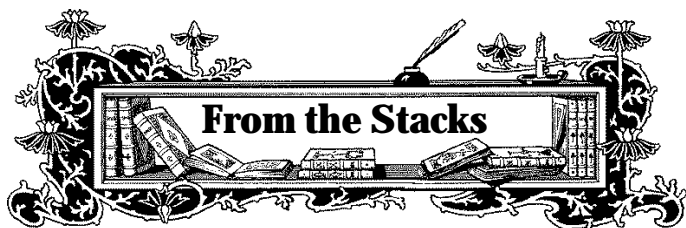
Mark Timlin’s “Dog Life” seems like it is either part of a series or an excerpt from a novel. Without an introduction from the editor, the reader is left on his own to figure out which. The main character is certainly tough and ruthless, but other than the stock “he saved my life as a kid” we don’t get any reason for why he’s dishing out revenge. The main character has so little personality, outside of the determination to exact revenge, that he is more like a force of nature than a character.

David Goodis has an excellent story that actually has adventure and action in it. While it wouldn’t have made the cut at *Adventure*, it certainly could have been printed by any number of second-tier adventure pulps. “Caravan to Tarim” is a good, if somewhat unrealistic, pulp-style adventure that somehow was printed by a slick.

In his introduction to the prior volume, Jakubowski mentions several writers that he planned to include in that volume, but had to cut because of rising printing costs. Several of these authors make it into this volume, but some, like James Reasoner and Loren D. Estleman do not. Hopefully these left-out writers, Reasoner at least, will make it into a future collection.

Jakubowski’s introduction is perfunctory and he does not introduce any of the stories individually. There is no information on the authors or the stories and where they fit into “Pulp.” You wouldn’t know that McBain is a major writer while Roger Torrey, unfortunately, is a nearly forgotten one. He doesn’t say if the characters in a story are part of an ongoing series or why he selected these stories.

The saving grace of this book is that it is cheap and thick. Even with the large number of poor choices and otherwise available stories, there are still enough that are good and exclusive to this volume to make it worth picking up. 



The Mammoth Book of Pulp Fiction

Edited by Maxim Jakubowski

Carroll and Graf

586 pages

1996

\$9.95 (current price may be higher)

With only eight out of 32 stories actually taken from the pulps, this collection would be more accurately titled "The Mammoth Book of Crime Fiction." But aside from that it presents some great reading for a low price.

Pulp authors include Hammet with the old Sam Spade standby "Too Many Have Lived," which is a good choice, if too often anthologized, but this comes from a slick and not a pulp.

Robert Leslie Bellem has "Preview of Murder" from *Thrilling Detective*, and while it's not a Dan Turner yarn, detective Nick Ransom "ankles" his way through it lighting up "gaspers."

William P. McGivern's "Death Comes Gift Wrapped" is a weak story from the pages of *Black Mask*. It follows a cop as his plans to get away with murder fall apart because of his stupidity, but the story, particularly the ending, is not convincing.

John D. MacDonald has "Finder's Killers" from *Detective Story Magazine*. This is a good story about a disgraced federal agent who continues to track down the target of his last investigation for the bureau. While this is a common pulp plot, MacDonald's prose and plot twists make this a story worth reading. There is a good twist ending and MacDonald does a good job in building suspense.

Pulp authors Fredric Brown and James M. Cain are also represented by works from non-pulp sources.

One terrific story from *Thrilling Detective* is "Murderer's Mandate" by W.T. Ballard. Set in Las Vegas, Ballard gives a very detailed account of the setting that shows he knows his Las Vegas Valley. He comments on the (munition) plants on the road to Boulder and sets some of his action in the Horseshoe Casino. The Horseshoe was built by "Cowboy" Benny Binion, a notorious thug from Texas (several of his rivals in the Texas underworld ended up dying from car bombs or in hails of bullets) who had a bad reputation for the rough stuff his bouncers pulled. A quick check shows that the Horseshoe may not have been open at the time the story was written, but it would have

been close and the description certainly matches the real casino. His hero is named Sam Boyd, but obviously not the same real-life Sam Boyd who later became a major player in the casino industry and had UNLV's stadium named after him. The real Boyd was part owner of several casino properties during the time the story was set but wasn't quite as prominent as he would later become.

While Ballard's hero does find a dead body and is the prime suspect, there is a logical reason for his presence at the crime scene. His legal troubles are because he is being set up by somebody he has every reason to trust. Although it is hard to believe that an astute man like Boyd could have worked for his boss for three years without realizing what a rat he was, the boss doesn't show his true colors until the end. The ending is a little too pat, but the authentic Las Vegas atmosphere goes a long way to make up for it.

On the other hand, Howard Browne has a Paul Pine story from *Manhunt* that is firmly — too firmly — in the Chandler school. It has the cliché "body of a would-be client found murdered in the detectives office" routine. Pine wisecracks the cops, who'd like to pin the murder on him and sets off to solve the case even though he hasn't been hired and there is no reason for him to work for free. He has a bad guy get the drop on him and goes out of his way to get in the middle of the action even when it would have served him much better just to give the cops a nudge and let them do the dirty work. He even has the requisite dentist for a next door neighbor. At least he didn't tamper with evidence, enter a suspect's house through an unlocked door and get knocked unconscious only to wake up with a corpse killed with his gun or get slipped a mickey. But it was a short story so there wasn't space for the full Chandler/Browne treatment.

But why was this story printed here? It was printed in "The Mammoth Book of Private Eye Stories" just eight years previous. At least Jakubowski could have avoided running a story from a collection that was not only published by Carroll and Graf, but was part of the same series of anthologies.

Many of the stories here are more noir than pulp in that they focus on the suspense of the situation rather than the action and drama.

Fredric Brown has a nice noir story about a man who finds himself a suspect in a murder case. No detective or tough guy, he's just a wino trying to get out from under. "The Wench is Dead" is one of nine stories from the pages of *Manhunt*.

Day Keene's "The Bloody Tide" from *Black Mask* has a similar theme, this one about the redemption of an ex-con who, again, is on the run for murder. The mystery part "who is Senior Peso" takes a back seat to the "will he go straight" and "will he get away" part of the story.

The Keene story focuses on the action and comes to a predictable end that would be approved by the com-

ics code. The Brown story doesn't set up its ending as well, but it is the better story in having more complex characters and a morally ambiguous end.

Robert Bloch's "Death is a Vampire," from the pages of *Thrilling Mystery*, is a disappointment that tries for a screwball feel using the tired shudder pulp formula but fails to be funny. At least it manages to avoid the blood and guts of many of the stories in its genre.

While there are many good stories, some, like Charles Willeford's "Citizen's Arrest" just sit there. It isn't hard-boiled, merely a story about how frustrating encountering crime can be to an honest citizen. It breaks out of the formula, but fails to be interesting.

Much better is Bruno Fischer's "We Are All Dead." It starts out as a caper story but turns into a tight noir thriller. Well-written enough to be a slick story with good character studies of the relationships between the crooks, the Manhunt piece is suspenseful enough to have made it as a pulp story. It is full of the small details that bring this kind of story to life. The characters complain about how it isn't as easy to pull a caper anymore, the job goes bad, and then the "getaway" goes bad. Even though the characters are all hard, cold and professional thieves, you see how their human failings trip them up.

Max Allan Collins "A Matter of Principle" and Bill Pronzini's "Stacked Deck" both take place around isolated cottages along the shores of a lake and both are about criminals taking on other criminals, but they develop their stories and characters in very different ways. Collins' story is the more effective but Pronzini's has a more complex plot to pull off. Collins does a good job of getting inside the head of his protagonist and the story compares favorably with the criminal point of view Donald Westlake uses in his Parker novels.

An excerpt from "Enter Scarface" is too incomplete to be considered a full story and shouldn't have been included. Anthologies shouldn't be cutting up pieces of longer works, but printing complete stories. There is no reason for this except to be included.

A fine long story from the pages of *Thrilling Detective* is William Campbell Gault's "Hibiscus and Homicide." There are only three things wrong with the story,

the detective is slipped a mickey and wakes up next to a corpse, there is a dentist office down the hall from the detective's office, and the ending is a little pat with the bad guys conveniently rubbing each other out. Other than that, this is a good private detective story that contains some tough characters and a nicely-described Hawaii background.

"The Second Coming" by Joe Gores is an interesting experiment, being written entirely in hipster speak, but the novelty is not enough to warrant its inclusion. The attempt at clever style destroys the effectiveness of the story and the seriousness of the subject. It's hard to believe that anyone would really talk that way all of the time.


Harlan Ellison's "Killing Bernstein" turns out to be a science fiction story written with a noir style.

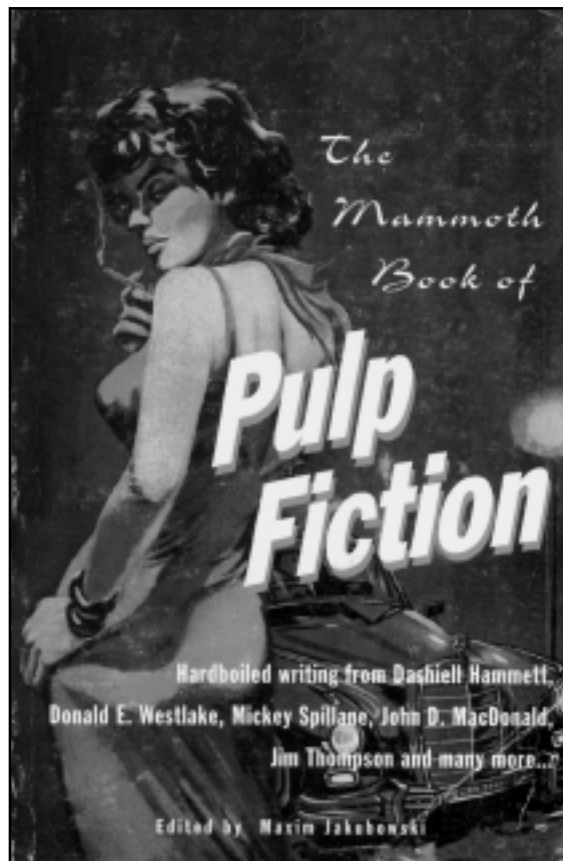
Jack Richie has a short but good story in "Divide and Conquer."

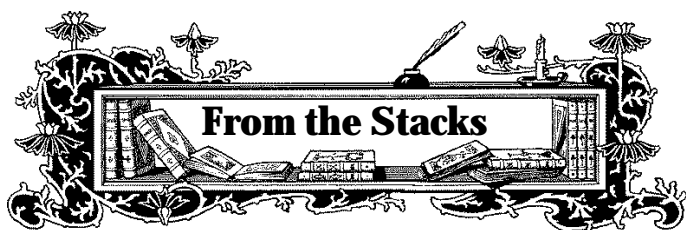
Gil Brewer's "The Getaway" is good, but the ending, while a good twist, could have been better handled. It would have been better if the girl had not died. This, and several other of these stories, would have been a better choice for the anthology "Murder is My Business" as they are actually about hitmen.

The volume also includes some old stand-bys, like Paul Cain's "Black" and Ross MacDonald's "Sleeping Dogs." Both are stories that deserve to be reprinted, just not as often as they are.

The story that ends the volume, "Ordo," by Donald Westlake, really shouldn't be here, even though it is an engrossing, well-written story.

Westlake is a great writer, particularly with his novels of tough crook Parker, but this story has no crime and no violence and no action. It's a wonderful slick-style story that explores the human condition. It's well written and interesting, but it isn't pulp by any stretch of the imagination. It's a fine, fine story, but all that happens is a guy finds out his ex-wife is a movie star and then he goes to visit her, and then he goes home and marries somebody else. It's a testament to Westlake's skill as a writer that he can carry reader's interest through one of the longest stories in the collection. In some ways, this is reminiscent of Horace McCoy's "They Shoot Horses, Don't They?" which is hard boiled despite its non-traditional subject and style. Ordo falls just short of being a noir story. 





The Mammoth Book of Sword and Honor
Edited by Mike Ashley
Carrol and Graf
2000
590 pages
\$11.95

Carrol and Graf have another one of their thick trade paperbacks and this one is focused on stories of war in the 19th century. There are quite a few enjoyable stories here, including a few surprises, and only a couple that should have been left out.

Charles Partington's *Gallant's Gamble* is a rousing, action-packed romp in the tradition of Bernard Cornwall's popular *Richard Sharpe* series. A young, but smart, corporal is thrust into command when all of the officers of his unit are killed. He has to prove himself, lead his men, who are cut off from their forces by a shipwreck, to victory and rescue the damsel in distress. He succeeds in fine pulp style.

In contrast Clayton Emery's "Every Man A King" doesn't present a very positive view of soldiers fighting the Battle of New Orleans. He tells his story from the point of view of the invading British and while they don't come off looking good, the Americans come off looking worse. It's a different viewpoint seeing American militiamen come off as country bumpkins, but other than making a point about the pointlessness of war, there isn't much to this story except killing.

The main problem with the book is that either it needed different title or it needed a different focus. A collection titled "Sword and Honor" should have stories ranging more widely than the 19th century. The time period is too late for "sword" stories, and most of the characters carry muskets, pistols and rifles

as their main weapons, only occasionally resorting to lance or sword.

There should have been a title that reflected this, or editor Mike Ashley should not have restricted himself to the period and filled the book with stories of cavaliers, crusaders and such. Perhaps this title was at chosen by the publisher who felt a more accurate title wouldn't sell.

It was also disappointing in that there was only a single pulp story included, this being Talbot Mundy's story from the pages of *Adventure*. Surely *Adventure* should have been better represented, along with the other pulps. Nowhere else can you find such a concentration of great, rousing stories of sword and honor than in the pages of the pulps.

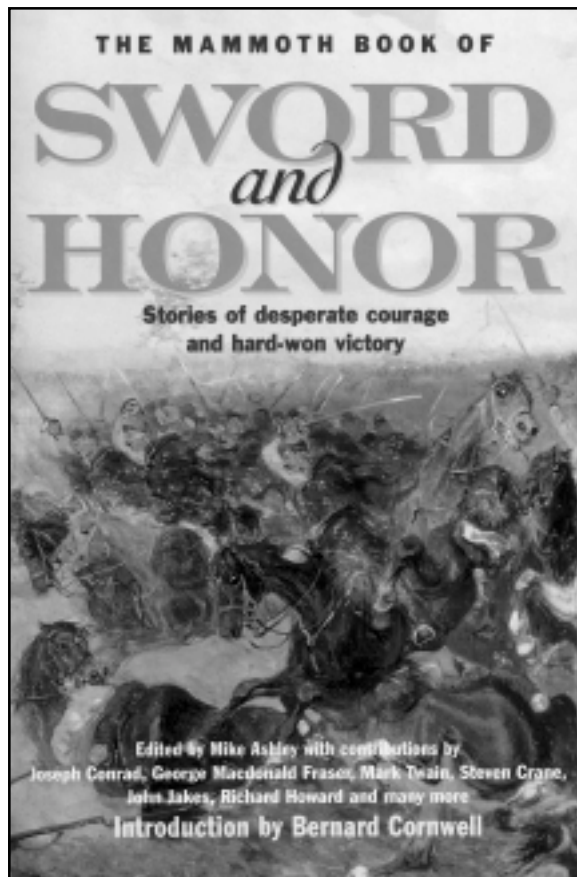
The collection should have included George Challis (Frederick Faust/Max Brand), H. Bedford Jones, Robert E. Howard and Harold Lamb, just as a start.

By using "slick" and "literary" writers, and contemporary and current authors, he loses much of the focus on "honor." The pulps were full of heroes who acted with a code of honor, while the modern writers seem to feel that honor is an outmoded virtue. Several of the stories in this collection suffer from this conceit.

"Perditta's War" by Daphne Wright is one of these that is more concerned with the more modern notion of the horrors of war rather than the honor of warriors. "The Sharpshooter" by Garry Douglas is another modern tale that transplants current ideas of the psychology of the battlefield into a period setting. The former was a grueling exercise in misery and the later was a suspenseful action piece that overcame its introspective "nature of war" musings.

"The Sharpshooter" had the advantage of at least discussing the nature of honor on the battlefield and how the perception of honor changed when faced with the realities of war and changing battlefield technology. Written for

the collection, it features characters that appear in a series of novels. As such it doesn't stand on it's own as much as it should, it's obvious that the characters have the sort of relationship that develops over the course of a series, but Douglas doesn't have room in the short story to develop



the relationships further. Still, it was well written and had action.

The lead story, Richard Howard's "The First Conflict" epitomizes the bulk of these stories. While it is a novelty to have the hero a soldier in Napoleon's army, the story consists of little more than an ambush and the subsequent looting of the dead and grubbing for food. Apparently excerpted from a novel, the characters are not fully introduced and do not develop over the course of the story.

While stories such as these certainly provide a more modern and realistic view of the nature of war and what happens during war, it really doesn't fit with the supposed theme. These sorts of stories were probably included to make the collection palatable to intellectual tastes founded in post-Vietnam ideas of war and modern notions of what constitutes literary merit, however, there should have been a lot more swashbuckling and much less soul-searching.

Some of the "quality" stories are surprising in how good they were. Joseph Conrad's "The Duel" being a good example. Often editors of these sorts of collections choose stories by well-known authors just to fill the contents page with names familiar to everybody. It doesn't matter how good the story is, as long as the author is famous. However, "The Duel" proved surprisingly readable for an author that makes it onto the required reading lists in high school. Even though it's quite long, the story is enjoyable and doesn't drag, neither does it come to a predictable conclusion. The poor lieutenant who is the victim of this sequence of duels he doesn't want to fight quickly becomes a sympathetic character as he tries to do his best within the system of honor that he's trapped within. The story takes place over many years and presents an interesting view of France in the Napoleonic era. This was made into a cult movie several years back.

Another "contents page filler," this one detrimental to the collection, was a Flashman story by George MacDonald Fraser. While these stories are unaccountably popular, it is hard to admire Flashman's ability to lie his cowardly way to success or how he comes out ahead of much better men. Heroes should be at least sympathetic and there are few characters in fiction that deserve a Zulu lance between the shoulder blades as much as Flashman.

There are a number of good stories, but after a while, the concentration on British Empire (or at least former British Empire holdings) and the restriction on time period gets wearying. It would have provided a nice balance to have had a few naval-based stories as opposed to the infantry stories that make up the book. However, Ashley also edited two companion titles, "The Mammoth Book of Men O'War" and "The Mammoth Book of Sea Battles" which cover the nautical end of things.

He does have a few stories of the American Civil War, including one by Mark Twain that is another one of

those contents page fillers. Once again, the characters don't act with much honor, and the story is more about the folly of war than the honor of war.

Ambrose Bierce's "One of the Missing" likewise is not about honor, but about the misfortune of war, although it is better than several other works included.

Predictably one of the best stories is the one by Talbot Mundy. "The Man Who Saw" is full of the flavor of British military life in India just at the start of the Sepoy mutiny. The classic elements are all here: the clash between the Victorian ideals and the ways of the mysterious East, the hard Englishman who knows too much of the ways of the natives, and a heroic effort that saves the day. Mundy makes you think his main character is heading in one direction, and then surprises you at the end.


Jim Holt's "The Fallen Plume" is based on the real-life inspiration for Allan Quatermain so there is at least a tenuous pulp connection. It's a fair enough story, but again, his character is hardly acting in an honorable fashion. There is a nice battle scene against the Zulus and the point is made that the British weren't always the white hats they seemed to think they were.

One of the older stories, "Sphinx" by Clotilde Graves is a little dated in style, but is still interesting. The hero acts heroically and with honor, and saves the day, even though the British cannons are the real winners of the battle.

There is an appendix that prints stories of actual Victoria Cross winners describing what they did to earn the honor. Some of these are the most fascinating stories in the book. It's interesting to see two different views of the same battle from Victoria Cross winners who fought side-by-side.

Ashley's Foreword does a good job of outlining his philosophy in choosing the stories included, and the selection is consistent with his thesis. He also provides welcome introductions to each story, placing them in context, briefly explaining the background to the war and giving information on each author and on original appearance.

The collection looks to be aimed at the fans of Bernard Cornwall's Sharpe books. The introduction is by him, although he doesn't have a story. It probably would have broken the budget to get Cornwall to write a story in the extremely popular Sharpe series. Cornwall's introductory essay shows his skill as a writer and unlike many big-name introductions in anthologies actually adds to the understanding of the subject matter.

While it would have benefited by a broader focus, and more pulp reprints, if you're looking for a book with redcoats marching into battle. Zulu warriors flinging spears and blue coats and graycoats taking shots at each other, Ashley's collection will give you a big helping at a small price. 

Recent Reading:

Murder, Chop, Chop by James Norman

This is a paperback reprint of an unusual story that originally appeared in *Adventure*. This is the expanded version that was published in hardback shortly after its 1940 pulp appearance.

The author managed to get an old fashioned classic manor house mystery published in *Adventure* by setting it in war-torn China.

Instead of servants, we get Chinese guerilla fighters running around underfoot. Instead of a group upper-class Brits isolated in a country house, we get a group of upper-class internationals isolated by the war. We have a colorful amateur detective, a Watson who comes up with the obvious, wrong, answers when asked to provide his solution, and the usual cast of characters with secret marriages, hidden pasts, and skeletons in the closet. The Chinese secret police are even kind enough to make sure all of the suspects are gathered together at the end of the book for the amateur detective's colorful and charming reconstruction of the crime. The murderer is of course the least likely suspect.

Ellery Queen would be dismayed though, as this is not a fair-play mystery. The details of a key clue that points directly to the murderer are provided to the detective but not to the reader.

The murder itself is one of those that depend on luck rather than on planning. Many of the red herrings are there because the murderer got lucky rather than by plan. I dislike murder plots where the murderer has to depend on the fortuitous actions of others to obscure his or her guilt.

The book is readable, with the fun cast of characters and the wartime setting making up for the deficiency in the mystery. The detective is a bandolier-laden Mexican Guerilla commander, who for some unaccountable reason travels unarmed while near enemy territory. There is a cowboy named Nevada, who happens to be arrested (for returning to the front while still wounded) so that he can convince his guards to take him back to the clink through said enemy territory just in time to coincidentally save the detective. There is the lovely Oriental Femme Fatal, the goofily efficient head of the secret police, a nosy British journalist who may be a spy, a shifty Chinese banker, and a British lord who gave up his position to fight the Japanese.

There is a biography that unfortunately gives no details on the author's pulp career.

I picked this up for either \$.50 or \$1.00 at a library book sale and so I'm pretty pleased with the purchase. It wouldn't be worth full price though. This reprint was put out by a small press run by a husband and wife

team who are bringing a number of older books back into print in small run editions. I've been thinking of picking up a Norbert Davis reprint they've done. The format is similar to that used for "A Cent A Story," the Bowling Green Popular Press collection of stories from 10 Detective Aces.

The World of Fanzines: A Special Form of Communication By Fredric Wertham

This was the find on my recent trip to Las Vegas. It only cost \$14.95 and I thought it was well worth the price. I was surprised at how positive Wertham was about the world of science fiction and comic fandom. Based on what I've heard of "Seduction of the Innocent" I expected a less than sympathetic treatment.

Instead, Wertham seems to be a very human and reasonable person. He likes fanzines and even has a good sense of humor about satirical comments aimed at his direction from comic fandom.

This is a short book, far too short for the subject matter. Wertham only gets started in defining his subject before the book is over. I thought his coverage was shallow, just scraping the surface. He doesn't seem to know about the sort of amateur presses that Lovecraft was a part of, does not mention any fanzine that is not based on Science Fiction and doesn't review the contents of any fanzines in detail.

There is no attempt made to interview the obvious primary sources, the editors of the fanzines he's discussing.

He includes APA in his list of defined terms, but doesn't really seem to understand the difference between normal zines and APA zines.

He also seems to be under the impression that the first amateur publications date from the 1930s, while in reality zines and APA zines date from at least the early part of the 19th century.

His focus on comic and science fiction is limiting. While I don't know exactly the extent of the zine scene at the time he was researching, by the 1980s genre zines were a fraction of the total being published.

While he touts the wholesomeness of the zine scene, I doubt he would have as tolerant an attitude if he saw the much more raw zines that have been published by the underground culture in recent years.

32 Cadillacs by Joe Gores:

32 Cadillacs is the first Gores novel I've read and I'm regretting that I waited so long to start. Gores is clearly working in the Hammett tradition. Like Hammett, Gores

has authentic private investigator experience that he can use. Unlike so many private eyes, Gore's DKA field men are working for a living, not pursuing some quest based on a personal sense of morality.

Instead of the usual P.I. nonsense, the members of Daniel Kerney Associates actually take on the kind of cases that a real private investigative agency would take on.

In this novel, the DKA investigators are given the task of recovering 31 Cadillacs that were stolen by Gypsies in a single scam. This is what DKA specializes in, repossessing cars, and the associates get to show every trick in the repo man's book. Gores based this novel on a real case he worked on as a "car hawk" and combined it with some of the more memorable repos the real DKA worked while he was with them.

The plot is complex, but Gores skillfully balances all of the elements. He's never confusing even when he has competing Gypsy clans scheming against each other while trying to pull off major cons and evade the repo men. The repo men, and women, in turn are trying to out scheme and out con the Gypsies and by the end are trying to out con each other.

Gores manages to incorporate almost all of the classic Gypsy con games, from the pigeon drop to the fake roofing and paving scam, fortune telling to pick pocketing, insurance scams to shoplifting and, of course, car theft. The trick is he manages to blend these into a coherent whole, going from one scam to the next, yet still keeping on the main track. The book is funny without being silly, complex without being confusing and realistic without being dull.

One of the great things about Gores is that he doesn't have altruistic detectives acting out of some heroic sense of right and wrong. The DKA detectives are out to get the cars back, no matter what, because they are being paid to do so. This includes lying, cheating, threatening, stealing, and making deals with, and sleeping with, the devil. Not to mention lying to, cheating, tailing and stealing cars from each other. One of the key sets of scams involve the 32nd Cadillac, a pink 1952 convertible that has been stolen from a dealer. The Gypsies and the carhawks hunt for, steal and scam to obtain this car. But the repo men don't want to return it, they couldn't care less because they aren't getting paid to recover it. It's just a pawn in the game they are playing to recover the 31 caddies that they are getting paid for.

The only place where this enlightened self interest breaks down is when the team recovers thousands of dollars from Gypsy scams that they, for various reasons, can't give back to the rightful owners. They actually try to give the money back, and then use the money for charity when they can't. I can't see why they didn't just take the money as a bonus after the victims refuse to take it back. It's the one stain of do-gooderism marring the book.

There is also a bonus chapter, which does not re-

ally fit with the rest of the book, where one of the DKA carhawks tries to recover a car that has been stolen from the gypsies that stole it in the first place. The joke is that the car was stolen by Donald Westlake's Dortmunder crew for use in a caper they are running in one of his novels. I haven't tracked down the corresponding Westlake book yet, but I understand it has a chapter that tells the same story from his characters' perspective. (I just located it, it's "Drowned Hopes," but I haven't had a chance to read it yet.)

This is one of the best books I've read in the past year and I very highly recommend it.

Gone, No Forwarding by Joe Gores:

I picked this up at a library book sale the same day I bought "32 Cadillacs." Cadillacs was such a good book that I started *Gone* immediately after I finished *Cadillacs*. This is an earlier novel, by quite a few years writing-wise, and several years story-wise.

I didn't think it was nearly the brilliant tour-de-force that *Cadillacs* was, but it was still a very good book. I like that once again, it is about the routine sort of work that real private detectives would do. Just as *Cadillacs* is about recovering cars, this one is about skip tracing.

The main plot is that DKA is in trouble with the licensing board and the gang will be out of business if they can't trace important witnesses and unravel the plot against them. I thought that the plot was a bit complicated and not brought off as well as in *Cadillacs*. The plan of the opposition was too complicated and had too many places for it to fall apart for it to have really worked out. I also had a hard time following exactly what the legal maneuvering was about, and with my background, I'm usually pretty good at this sort of thing.

But the individual chapters, with the various operatives doing their part, were quite good. Each of the main characters gets a chance to follow leads and con, cajole, or convince people to give up what they know about the whereabouts of the folks they are looking for.

I like that Gores does not have the one murder that takes place be the focus of the plot. In fact, the detectives are not aware of the murder and its connection to their case until the end of the book.

Too often P.I. writers will get stuck with the typical P.I. formula concerning a client getting murdered or getting framed for murder, or the murder takes place in the P.I.'s office or the P.I. is the prime suspect. Gores proves that you can write an excellent P.I. novel based on the kind of cases a real P.I. might handle: skip tracing, insurance investigation and finance company repossessions.

Stakeout on Page Street By Joe Gores

I liked the two above DKA books, particularly 32

Cadillacs, so much that when I found the trade paperback of this at the local Borders, I actually paid full price for it. I usually only buy books new if I really want them—say if they are by one of my very favorite authors and it's a favorite series—or if it's a book I really want and know that I'll never see at a used book store or library book sale. For example, as much as I like Westlake, I won't pay the \$12 each that the Parker, and now the Dortmunder, books are priced at new. I'll pick them up used, I'll just have to be patient and the hunt is part of the fun. So it says something that I paid \$16 for this. Since it's by Crippen and Landru, I'll probably never see it as a used copy at a library sale or in a used bookstore.

The book is a bit thin, at only 187 pages of stories, but it does include all 12 of the DKA file stories that were, mostly, printed in Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine. These are all quite good, although I think the DKA setup works better in novel length. Each story is introduced by Gores with information on what inspired each story and what really happened in the cases on which these stories are based. His introduction details his years as a real private investigator and he reveals the background and real people his stories are based on. As an added bonus, there is a Gores bibliography included.

I didn't care much for the cover art, but I'll live with it.

I only wish that Gores had written more DKA short stories over the years. This was a quick read and left me wanting more.

The Kobra Manifesto **Quiller Salamander** **Quiller Solitaire** **By Adam Hall**

These were all library booksale or thriftstore finds. I'd heard good things about how hard-boiled the Quiller books were from members of the Rara-Avis mailing list when I was a member, and I'd enjoyed reading an earlier Quiller novel, "The Warsaw Document."

I have some mixed feelings about these books. "The Warsaw Document" is quite good, almost too cold-blooded, with a complex but coherent and logical plot. Quiller is sent behind the Iron Curtain on a mission that turns out to be quite different than what he's told it is. Quiller has to figure out what is really going on, knowing that he's been set up by his own side.

Both the Kobra Manifesto and Quiller Salamander suffer from plot problems, but Hall's style carries the books. In Kobra, there is a big buildup, but the evil plot by the Kobra cell turns out to be a routine kidnapping plot. I had trouble believing that the ultra-secret British agency that Quiller belongs to would not just turn this over to the FBI to handle. In Salamander, I thought it would have been much easier for Quiller to have called in the local military to take out the bad guy once he was located in-

side of friendly territory, instead of having to assassinate him in a very dangerous mission in enemy territory.

Despite the plot improbabilities, I read all three back-to-back. I couldn't put these down and I will definitely be looking for more Hall novels at library book sales. He has a good style, very cold and minimalist, for this kind of novel. He does have an annoying quirk where he brings a tense scene to a dramatic climax with Quiller facing certain death, and then cuts to a few minutes later when Quiller relates how he escapes. This is a serious flaw in a suspense writer's style.

For an action hero, Quiller is very introspective, but that's part of the charm of the series. Quiller is constantly thinking about, and telling the reader about, how he's being manipulated, how he's manipulating others, what the words he and others say really mean, instead of what they seem to mean.

Solitaire is the best of the three by far. In Solitaire, Quiller has to infiltrate a German Red Army Faction splinter group and stop their plans before their next attack. There is only one place where I had a problem with the plotting, where Quiller somehow walks away from a police shootout and car chase without the cops realizing that they've got one supposed terrorist missing. The ending is great, and Hall is an expert at tightening the screws and keeping the reader on the edge of their seat.

I've been trying to avoid commenting on September 11 as I put this issue together. I'm a bit leery of all that "things will never be the same" jazz that's filling the mass media. Everyone seems to feel the need to relate every aspect of their existence to the attack. And after all, this is supposed to be an APA about the pulp era, not the modern era. Not that such things didn't happen in the pulp era, the pulp era did have assassinations, terrorist bombings and U.S. invasions of uppity third world countries, but I'd prefer to keep it on topic.

Nevertheless, I couldn't read Solitaire—with a plot by a terrorist group to hijack a commercial jet, complete with Islamic pilots on a suicide mission, fill it with explosives and aim it at the White House—without having a post 9/11 chill. I wonder how much of the effectiveness and suspense of the ending—which has an injured Quiller battling to board and take control of the jet even though doing so means almost certain death—comes from my reading this now, rather than before the events of September.

This is the worst that a suspense writer could come up with, a single plane, a single target and the passengers of the hijacked plane being deboarded before the plane is sent on its mission. It's startling to see how real life has eclipsed the worst that fiction can come up with.

The Killing Man **By Mickey Spillane**

I read the short story version of this in "The Eyes

Still Have It” and liked it enough that when I realized that I had the novel version on the to-be-read pile, I pulled it out to see how the two differed. Having read the short story, I felt I knew where it was going, but Spillane put in enough extra twists and turns that I didn’t mind. The book felt like a full novel and not just a stretched short story, which I thought was a good trick.

He added in a major plot concerning international intrigue and the ending is substantially different than that of the short story. I thought the short story ended too abruptly and without enough participation from Hammer. The novel’s ending is much better.

The Eyes Still Have It **Edited by Robert Randisi**

I needed a book to read while doing laundry and since I was in a P.I. mood, I grabbed this one. There were a lot of good stories, but I was disappointed with several. Loren Estleman’s in particular bothered me as his P.I. just happens to have lunch in the same diner where a mob hit takes place. This is a particular pet peeve of mine. I eat out a lot, and I’ve never been a bystander to a mob hit. I suspect that it’s the same for most people. I’ve heard this referred to as the “Murder She Wrote” syndrome — where the main character leaves a trail of death and destruction behind them as a excuse to get the detective involved with the story. Every time the detective sneezes a corpse just happens to pop up, every one of the detective’s friends is the prime suspect in a murder, the detective takes a case even though there’s no money in it for him, and the police don’t seem to mind the detective interfering with an active case, withholding evidence or aiding and abetting wanted suspects. In the real world, this P.I. would have had his license revoked and been up on felony charges. When I want to read fantasy, I’ll pick up a fantasy novel.

The short story version of Spillane’s “The Killing Man” was good enough to make me pull out the novel version. It was a good story, with lots of the trademark Spillane action, but with less of the vitriol that his earlier works have. I could see that it was a bit rushed and cut down from the longer work, but it still held together as a short story.

Murder is My Business **Edited by Max Allan Collins and Mickey Spillane**

I found this at a library sale in brand-new, never read condition.

The problem I have with this is that many of the stories are not about the purported subject of the collection. It claims to be a story about murder for hire, in other words, hitmen. However, it ends up being a collection of stories that pretend to be stories about hitmen but have a clever twist that make them something else.

There is a story about a murder scheme that is supposed to be a hit, that ends up being a red herring for

a prosaic murder plot.

There is a story about two hitmen going after each other, but it turns out to be a game. Big twist! Then there’s another twist: one of them is really going to kill the other. Two, count em’ two clever plot twists! But no hitmen. How can murder be their business is they don’t kill for money?

Collins’ story, about his hitman series character Quarry, is not even about a murder for hire. Quarry first blows his cover, miraculously gets away with it and then jeopardizes his new-found security by deciding to murder a guy because he beats his wife. This isn’t a hit, it’s a shabby murder-robbery committed because the murderer likes the victim’s wife’s tits.

I’m not impressed with Lawrence Block’s “Keller on Horseback” either. The story has too many coincidences and his hitman becomes too emotionally involved in the situation. He starts trying to find a way to use his skills as a killer to solve the problems of the people he encounters like some sort of psycho-killer social worker.

Henry Slesar’s “The Operation” mixes O’Henry-style plotting with murder to poor results. And again, it wasn’t really about murder for business reasons.

A good story was Edward Wellen’s “A Nice Save.” It was good, short, on-topic and even though it had a twist ending (which was given away by the subject of the anthology) it has a hitman who was paid to kill a stranger. The hitman in this has one goal: to kill the target and get paid for it. Full points for it actually being a story about a hitman doing a hit and the problem he encounters in completing his task.

Spillane’s story is the best in the book. While it is not a classic hit man story, it comes closer than any other in the book except for Wellen’s. The plot is implausible, but Spillane is good at pulling off implausible plots. This is the most pulp-like story in the book and I really liked it. There was good suspense, a character I liked, a twist ending and all the hard-boiled trappings. The book was worth the 50 cents I paid for it just for this story alone. It’s a good thing, as the rest of the book is weak. I suppose that without the Spillane, it still would have been worth the price, but not the time it took to read it.

The stories were written for the book, with the exception of the Spillane novelette that ends it.

Shotgun **By Ed McBain**

This was a 50 cent library booksale find. Great condition and well worth the price. This is not one of the better 87th Precinct novels, but is still readable. This certainly isn’t the best place to start reading the series, as most of the interest comes from watching the familiar crew work, rather than in the crime solving. I guess I’d have to say that the book is competently written, the style is readable, but I’ll forget the plot in about a week and within six

Back Numbers Can Be Easily Procured

months I'll have to refer to my list to make sure I don't accidentally buy it again.

Ten years ago, I could tell you from memory every book I had ever read, but I find that my memory isn't what it used to be. I suppose that I've exceeded my file size limit. For most books I can at least tell you if I have read them, but for large series, such as the 87th Precinct, or for less memorable novels, or for books I've bought but haven't yet read, my memory tends to be spotty.

I'd tell you what the plot was about, but I'm writing this more than a week after reading it, and I've forgotten.

Ok, that was unduly harsh for what is a competently written police procedural, but it still wasn't up to the level of "Let's Hear It For The Deaf Man" or "King's Ransom."

Carny Kill **By Robert Alter**

I found this in my least favorite local bookstore. I'm desperately searching for Westlake novels so I thought it might be worth it to swing by even this hole. The reason I don't like it is that it gets most of its business serving the junior college across the street. As a result it has almost all text books and long-hair crap. What little good stuff they have is keep outside, where it gets faded by the sun in summer and soaks up the fog in winter. But I got lucky, on the two short shelves of mystery they keep inside, I found a copy of the reprint of this book for only \$1.

I'd heard good things about this and the author's "Swamp Sister," so I was happy to find it so cheap.

The book itself is good, about on a par with most of the Gold Medal stuff from the same period. I guess I had gotten my hopes up from all the good things I'd heard about it. I expected it to be on a par with 32 Cadillacs or Westlake's Parker novels. I don't really have anything to say against it, other than it wasn't as amazing as I'd hoped it would be.

Alter does put in a lot of side show and carnival background and the main character is reasonably likable and competent. I didn't care that he is stumbling over dead bodies and that a number of people don't seem to act very smart.

I had one of the bad guys pegged from the start, as he had too much weird stuff going for it not to be part of the author's attempt to set up the ground for the murders to follow.

Slayground **By Richard Stark (Donald Westlake)**

I picked this up in a small paperback exchange in Henderson, Nevada in March. When I first walked in, I almost left without looking at any books because the stench of tobacco smoke was so bad. I'm desperate enough for Parker novels that I bought this anyway and read it that

night despite the reek of cigarettes.

I guess I'm spoiled living in California where there is a more intelligent view of smoking. (I just read one of the Destroyer novels, "Dark Horse," that Will wrote where he makes fun of us anti-smoking Californians so I guess I'm not going to get any sympathy from his direction on this.)

The book was worth the asthma and allergy attack that reading it brought on. Westlake opens this one up with the action already underway. Parker and his accomplices are literally knocking over an armored car. They get away with the money, but that's just the start. There is an accident and Parker is the only one to escape. Carrying the loot, he climbs over the fence into a closed amusement park, finding out too late that he's been spotted by a local gangster and the crooked cops the gangster was paying off.

This sets up the rest of the book, with Parker trapped in the park and the mobsters and bent cops hunting him down for the money. They find out too late that Parker is a better hunter than they are.

Westlake establishes his main characters and then sets them loose. Throughout the book, each character acts in what he thinks is his best interest and according to his nature. I really liked this book and all of the other Parker novels I've read.

Parker is not a hero as it's usually defined. He's not a nice guy and he's not doing nice things. But he is a very competent protagonist with a consistent set of character traits. He is first interested in survival, second in getting back at anyone who crosses him and third in getting away with the loot.

I suppose that he's my baseline for what I consider a hero. To me, a hero is the guy I root for and want to see succeed.

Parker is a very competent protagonist, and you almost feel sorry for the bad guys who think he's going to be an easy target. There are only a couple of places where I think he misses a step. There is a place where he could have stripped much-needed warm clothing from a corpse and he fails to do so and another place where he counts on luck to save him from certain death. Parker is very good at rigging death traps, preparing the ground to give himself the advantage, and using his opponents against each other.

The Sour Lemon Score **By Richard Stark (Donald Westlake)**

This was the first half of a double novel with "Deadly Edge." I'd rather have found these as individual volumes, but I wasn't about to turn down two Parker novels in one shot.

It seems that in these midpoint novels, the job that Parker and his accomplices are pulling is in the first few chapters and then the complications ensue. In the most

recently published novel I've read, "Backflash" and in the earlier "The Green Eagle Score." the book is in three parts, the setup of the job, the job itself, and the complications in getting away with it.

In this one and in "Deadly Edge," the crime is the first part, with both books opening up as the crew is just putting the score in place. It's fun to see the plan go down and get an idea of how Parker works a "normal" score. Then there is a betrayal or an outside player who causes Parker to go into his revenge/get-them-before-they-get-him mode.

The mistake the main "bad guy" in this one makes is in not killing Parker first, thus giving him a chance to get away. A second pair of "bad guys" who get involved make a mistake in letting Parker live when they have the chance to kill him. They live to regret their choices.

Parker has to act somewhat like a detective in this novel, tracing the member of his crew that betrayed him through his associates. He has the advantage that he's a criminal and thus is not bound by any rules or ethics.

Deadly Edge

By Richard Stark (Donald Westlake)

This starts out with a cool robbery that for once, goes well. Everything goes almost according to plan and the Parker's crew gets away with the loot and divides it up without trouble. The only thing that goes wrong is they find the dead body of a murdered associate at their safe house. This should have been a clue that somebody with adverse interests knew about this hideout and should have had Parker thinking about being more cautious until he figured out what was going on.

This is more in the thriller mode, with Parker knowing that there is somebody on his trail. Parker chases the bad guys rather than wait for them to catch up to him.

I thought that Parker's girlfriend should have been more willing to get the hell out of the danger zone, but Westlake tries hard to make her choices seem understandable, if not rational.

Westlake makes a choice in not revealing his villains until the novel is almost done. This heightens the suspense as neither Parker or the reader know what he's up against. But it works to diminish the bad guys when they show up. We just don't get to see enough of them to have their personalities really come alive.

With this book, I'm starting to see where Westlake may be getting into a rut that will eventually cause the series to lapse until Westlake does "Comeback." Or it could be that I'm just reading too many of them in a row.

The Mourner

By Richard Stark (Donald Westlake)

After getting back from Las Vegas, I wasted no time in finding out if my local paperback exchange had gotten in any Parker novels and I came up with this one.

This novel is one of the key early ones, serving as the novel where Handy MacKay retires to his diner where he spends most of the rest of the series. Likewise, it is a bridge between the early novels and the mid-range novels. In the early novels, each novel builds on what has come before. The second novel has Parker getting a new face to escape the Mafia that he pissed off in the first book, the third has him deal with the Mafia after they find out his new identity and in this one, he deals with the ramifications of leaving a gun that ties him to a murder in the wrong hands in the third book. But this is clearly a caper novel, where the action is an attempt to steal a valuable statue.

This has quite a shock in the middle of the book, and we get to see once again that if you're going to mess with Parker, you'd better make sure he's dead.

But we also get to see a more complex look at Parker as he shows ethics. He may not show it, but he does care about his partner's life and makes sure that he not only receives medical attention, but also that he gets his fair share of the loot. In fact, the book opens up with Parker tracking down his partner and rescuing him when he's grabbed by a competing group. Not only is it a bad idea to mess with Parker, it's a bad idea to mess with Parker's friend. This is a sharp step up from the lone wolf he's usually portrayed as. In "Slayground" for example, he abandons his partners to the cops and makes off with the loot when they become injured. He does the same at the start of "Backflash." Of course, Westlake has him in a situation where he can't help his cohorts without getting caught, but in "Slayground" he clearly intends to take the whole pie for himself and not to leave any for his partners for when they get out of prison. Somehow, I think Parker would not approve if he was the one in prison and his partners used that as an excuse to stiff him.

Plunder Squad

By Richard Stark (Donald Westlake)

Wow, what a great title. With a title this great, the book should have been the best book in the series. Instead, I thought it was one of the weakest. It has some good points but the trouble is that it's really two novel-ettes forming the two halves of the novel. In the first one, Parker is once again lucky enough to escape an attempt on his life. He has to track down and kill George Uhl, the guy he left alive in "The Sour Lemon Score." As one of Parker's friends says "Never leave a guy alive who'd like to see you dead." Parker is smart enough to learn from his mistake. But after seeing Parker take up the better part of a book in dealing with Uhl last time, he's a little too much of a cipher in this one.

I thought the "bad guys" should have been more competent. It was nice to see Parker work in the same mode as the Continental Op, listening to the lies told to him and not believing a word of them.

Back Numbers Can Be Easily Procured

This also has a short cameo by Daniel Kearney from the DKA books by Joe Gores. It's interesting if you're a Gores fan.

The second half is a short caper story with a clever, but quick heist and some interesting complications from the buyers of the stolen merchandise. It makes a good novelette, but doesn't have enough meat to sustain a full novel.

The overall theme is that Parker is having a run of back luck. Perhaps Westlake was concerned about making his hero too successful as a criminal.

I found this at a library book sale. It sure pays to look at the books in the boxes under the tables.

It's too bad that Westlake wastes the title on such a mediocre Parker novel. If Plunder Squad had been about Parker teaming up with the best of the best for a really big string of amazing heists, it would have been a better book.

Bank Shot

By Donald Westlake

I picked this up as a consolation prize for not being able to find any of the Parker novels. I was afraid that the Parker formula wouldn't work in a humor novel, but this was both funny and a great crime story. It's been a while since I've read a book that actually made me laugh out loud. In addition, it was very satisfying on a caper-novel level. The cops in this are a little too stupid to believe, but otherwise, this is a first-rate novel. The crooks have a plan that should work, but they experience bad luck and the consequences of not knowing enough about their target. After reading this, I've added the Dortmund novels to the list of novels for which I'm actively searching.

Cops and Robbers

By Donald Westlake

This was another 50 cent find. I was hoping to find a Parker or a Dortmund book by Westlake, but I had to settle for this one instead. This one isn't as good as the other Westlake books I've read. He switches from first person of one main character to first person of the other main character to third person. This interrupts the narrative flow. The basic structure is the same as his other caper novels, with the introduction of the characters, the identification of the target of the caper, getting ready for the caper, pulling the caper and then what goes wrong in getting away with it. However, he spends too much time, almost the entire first half of the book, introducing the characters and showing the characters talking themselves into the job and figuring out what the job is going to be. There is very little shown of the setup, which usually is quite involved in a Westlake novel, even if he doesn't let the reader know exactly what the plan is. Westlake is usually good at building suspense at the key moments in his books, and the use of amateur crooks adds much to the

suspense in this one. For Dortmund or Parker, being a thief is their job, but for the two cops in this one, the suspense is heightened by what they have to lose if they are caught.

Expendable

Ascending

By James Allan Gardner

Ha, bet you thought I didn't read any Science Fiction! I started to read *Ascending* while browsing at Barnes and Noble and liked it enough to pick up *Expendable* when I saw it used. I really liked the style of the first person account in *Ascending* and finally put my finger on why it seemed familiar. The main character talks like Chuin from the *Destroyer* series. *Expendable* is a pretty good adventure SF novel if you are willing to accept some of Gardner's basic premises. One of these is that the universe is run by aliens so advanced that they can know what is in the hearts and minds of every lesser sentient being. Mention is made of Clarke's Law about sufficiently advanced technology, but it is a little like knowing that God is constantly looking over your shoulder ready to squash you like a bug if you mess up. But Gardner sets up the rules of his universe and plays fair within them, even though the rules are set up to force the situations he wants to create.

The main character of *Expendable* seems to be a bit dense at times, but she soldiers on bravely until the end. She shows up in most, if not all, of Gardner's later books as a kind of benevolent *deus ex machina*/author's pet, but she's an interesting enough character to take the burden.

I did enjoy these books, Gardner has a nice style and is entertaining in the adventure SF arena, but I thought the science in the fiction was mostly of the hand wave, "technology as magic" range. There is some good *Sense of Wonder* stuff but Gardner's characters take it too matter-of-factly. I'll pick up future Gardner books, but I'll wait until I can find them used.


The Mammoth Book of Private Eye Stories

Edited By Bill Pronzini and Martin H. Greenberg

I finally got around to finishing this one. I enjoyed this book, but it has been sitting on the shelf for a number of years because I just couldn't make the commitment necessary to finish it.

I liked this collection, even though I thought a few more pulp stories would have made it better.

I see that I started to read this, and then stopped once I had finished the pulp stories. Every time I picked it up, I saw that I didn't have any more pulp stories to read and put it away again.

I'm starting to dislike Lawrence Sanders as a writer. His Matthew Scudder stories, both here and elsewhere, are not impressing me. Loren D. Estleman is another writer from whom I expected better things. 

Pulp Sightings

I'll start the quarterly roundup of pulp sightings with a painful one. Just after the last issue was in the mail, I walked into the local Barnes and Noble and spotted the latest abomination. On the gift book display was a bright, colorful, very noticable book with a cover illustration of two men in a provocative pose. The book was entitled: "GAY PULP." A shelf down was a companion title: "LESBIAN PULP." We've lost the battle I'm afraid and the only thing for it is to find another name to describe what it is we collect. Oh, for the days when "Gay Pulp" meant "Parisian Nights" or "Saucy Stories."

In a similar vein, Bill Thom, on the PulpMags newsgroup, kindly passed along that:

"The BAD GIRLS OF PULP FICTION" mini hardcover is listed in the December PREVIEWS from Diamond Comics.

"The book is described as follows:

"Bright, lurid, and enormously entertaining, the covers of adult pulp novels published from the 40's through the 60's constitute a pop-art genre of enduring appeal. This 'Miniature Edition' collection of 60 pulp fiction book covers includes such kitschy classics as TOMCAT INTIGHTS, SHE COULDN'T BE GOOD, and SEX-A-GO-GO. Hardcover, 2 inches by 3 inches \$5.95."

I think I shall pass on this one.

I don't know what we could call real pulp fiction instead of Pulp. The contemporary "All-Fiction Magazines" was accurate during most of the pulp era and has the advantage of eliminating the debate over bedsheet Argosy, digest Doc Savage and similar issues. However, it would raise arguments about whether the various pulps that had true fact articles, such as DFW and Argosy at times, would still qualify. And most importantly it would include the digests and other fiction mags up to the present day. This line of thought is treading perilously close to raising the debate on how to define a pulp magazine, so I'll think I'll change the subject back to something that won't get me into trouble.

The next sighting of "pulp" was at a bookstore in Petaluma, a town about 20 minutes south of Santa Rosa. They had a whole rack at the end of a bookshelf labled "Real Pulp Fiction." I sauntered over to find out what they considered "real." Funny, I didn't know Gidget was a pulp character. She must have appeared in Thrilling Surfer Stories, or perhaps 10 Beach Stories. Aside from TV and Movie tie-ins, like M.A.S.H. books and Six Million Dollar Man books, the rack was filled with a couple of Charles Adams paperbacks, mediocre 60's era P.I. novels and other oddities. The only real pulp was to be found in a handful of science fiction paperbacks, and even those were mostly pulp authors, not real pulp story reprints.

This bookstore did have a paperback edition of "The Detectionary" which I've been looking for to add to my reference shelf. I thought it had some interesting pulp characters included, some that I would not have thought to include, but the errors, such as attributing the Avenger stories to Lester Dent, make it less than ideal. I presume there has been adequate comments made in the past on these errors by those more qualified than myself to bring them up. I suppose that in books like this and in Haining's "The American Era of Pulp Fiction" it's a good thing that there are some glaring boners so that I know to be careful about accepting more obscure information as gospel.

On the same day I picked up "The Detectionary," I found a British Argosy from August 1957. This is somewhat like an American digest, although shaped closer to a paperback. It was still an all-fiction magazine then, and while it seemed to have more of a "slick" feel to the stories, it did have a short yarn by pulp Argosy writer C. S. Forester. I have a feeling that the bookstore stocked it because of the collectability of one of the slick authors rather than as a pulp. In fact there was a second copy of the issue there as well. I bought it mostly for the Forester and to have an example of the magazine.

Familiar names included Michael Gilbert, with one of his Patrick Patrella stories and John Wyndham. Unknown to me were Paul Gallico who got top cover billing, and John Collier. These names are familiar, I think they are slick writers that I haven't read. Ah, yes, Collier did "Thus, I Refute Beazley," a story whose title was more memorable than the story or the author.

The Forester was only two pages long and I didn't really care for it. I think it was published based on his name recognition and not on the merits of the story itself.

The Gilbert story was ok, but I don't really see why he's a big name. I don't know if it's just me, but his stories seem to be pretty run-of-the-mill.

There were a few illustrations, and it was an all-fiction magazine, but it didn't really strike me as having a very "pulpy" quality.

A little research shows that Argosy as a fiction magazine had a much later run in Great Britain than in the U.S. I certainly wish that I was better informed when I was in London in 1990. I must have missed quite a few opportunities to pick up interesting items just because I didn't know they existed. It looks like there was a British Argosy that had a history unconnected with the American version. I had assumed that the British version was a reprint of the American version because the American version had both London and Paris addresses published at various times.

Well, it seems like a review of Inside Borders is going to be a tradition. The September issue features Ray

Back Numbers Can Be Easily Procured

Bradbury's "From the Dust Returned" as their cover feature. Bradbury's latest novel contains several chapters that were previously published as short stories, including one that was originally published in *Weird Tales*.

The interview is too brief but interesting. The interview provides some depth on Bradbury's childhood and early reading, describing his influences. Perhaps this information is available in various interviews and biographies, but I hadn't heard it before.

I must admit that I've never been a big Bradbury fan. I've never been able to forgive him for being an up-market, respectable, literary-crowd approved writer. I have read "Memory of Murder" and the stories seemed to be too "slick" for my taste.

But between the Charles Addams cover, reprinted from the *Vanity Fair* appearance of one of the chapters, the interview with Bradbury and a quick skim of the first chapter, this looks like a book I'd like very much to read. Perhaps not enough to pay the \$20 or so for the hardback, but I won't hesitate to pick up a paperback or get a used copy if one shows up with a reasonable price.

A few years ago at Pulpcon, Al Tonik mentioned that the Bancroft Library at Berkely was supposed to have issues of *Argosy* in its collection. I'd been meaning to go down there for a long time and find out what they had and how difficult it would be to access the collection.

The Bancroft Library is very accessible: once you register as a user, you can request any of the material they have, although they have the standard special collections restrictions in place. For example you can't bring in any bags or pens.

The issues are held off-campus so I requested a set and came back the next week to take a look at them. From the description in the computer listing, I had hoped for a long run. What I didn't know is that "run is incomplete" means that the run is four issues from 1926 and then two from 1933. I had been expecting bound volumes, but these were loose pulps, six of them in an archival box. All of these issues contained Max Brand material, so I guess that all of the *Argosy* issues they have were obtained as part of their Brand collection and the library is holding them as part of that collection instead of any attempt to collect the magazine itself.

I'm a bit disappointed, the holdings are nowhere near complete enough to do me much good, a couple of the issues I requested I already had, and the few I didn't, did not have much that I was interested in.

I was hoping to be able to find the rest of the Munsey biographical material that appeared after his death, but those issues were missing.

I started to index the issues anyway, but soon gave up. I wanted to index the issues with notations on the genre of each story and try and trace any series characters. I had a hard time pinning many of the stories into a cat-

egory. Westerns were an easy choice, but others I categorized as "minority dialect" and "comedy of manners." Some stories I just gave up on.

I was thinking that an index that listed stories by subject, such as "Future War," "South Seas Adventure" or "Northwest Mounted Police" would prove useful to collectors, anthologists, researchers and readers looking for certain subjects. But I've come to the conclusion that the project is too big to take on.

Jo Hammett had a reading in San Francisco in December from her new book on her father. I wanted to go, but I had to work late and realized that by the time I drove into the City I'd get to the reading almost two hours late. I was disappointed that I had to miss it, and I'm keeping my eyes open for another reading. I'd like to get the book, but it's a bit out of my price range at the moment.

On a recent Saturday, I took a drive down to the nearby town of Cotati and checked out the bookstore there. The entire fiction section was only about half a bookcase, but I found an amazing number of treasures. First were Sax Rohmer's "Nude in Mink" and "Return of Sumuru," a nice recent copy of Hodgson's "House on the Borderlands" and the real prize, a copy of Frank Packard's "The Locked Book." The Packard is a wonderful hardback with a raised gilt dragon design. The story, which is a pulp reprint from *Argosy*, is a great South Seas adventure tale. Hopefully I'll finish it in time to do a review for next issue.

Rohmer books have been turning up for me lately. I checked out a thrift store next door to the place at which I was getting my oil changed and lucked into a half-off sale. Rohmer's "Quest of the Golden Slipper" and "Bride of Fu Manchu" set me back a quarter each. I also found two Docs and a Quiller book by Adam Hall.

I'm not a big Rohmer fan, but "Quest" was ok. I don't have much respect for Rohmer's protagonists, and the star of this one is no exception. So far, "Nude" seems like a retread of the early Fu Manchu books. Rohmer seems to make the "Watson" of the book the hero. Still, it's nice to see where Hogan was getting all of the stuff for his Wu Fang stories.

I read the two Docs, "The Living Fire Menace" and "The Mystic Mullah." I have never been a Doc fan, and this pair didn't change my mind. They were worth .25 each, but no more. I guess it's true, you are either a Shadow fan or a Doc fan, but not both.

I see from Duane's article in *Golden Perils* that "The Living Fire Menace" is not by Dent, but was ghosted by Harold A. Davis. Duane doesn't seem to think much of it either.

I also recently picked up a copy of "Shot in the

Dark,” an anthology of Science Fantasy stories edited by Judith Merrill for \$4.00. I haven’t had the chance to read it yet.

I flew down to Las Vegas for a week in March to spend some time with my family. I hit most of the major bookstores and came up with a few finds.

Among the things I didn’t pick up were some Railroad Magazines from 1938 through the 1950s. They were asking \$15 each for them and so I passed. If anyone is interested they are at Albion Books on Desert Inn Road.

I also found a copy of Frank Gruber’s “Pulp Jungle,” in dust jacket, for \$19.95 at Dead Poet Books. (email: Scalzi@ix.netcom.com for anyone who needs a copy.) I already have a copy so I couldn’t justify paying 20 bucks for a dust jacket. Somebody has written their name and date in the front, but other than that it’s in ok shape.

Some of the finds I did pick up were three of the Parker novels I needed and several of the Dortmunder books, all by Donald Westlake. I also found a copy of “The World of Fanzines” by Frederick Wertham. Most of these are reviewed in recent reads this issue.

I also picked up a few adventure comic strip collections, including two of the British Modesty Blaise collections, four of the Kerry Drake collections and one collection of Scorchy Smith strips. The prices were right and you just don’t see these around much anymore.

An antique store here in Santa Rosa has an interesting volume. This is a very nicely bound book that contains a number of excerpted stories from the pulps.

The book is bound library style with the edges trimmed. Part of the front cover for “The Ship of Ishtar” is cut up and used as an illustration on the top of the contents page. The stories included from Argosy and All-Story are: “The Ship of Ishtar” by A. Merrit, “The Efficiency Expert” by Edgar Rice Burroughs, “Clung” by Max Brand, “The Blind Spot” by Homer Eon Flint (Flindt) and Austin Hall, “Tophet at Trail’s End” by George W. Ogden. From Short Stories is “Yellow Shadows” by Sax Rohmer. It has a stamp saying that it was bound by Ruperti in Baltimore. At \$125, it’s too expensive for me, but perhaps one of you may be interested. If so, you can contact the store directly at: Lanny Davidson – Knight’s Books, Whistle Stop Antiques, 130 4th St., Santa Rosa, CA 95401, (707) 526-5611.

The annual Oakland Museum of Art White Elephant Sale yielded a few finds. Among them was a copy of the paperback edition of “Jimmy Dale and the Phantom Hour” by Frank Packard. I had hoped that this was the one I was missing, but when I got home I found I already have a copy in hardback. I still need “Jimmy Dale and the Blue Envelope Murders.”

Another item was a pretty nice copy of “Alfred

Hitchcock’s Solve-Them-Yourself Mysteries” in dustjacket. This is a kids book, but it’s edited, and probably written by, pulp author Robert Arthur, who also created The Three Investigators, one of my favorite series from my childhood. I liked these even better than the Tom Swift Jr. books. I understand that Dennis Lynds wrote at least one of the Three Investigator books after Arthur died, but Arthur’s books were the best.

I also found one of the Dennis Wheatley/J.G. Links solve the murder books: “Who Killed Robert Prentice.” Somebody has opened the solution, but the rest of the book looks intact. It was only \$1. I’ve seen these around here for \$10, so this looked like a good way to see if they are interesting.

I picked up a copy of Max Brand’s “The Night Horseman” for John DeWalt as he’s been trying to find all of the Dan Barry novels.

They were also selling, for \$15 each, a bunch of big New York auction house catalogs. I glanced through them hoping to find one that had some pulp art or books listed and spotted one for the estate of Ned L. Pines. At first I thought I had hit the mother lode. A Pines art collection should certainly have tons of great original pulp art right? Unfortunately, instead of collecting the art he published, and probably had lying around the office, he actually paid money for lousy modern art. It was all this “art” made by these so-called artists who have no talent other than in convincing art critics that their junk is art. What a wasted opportunity.

The San Rafael big library book sale was well worth the 45 minute trip through the rain to attend.

At first I didn’t see much but then I spotted a near perfect copy of Charles Adams “Drawn and Quartered” which is quite the bargain at 50 cents. The only thing that made it less than perfect was a small date stamp on the cover.

I also found Latimer’s “Lady in the Morgue”, Brown’s “Night of the Jabberwock” and a Westlake Parker novel, “Plundersquad.”

I bought the “SF Story Index, 1950-1968” although I may put it on my table at Pulpcon. It’s not quite in my interest range, but I hate to see a reference book so cheap and not pick it up.

On the other hand, I’ll keep “The Big Broadcast” even though I can tell it has some shortcomings. It lists “I Love A Mystery” but not “I Love Adventure” or “Adventures by Morse.” This has a lot of entries, but not enough depth.

The real find though was George Challis’s “The Bait and the Trap.” This reprints two of the Tizzo the Firebrand stories from Argosy. It’s damaged, but readable and I’m not about to turn down what is a hard paperback to find.

And that will be it for pulp sightings. 

Three Views of Metropolis

By Warren Harris

Metropolis

By Thea Von Harbou

with an introduction by Forrie Ackerman

Metropolis

Directed by Fritz Lang

Metropolis

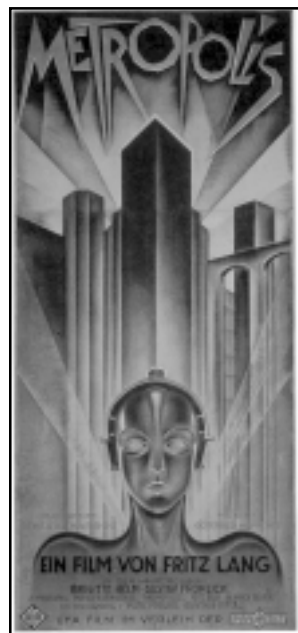
Directed by Rin Taro

Produced by Katsuhiro Otomo

Based on the manga by Osamu Tezuku

Being lucky enough to live within driving distance of San Francisco, I'm able to see a lot of cool movies. One of these was a somewhat restored version of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* that opened the 2001 San Francisco Film Festival last spring.

The showing was held at the Castro Theater, one of my favorite venues. The Castro is an authentic 1920's-style movie palace complete with pipe organ, classical revival style decor and a real balcony. This showing was packed and I barely managed to get there in time to find a seat in the upper, upper balcony.



They had a live musical accompaniment on the organ and while the title cards were in the original German, there was an English voice-over to translate. This was the restored version that has only been seen a few times. In addition to the extra footage that has been pieced together, there was bridging text based on the original screenplay to

cover for sections of movie that are probably lost forever.

I'd seen the cut version of *Metropolis* before and this version was much easier to follow. I remember the cut version didn't make much sense. It is still choppy in parts, but makes much more sense when major parts of the plot haven't been cut. The characters' actions actually make sense in this, although I still wonder why anyone would think that flooding the lower levels would get them anything.

The socialist subtext is very clear, and Lang is not subtle about his message. "Between the Head and the Hand

must be THE HEART!" I don't know if this lack of subtlety is a German thing or a silent movie thing.

While I would recommend this version to those interested in early SF films and I hope that they will bring this out on DVD, I think it really needs to be seen on the big screen in a huge old period theater with a live organist to be fully appreciated.

The set designs are still impressive, so impressive that Japan's "God of Comics" Osamu Tezuku reportedly saw one still from Lang's film and created an entire comic around it. While he died in 1989, a group of animators, led by Director Rin Taro (*X: The Movie*) and Producer Katsuhiro Otomo (*Akira*) brought an animated version of his story to the big screen. A subtitled version was in limited release this spring.

Otomo's *Akira* was a groundbreaking animated movie at the time of its release, and *Metropolis* sets the bar even higher.

While Japanese animators have combined cell drawings with computer animation for years — the awful adaptation of *Lensman* being the first — this is the most advanced use of the technique to date. *Lensman*, based very loosely on the E.E. "Doc" Smith book, used primitive computer animation for the spacecraft scenes which was jarring when combined with the poor cell animation. The more recent *Blue Submarine No. 6* used computer animation for the undersea and mechanical scenes and then used traditional cell animation for characters. However, this was done much better, although the changeover was still glaring. A series called *Sol Bianca* was done entirely with computers, including animating the characters and was technically quite well done, although the story seemed to quickly lose focus.

Metropolis, the Japanese animated movie, takes this use of computer animation further by an amazing creation of the city of *Metropolis*. The main characters are done in a style that replicates Tezuku's Disney-inspired cartoon style. This at times can be jarring to those not used to a mix of ultra-realistic computer animation and big-eyed cartoony characters.

This movie has wonderful city-scapes and set designs, which are clearly inspired by the set designs for Lang's *Metropolis*. The movie is worth seeing just for the lovely use of cutting-edge animation.

The claim that this is based merely on one still from the Lang film is hard to credit though. The plot involves a young man who is assisting his uncle, a Japanese detective visiting *Metropolis*, in an effort to arrest a scientist.

While the detective and his nephew are new to the story, the rest is too close to the plot of the book and

earlier movie to be a coincidence. The scientist is working in a secret underground lab in an effort to create a robot shaped in the image of the girl (probably daughter) that the evil Duke Red, who controls the city, loves but lost.

The scientist is not entirely trustworthy. The Duke is planing to use the robot in an effort to seize world power by placing her on the throne of his doomsday weapon. He is opposed by his (adopted) son who betrays him. It is the detective's nephew who falls in love with the "Maria" character however, and instead of there being a human Maria and a robot Maria, there is one character who is a robot trying to become a human.

There are differences, the robot in the movie is not called Maria, although she is both the instrument of the overlord's plan to destroy the underclass and the embodiment of the liberation of the worker robots. The son of the Duke is a bad guy who wants to kill the girl robot. The good-guy role is taken by the boy detective.

Like many Japanese science fiction and fantasy films, this one starts out with great potential for real SF and then squanders it with a fantasy ending. There are themes introduced about the replacement of human labor with robots but they fail to follow through with the labor issues involved. The robots are supposedly better than humans in that they lack emotion and therefore lack the capacity for evil, yet the robots act as if they are compassionate and are anthropomorphized into being humans until the end where they go crazy and start killing people. The story makes a start at addressing how the robots are treated as less than human while acting better than the humans around them, but the ramifications are never fully addressed. Class structure is attacked, but no solution is proposed.

Too often Japanese movies end like this — humans suck, so let's try to destroy the world in the final reel. Another major theme that I've never been able to understand is that control triggers to doomsday weapons are always built into the form of humans, or robots who look like humans, who then go out of control and threaten the world. I understand that there is an ongoing theme of humans being reduced to machines but I'm obviously missing the second half of the equation that is significant to the Japanese psyche.

One major problem with the film is the digitized

subtitles. A technical glitch causes these to break up and fuzz out. I am normally very opposed to dubbing Japanese movies, preferring to read the subtitles. Dubbing is usually very poor and inaccurate, thereby more of a distraction that reading

subtitles. In this case, though, I found that I wanted to use my eyes to soak in the wonderful art rather than reading the dialog.

This too would be a good choice for a DVD rental, but really needs to be seen on the big screen to appreciate the visual artistry.

While reading the novel, I was surprised to find that many of the things I took to be silent movie conven-

tions are actually in the book. The Fritz Lang version is surprisingly faithful to the book. This is probably because Lang was married to Von Harbou. The book seems to be a supplement to the movie and was written about the same time as Von Harbou's screenplay.

The novel is definitely a product of its time. There is a great deal of melodrama that I took for granted in a silent film, that seems overdone in a novel. Freder falls instantly in love with Maria and in a fit of love rejects his upbringing and entire life to pursue her cause.


Rotwang is a stereotypical mad scientist of the era, menacing and deformed, his crippled body reflecting his twisted mind and soul. The novel does provide more of a rationale for his madness than the movie. The soulless Slim's suborning of Freder's one friend is clumsily handled, with a lack of subtlety that makes it into a ridiculous scene.

The hero searches frantically for Maria throughout the vast Metropolis, and quickly and by chance comes upon Rotwang's house where she is being held captive.

Although it lacks subtlety as a work of fiction, it is still readable and the subplots make much more sense than in the cut up movie version.

In fact, the movie is such a close adaption of the book, that it's impossible to read the book without picturing the scenes of the movie. Even much of the dialog is reminiscent of the title cards used in the movie.

There are a number of scenes in the book that either were not in the movie, or have been lost. So reading the book fills in many of the gaps in the plot of the movie.

An excellent website that details the differences between the two versions can be found at www.uow.edu.au/~morgan/Metroa.html. 



Mailing Comments:

Argassing 58:

I think I'll abstain from lobbying the membership on the proposed increase in the number of full members. If it is approved, I'll be closer to membership, but there will be fewer back mailings available to buy. I would be opposed to an increase in membership if it meant that any of the current members would be burdened by having to print additional copies, but the proposal at hand seems to avoid that.

As for publishing of addresses, I don't mind having mine included, after all, I, as well as most of the others I see, include that information in their mailings.

But this does make me start to re-think an idea I had to distribute my contributions outside the mailings. Since my contributions are completely computer generated, and since I can easily convert them into Acrobat format, I was thinking of distributing a screen-resolution version via email like Howard Hopkins does with his Golden Perils. I'd delay releasing by one mailing, in other words, my first issue would be released to the internet after the mailing for this issue is sent out by Brian.

But while I don't mind giving out my home phone and address to the PEAPS membership, I'm going to think about whether I want to release it to just anyone.

It also makes me think about putting a copyright notice on my pages. I see some members do and some members don't. As long as I was thinking of Back Numbers as just a few notes sent to a circle of friends and acquaintances, I didn't think it was necessary. I also wonder if I should omit my mailing comments from the electronic version.

I appreciate the offer to make copies, but since I work for a certain chain that rhymes with Stinko's, I don't think I'll need to trouble you for the service.

Fillyloo 27: Graham Stone

I think your idea of having a PEAPS reprint is a good one. I'd certainly buy it. But this would be a lot of work, and raise some thorny issues.

As you point out, it would have to be done by those who have complete sets of the mailings. I don't know if anyone knows how many complete sets there are, but I'd think the number would be small. Just how many people have been members since the first mailing?

Copyright would also be a concern. Some of the current membership, and I presume the past membership, have plans for reprinting their work in their own projects. The various indexes that have been printed here are one of the obvious things that need to be reprinted, but the

indexers may have other plans for them. Securing permission from past members, or their estates, would also have to be done.

Instead of doing a full-count reprint, I'd like to see a Best of PEAPS book. The task of collecting and editing the material would be a pretty big project. Would things be retypeset, or facsimile of the original? Would you include mailing comments? Mailing comments are an important part of the mailings but it would be hard to reproduce the give and take that occurs over years.

I'd like to see a reprint done in a similar format as the pulp books put out by James Van Hise. But much of what is in the mailings are not in traditional article format. Important data is buried in mailing comments for instance, and indexes are in different formats.

As for pulp reprints, I personally prefer them to be re-typeset. Too often facsimiles are hard to read because of poor quality originals or because the inside margin gets distorted. I think those who re-typeset should take care to accurately record the original information, but as long as this is done, I don't see a problem with it.

The Pulp Hound 35: Will Murray

Your article on Westerns was fantastic. I almost passed it by, as I'm not a fan of the "Gun Dummy" Westerns, but once I started it I found it fascinating. I don't read many Westerns, but I thought it was very interesting reading about the editorial decisions that shaped the genre. Many of the complaints I have about Westerns stem from the formulas used. It's nice to know where these formulas came from and it's too bad that it was so difficult for the pulps to break out of the rut they were in.

I hope you are planning a part two to follow the trends into and beyond the 1930s. I'm interested in how Popular's Dime Western changed the way Westerns were written.

Pulp Monger 8: James Van Hise

Rex W. Layton's article on the Thrilling True Adventure series was excellent, thanks for printing it in your contribution. Reading it made me want to find the stories in the series. I wonder who the editors thought they were fooling. This is a series that it would be great to see reprinted in a series of Black Dog Books. Or perhaps as one volume from Adventure House. I'd volunteer to do it, but I'd need the stories, and I'm not in a position to clear the copyrights or finance it, or distribute it. I could handle the production and publishing end, but that's the easy part. I guess I'll just have to add those issue of Thrilling Adven-

ture to my want list.

Hurricane H(e)aven 4: Steve Young

Whenever I see cañon it have to pause for a second as I'm so used to seeing it as canyon. I supposed the spelling change came about when the word was fully expected as an English noun in regular use rather than a commonly known Spanish word used to add Western flavor. So what did people call a canyon before they borrowed the word from Spanish? There obviously needs to be a word that means something bigger than a crevice and narrower than a valley. Perhaps Graham Stone can tell us what they call 'em down his way, where I would think there would be less borrowing from Spanish.

I sure hope that I don't have as long a wait as you did to become a member of the group, but I don't want to see any members of the group drop out either.

From The Pulp Vault 22: Doug Ellis

That was a nice index to Novelettes, a title I've never seen, but I'll have to look for. There were a few stories listed by authors that I like to read when I get the chance, like Wetjen and Daly. Do you have any plans to print any of the biographical data you mention?

So when can we look forward to issue 14 of Pulp Vault? Perhaps you would consider reprinting some of the earlier issues? I got on board too late to buy very many before they went out of print. I snapped up every one you had at the Pulpcon in San Jose, but you were already sold out of many of them.

Darrel C. Richardson

I enjoyed your article on Williamson. I'm in the middle of reading "Wolves of Darkness" and I'm looking for an inexpensive copy of "Golden Blood." I'd like to find one that reprints the original Weird Tales cover. I suppose I'll have to spring for the recent hardback. How does that version stand up? Is it a faithful reprint of the pulp version of the story? I suppose these questions have all been answered before in earlier mailings.

The Eclectic Collector: John P. Gunnison

I wondered about "Pep-Tec" tales myself. It sounded like a weird name, but then there have been quite a few weird-named pulps out there. I just figured that it was one I hadn't run across, but if you haven't seen it either, I think there is good reason to doubt its existence. Unfortunately Haining's book isn't documented very well and it's impossible to tell where he is getting much of his information. I trust you've followed the debate on this on the pulpmags mailing list.

Could Pep-'Tec be related to "Tec The Five-In-One Detective Magazine published by Quintec, Inc. in 1939? (Information supplied by The Adventure House Guide to the Pulps.)

Speaking of weird-named pulps, I was paging through TAHGTTP and I ran across the listing for "How 7." I'm curious, what is that title all about? Is there a story behind it? What kind of stories did it publish? It certainly seems like a strange title.

You certainly are involved with a lot of pulp reprinting projects. They are all appreciated by me. My introduction to pulp fandom was when I found a copy of Pulp Review 14 at a comic book store.

I see you're planning to reprint "Pulpwood Editor." I'll be sure to pick that up. I hope it does well enough for you to consider reprinting all of the other books, the few that exist, that were written by pulpsters on the pulps. I have Pulp Jungle, but a reprint of "The Street and Smith Story" and "This Fiction Business" and "Munsey, the story of a magazine" and "Some of My Best Friends are Writers, But I Wouldn't Want My Daughter to Marry One," would all be good choices. Forgive me if I've gotten the names wrong, I've never seen any of these books.

The Pulp Cat Winter 2002: Kristin Ladnier

I'm glad you liked my essay on the perception of pulp. I can imagine how much trouble it must be to defend pulp fiction to the academic community. I discussed a similar issue with Rich Harvey at Pulpcon a few years ago: just how do you explain a pulp collecting hobby and what do you tell people when they ask you why you spend your vacation in Ohio each year? Rich says he just tells people he has friends in Ohio, which is true enough, and doesn't go into attending Pulpcon. Since I don't have a computer at home, I do Back Numbers at work. This works out well as my job consists of sitting in front of a computer most of the day answering dumb questions. I can disguise most of my writing as real work. (At the moment I'm writing this as I'm waiting for the clock to run out on my shift. Almost quitting time.) But I have to spend some time after work hours scanning in images, which always attracts a bit too much attention from curious coworkers. I really don't like having to explain pulp fiction to them. The normal people I can just tell them that I working on that book thing I do. As soon as I mention "reading" their eyes glaze over and they wander off. The trouble comes from those that collect comic books and think they know what pulp fiction is.

Missing Back Cover: Larry Estep

I think we're on the same page when it comes to collecting pulp fiction. I'm just as happy to get an issue with a missing back cover, as long as it has all the fiction

complete.

I'm not a sports pulp fan, but it's nice to see that somebody is taking the time to index them. At this stage, doing historical research on all of the pulps is important, not just the ones most popular or marketable to the current generation of fandom.

I note that you are missing the 1st fall 1943 issue of *Football Action*. I checked the index over as I was interested in the publication schedule.

I also appreciate that you're working on indexing some of the overlooked *Street and Smith* titles.

Happiest Blue Elephant 30, 31: Kurt B. Shoemaker

You ain't kidding about those athlete's foot ads. Some of them are more disturbing than anything *Weird Tales* ran.

I'm with you about the issues with Burroughs' stories. I can't understand why they are so expensive when the stories are easily obtained, in the author's preferred text, in book format. I often come up against an issue of *Argosy* that I want for stories other than the Burroughs, but have to pass because of the price.

I thought I was the only person who had ever heard of the *Throbs*. I like that album, *Language of Thieves and Vagabonds*. I'll have to dig that out and listen to it again. Do you know if they ever did any others?

I have a J.E. Grinstead bio from the pages of *Argosy*, would you like me to run it here?

I've really enjoyed your essays on *Adventure and Argosy*. Your love of pulps really shows up in your writing. Your *Argosy* essay reflects why I love to collect the magazine, and your *Adventure* essay is going to temp me into becoming more than just a casual collector of that title.

I also really liked your report on the weekend you spent in Cross Plains at the Robert E. Howard celebration. Maybe someday I'll be able to make it out that way myself for the festivities. Con reports and similar articles are always welcome.

Eldorado 13: John DeWalt

You asked about Alcatraz at one point. It is indeed Spanish for Pelican. Alcatraz Island was named *La Isla de los Alcatrazes* (The Island of the Pelicans) by the Spanish because of the large number of birds there. You've still got me as to why anyone would name a horse after a pelican, though.

The title story in "Long Live the Dead" was originally published as by Allen Beck in *Black Mask*. It was the second Cave story in that issue.

You also asked for information on Stephen Marlow, he was born in 1928. A Chester Drum story, "Wanted Dead and Alive" was printed in "The Mammoth

Book of Private Eye Stories," Which is where I get the aforementioned information on his birth. The original publication was copyrighted in 1963 by Flying Eagle Publications. Of course they don't telling us the name of the magazine Flying Eagle published. (Manhunt? I'm too lazy to start pulling out other anthologies to check this.)

Eldorado 14: John DeWalt

John, John, John, how do you find anything using that system of yours? Books by the same author belong together. You wouldn't want to break up a family would you? Are you telling me that you can't see that putting "Warlord of Mars" in one place, "The Bandit of Hell's Bend" in another and "The Oakdale Affair" in a third doesn't lead to madness?

In a perfect world, where books fell neatly into clearly defined categories, I could see dividing fiction into subjects for filing. But there are far too many exceptions or fuzzy areas with which to contend. Is Lovecraft fantasy, horror or science fiction? Is Randall Garrett's Lord Darcy series fantasy, alternate history occult detective or mystery? Where do you set the dividing line as to how precise you define a genre? Speculative Fiction (covering Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror), Western, Mystery/Crime (covering Hard-boiled, Classic, Noir, Crime, Espionage, Police Procedural and Caper), and General (covering modern, adventure and historical fiction not fitting into another category) seem to me to be the major categories, but it's pretty common for bookstores to sub-divide out Horror from SF and I've seen one or two who have separate sections for Science Fiction and Fantasy, which seems like lunacy to me.

And it just seems wrong to me to file "High Plains Drifter" anywhere but after Tidyman's Shaft novels. I'm not a big western fan, I usually only buy westerns if they are by a favorite author who writes in another genre that I do collect. I'd never have read "High Plains Drifter" if I wasn't a fan of the John Shaft novels.

I've given a lot of thought to how I wanted to organize my books and I think any system with hard rules will inevitably come up with too many exceptions to cope with. There's a mathematical theory that states that for any system, there are always true statements that cannot be proven by that system.

So after much thought, my system ends up with one rule: Books are to be filed where I feel they should go.

This is purely an emotional decision on my part, there is no logic behind it. I can predict how I feel about a certain book with sufficient accuracy to find it when I need it.

This is not so arbitrary a policy as it seems. I feel that books come in three main categories, Fiction, Non-Fiction and Art/Cartoon. I feel that Non-Fiction books

should be organized by subject. I feel that Fiction books should be organized by author's name, and within the author's name by some logical system.

So all of the Burroughs books are in the same place, with the series put together in series order followed by the books not in a series. Westerns are at the end. A book that is not by Burroughs, but was bought because of a connection to Burroughs would go afterward. For example "Tarzan and the Snake Men" is the last book in the Burroughs set even though it's not by him. But "Time's Last Gift" and "Lord of the Trees/The Mad Goblin" are under Farmer. Why? Because that's where I feel they belong. If I go looking for "Tarzan and the Snake Men" I'm not going to remember the name of the author on the book, but I will remember it's a Burroughs ripoff. If I'm looking for "Time's Last Gift," I'll remember it as one of Farmer's ripoffs of other writers.

Conversely, I have one of the Dungeon series supposedly by Farmer but ghosted by other writers. I have this book because it was ghosted by Charles DeLint and at one time I collected his works. So that's under DeLint.

Books under a pen name are filed under the author's real name, unless I like the pen name better or the pen name is better known. I'm still undecided on how to file Richard Stark but for now he's under Westlake.

Books by more than one author are filed under the author I like best or that I collect or that I associate with that particular book or type of fiction.

Anthologies are filed at the front of the Fiction section, organized by subject since I can rarely remember who edited a given anthology. (Besides, the Greenberg section would be unwieldy.) Media tie-ins and movie novelizations go at the end.

Right now, because of a lack of space, I have most of my books in storage and the ones I have with me are not really in proper order. I have paperbacks and hardbacks separated to conserve space, something I hope to rectify when I next move. While it saves space and looks nice, I can't agree with separating books by size or format. My "Shadow and the Golden Master" should be on the same shelf as my Pyramid paperbacks. Ideally I try to purchase all small paperbacks, but this isn't always possible.

Flakes From the Ragged Edges: Victor Berch

Thank you for your indexing efforts. Romance sounds like it may have some very interesting fiction. Without your information, I might have passed up an issue without thinking about how the definition of romance has changed.

Your skill at research, and dedication at combing through those old records, makes me feel inadequate, but keep it up. I'm particularly interested in your efforts at tracing copyright renewals.

Do you need me to index the July 13, 1918 issue

of All-Story for your indexing project? I think the Argosy Index should have included All-Story and the other pulps that were folded into Argosy over the years. As long as someone is going to take on such a difficult project, they should be complete about it.

Ramblings of the Perambulating Pulp Fan #52: Al Tonik

It sounds like you had fun in Australia. I enjoyed the photo of you and fellow PEAPS member Graham Stone. Did you get to hunt through any bookstores while you were there? Hmm, it really says something about my misplaced priorities that I ask about book hunting rather than the sight-seeing or the people you met.

I'll have to add the Contemporary Authors series you mention to Steve Young to my list of sources to check when I'm doing research.

Thank you for your kind words on my mailing.

I'm embarrassed that my spell checking failed to catch the error in Chidsey's name. I wrote that at the last minute to fill a space and the error slipped through.

Thank you for the information from several indexes I either don't have, or can't access at the moment. I was particularly appreciative of your listing of stories from Dime Detective as I had not realized that Morton and McGarvey stories appeared there as well as in Detective Fiction Weekly.

Is there an index to Blue Book? I think I'm on the trail of another Chidsey series character there, but I don't have any issues of Blue Book to check.

Thank you also for pointing me in the direction of Lee Server's "Danger Is My Business." I have it on my shelf, but I overlooked it when cross checking Haining's book. It has the same story about Borden Chase, but not the quote from him about Munsey, that Haining prints. I have the feeling, thanks to John DeWalt, that I should review Pulp Jungle to see if that's where all of this is coming from. Of course, Gruber isn't always the most reliable primary source.

Hidalgo 59: Brian Earl Brown

Here I just finished my reviews of the last 3 Black Dog Books for this issue, and the mailing arrives with your contribution where you review all of them. Your reviews put mine to shame. Ah well, I'll run it anyway.

I'm really impressed that Tom has been able to get these out — 17 books is quite an achievement for one individual. I don't think the pulp community gives him enough credit for the work he's done. I've run some of the numbers in a general way, and I'd be hard pressed to be able to print similar books at the price he's asking, even if I were to use public domain material.

I enjoyed your Pulpcon photos and report, but

(cough, cough) the inside margins were a little tight. (I'd put a little smiley emoticon here if I didn't detest them so much.)

When the Detroit Free Press redesigned their comics page, did they keep Modesy Blaise? They were the only U.S. paper I knew of that ran the strip. I'm not really a big fan of the strip, but I am a big fan of the books.

The recent mess they've made out of the San Francisco papers has really screwed up the comic section. The Hearst chain took over the rival Chronicle and sold off the Examiner to a bunch of idiots. For a while Hearst ran two pages of daily comics, one from the old Chronicle and one from the old Examiner, in the Chronicle as well as the once a week comics that had been running in the Examiner. This was great. Two pages of comics, plus a couple of panels, plus the weekly stuff, plus all of the features that had been run in both papers all for 25 cents.

Then I noticed the quality of the journalism went down. No competition means that nobody had any incentive to get out and hustle or do good in-depth features. Then they redesigned for a narrower page, claiming that this wouldn't change content. But as it turns out, smaller pages mean less room for content.

Then they quietly dropped the weekly comics and most of the good features, like Dave Letterman's top ten list. The comics got smaller and dropped to one page. Strangely I don't feel the need to buy a paper every day anymore. I'm a real newspaper junkie, I'll happily read two newspapers a day and then read news online. So when I say I've given up on reading the paper on a daily basis you know the local paper is bad.

Hidalgo 60: Brian Earl Brown

Thanks for the review of a George Harmon Coxe Kent Murdock novel. I've enjoyed the Flashgun Casey stories I've read, but I've avoided the Murdock books because they weren't pulp reprints. I'll have to try one.

I seem to recall DeWalt giving a bad review to one of the later Coxe books, so maybe he's like Gardener and his books get worse the later in the series they are.

Thanks also for the comments on "The Plutonium Blonde." The cover is pulpish enough that it caught my attention, but I wondered if it was any good. I always have doubts about books that claim to have a pulp inspiration, as they seldom get it right. Now I can pass it by.

It sounds to me that many pulp collectors might be candidates for a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome, myself included. As I understand it another symptom of Asperger's Syndrome is an obsessive interest in a hobby, subject or collection that is not usually of interest to a normal person. Some subjects that are mentioned are things like history or trains. So I'd suspect those guys collecting Railroad Stories. (I'm kidding, Rick.)

Borden Chase branched out from sand hog sto-

ries pretty quickly. Most of his stories in Argosy after the first few are about the team of Smooth Kyle and Glenda. Kyle is a government agent and Glenda is a sort of Femme Fatale. Rich Harvey's read at least one of them, or at least he ended up with a composite that had the entire "Blue, White and Perfect" serial.

By the way, it's Haining, not me who claims Chase's real name is Fowler. I don't have any independent evidence. Although I notice Lee Server has the same information in his book, and a slightly different story confirming it appears in Gruber's book. I was hoping that somebody in PEAPS would have more information on Chase, particularly whether he wrote for other Munsey publications in the 1920s or in someplace like Adventure. Haining gives him much more space than I think a somewhat second-string Argosy writer merits. Although to be fair, he seemed pretty popular. One of his early stories tied for first place with an A. Merritt serial in a reader popularity survey and he certainly got his share of promotion in the Argonotes and covers.

I agree that 1923 is not the best year quality-wise to select stories from Weird Tales, but it is a logical place to start. Unfortunately, I think this logical approach may well have doomed any chance of future single-year collections. As much as I complain about some of the standard rules used to put anthologies together, I suppose they serve a purpose as those anthologies that break the rules don't seem to do well.

You are certainly right about popularity of the Spicy and Horror titles among some in the pulp community. I've never understood why the Spicy line commands such high prices. If you want porn, there is much more prurient material available at the local convenience store for much less money. The only reason to collect pulps that I can see is to read the stories, and the Spicy books aren't that well written. No insult intended to Glenn Lord here, many important authors wrote for the Spicy titles, I just don't think it's their best work and it's not to my taste.

I'm looking into getting Acrobat Reader onto John's computer. I'm hoping he can unzip the install file I'm sending him. He's not on the internet as you know, so he can't just download it from Adobe. I think he's got a plain text version of the story he was looking for, but Acrobat Reader seems to be something he should have.

T'rilling Action 2 and 3: Duane Spurlock

Funny you should mention wanting to see a "Mammoth Book of Adventure." When I first saw an advertisement for "The Mammoth Book of Pulp Action." I misread it and thought it was going to be "The Mammoth Book of Pulp Adventure." That started me making lists of what authors should be in such a book, which lead me to write my list of anthologies I'd like to see, which in turn lead me to write my article on anthologies that leads

off this issue.

I would also buy an anthology like this, but I think that it would have a hard time in the marketplace. While I think there would be enough people who would enjoy such a volume to make it a success if they knew about it, with the way books are marketed today, it would never reach them. Every once in a while I go looking for one of the Mammoth books but then come up short trying to figure out where a bookstore clerk would shelve it. Where exactly do you put "The Mammoth Book of Sword and Honor" if you don't have a war fiction section?

Your thoughts on Paul Stahr are pretty much along the same lines as mine.

Kissett: Howard De Vore

I always enjoy your stories, both here and on the pulpmags mailing list. You should collect all of these into a book. Yeah, I know, you've heard that before. But people like you and Al have so many interesting stories and know so many interesting facts. I think you could do a much better job than Julie Schwartz did in his book. Not that I didn't enjoy "Man of Two Worlds," but just when he started to get interesting, he changed the subject.

Blodgett #50: Scott Cranford

As others here have mentioned, those were some great pictures from Pulpcon. Seeing those, and the other Pulpcon photos that have been run in recent mailings, and reading all of the Pulpcon reports, made me sadder than I had been that I had to miss last year. I'm even sadder that I probably will miss this year as well.

Sons of the Blue Wolf 32, 33: Kevin L. Cook

I'm glad to hear you are ok after the events of September.

I'm very pleased with the information you've printed on the changes to Merritt's stories. Well, I'm pleased you published it, displeased to find out that every version of "Women of the Wood" that I own is the version with the altered ending.

Stacks 26: Rusty Hevelin

It sounds like you had a very nice trip with the Haldemans. It always astounds (and Astonishes and Amazes) me that you and Howard and the other Science Fiction PEAPS members all seem to be close friends with so many major authors.

I enjoy your reading lists, as I enjoy reading everyone's reading and acquisitions lists.

I like the Dusty Ayres novels I've read. Yes, they are not the best or most lucidly plotted, but I find them

fun to read.

I'm glad John is reprinting them and I look forward to finding out how the series ends. I'll admit you have a point about the implausibility of some of the plots.

Thin Air Wonder Stories: Joe Sokola

Those were some nice prices on those bound volumes of Argosy from 1894 to June 1896 that you picked up on Ebay. I would certainly have paid that much for them if I saw them at Pulpcon. You'd better look out though, calling them bound pulps. Some of the folks around here get a might touchy about such things. Did you win all of the lots offered, or were some of the gaps in the run caused by somebody else outbidding you?

I'm not a Ebay kind of guy. I love the auctions at Pulpcon, but I just can't get into on-line bidding.

Yesteryear 30: Glenn Lord

I was glad to see that information on the Howard letters that you ran. I wondered what the rest of the story was after reading Price's book and then seeing a collection of what seemed to be those letters offered for sale. As you can see from my review of his book in this issue, I faulted Price for not naming names when it would have been appropriate.

Sulf #49: Norm Metcalf

Thank you for the information from the Social Security Death Index on two possible birth dates for Donald Barr Chidsey and that he lived in Connecticut. I can confirm that Chidsey's birth date is May 14, 1902 based on biographical data published in "Third Mystery Companion" edited by A. L. Furman and published in 1945 by Gold Label Books. The biography states that Chidsey was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey. At the time the biography was written, he resided in Florida.

Sulf 52: Norm Metcalf

You say that based on an increase in sales for the Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction when they ran rocket ship covers, and the relative sales between Unknown and Astounding, that science fiction sells better than fantasy.

While those are certainly interesting figures, I think there may be more complex psychological issues at work.

I think that perhaps more people identify themselves as science fiction fans than as fantasy fans. While they may read or watch more fantasy, they are more likely to buy a magazine with a science fiction cover than one with the less socially acceptable fantasy cover. As evidence of this, take a look at the "Science Fiction" section of the

Back Numbers Can Be Easily Procured

local new bookstore. Fantasy, if you include the fantasy that parades as SF, clearly outweighs science fiction in the amount of shelf space. Even many science fiction novels are really either soft SF or fantasy in science fiction trappings. Serious hard science fiction is a small amount of the output.

Even much of the raygun and rocketship stuff is closer to straight adventure fiction with a few superficial trappings. How much of modern SF is just old south seas adventure stories with FTL ships replacing sailing ships and exotic planets replacing exotic ports of call?

For a long time I identified myself as a science fiction fan. That was acceptable. But when I really looked at what I was reading, outside of Heinlein, Piper and White, most of what I was reading was either sword and sorcery or high fantasy. But I was in serious denial that I was one of those foofy, elf-loving fantasy fans.

I'd buy a magazine or a book with a rocketship on the cover a lot sooner than one with a dragon on it.

The New, Complete, Thrilling, Popular, Spicy, Mammoth, All-Comment Magazine 16: Mike Chomko

Mike, I have to respectfully disagree with you on the subject on war fiction published during WWI. While it isn't actually set on the front, Ben Ames Williams has a serial in the July 13, 1918 issue of All-Story that has a plot by the German secret service to sneak a converted freighter that conceals German bombers into New York. Part of the action in a preceding chapter involves a crossing of the Atlantic by a passenger ship that is dogged by a German U-Boat. While this isn't exactly a front-line over-the-top war story, it does have a war background, German agents as villains, and a hero who is a pilot.

In the same issue, there is a promotion for "Hellcat" by Fred W. Jameson that is scheduled for the next issue. From the information provided, it looks like a war story set at the front.

I'd be surprised if other pulp writers didn't use the war for background, given the presence of so many Americans in the war both before and after the U.S. entered. The Lafayette Escadrille was certainly no secret, and you can see from the biographies of so many writers who fought, or tried to fight, in the war that it was considered a manly, adventurous thing to join the Allies.

As John DeWalt mentions, I'm pretty sure I have an electronic copy of that Carrol John Daly story from Triple X. I wonder why it didn't make it into the book. Perhaps I lagged too much and Hutchison needed to get on with the project. Let me know if you want me to shoot you a copy.

I'm starting to regret having such a long title on my mailing, it's too much trouble to type it in, but your title makes mine look short. Do you have a preferred nickname for it? I've taken to calling mine "Back Numbers"

everywhere except the title on the cover and the page headers, which are not something I have to type in.

P.I.I.P.: Randy Vanderbeek

Your project is of great interest to me. I think it's very helpful to have the cover artists indexed properly and it's even better that you are sorting the cover stories by subject. I'm looking forward to the information on the late 20s and early 30s issues where my collecting interest is concentrated at the moment.

Not Worth 1/4 Cent a Word: Richard Hall

I wish we had more examples of the marketing research done by the pulp publishers. I wonder what the final report looked like when all of the responses were tallied. I wonder how many people bothered to send them back.

I think question 16: Would you be willing to pay more for good paper, better type and better reproduction of photos is a very poorly worded question. I think they'd be pretty surprised at the difference in what people will say they'll pay more for and what they really will pay more for. They seem to want to justify doing the opposite of what Munsey did when he invented the pulp magazine. Instead of lowering the price to give the customer what they want on cheaper paper, they seem to want to convince the customer to pay more for what the company wants to publish.

I don't know that I'd be able to get "90% done" on an issue of Back Numbers and then just start over because the deadline had passed. This issue was originally meant for the January mailing, but I realized that I couldn't get it finished in time to make the deadline. Instead I've just kept working on it and will run the expanded issue in the April mailing.

I thought about doing a special double issue, numbered 2/3, but I thought that would create a problem with indexing and confuse me later about how many issues I had published.

Beaten to a ____!: Tom Roberts

That is some nice art you did for the cover to "Long Live The Dead." I liked the art you ran in the last issue as well.

I agree with you on how inexcusable it was to not print all three of the Officer Coffey stories in that book. Why bother doing it at all if you're not serious?

Thank you for your remembrances of Peggy Cave and George Evans. I'm sorry that I didn't get a chance to know George.

I'm looking forward to the pirate volume by H. Bedford-Jones from Adventure Fiction Press. I love pirate

stories. The website for the company has some great material on it. Please pass along to Peter Ruber that I thought his biographical and bibliographical pages on the Adventure Fiction Press website were excellent.


The Pulp Adventures Newline: Rich Harvey

Thanks for the look at the Frazetta Museum. I'd love to go to it myself, but I doubt I ever will have the opportunity. Your record of your visit will have to suffice for me.

Is your contribution also available to subscribers

of Pulp Adventures?

Your last issue of Pulp Adventures was great. I'm not a fan of the romance pulps, but I'm glad to see that somebody is making the point that the pulps were represent a vibrant and varied full range of popular fiction. The full-color, full-bleed cover was wonderful, something I don't think I've ever seen on a pulp fanzine. You're really making the move up into semi-pro status.

I see you're planning to print the Operator Five novels along with the Spider reprints. I'm all for it and will add them to my list of regular purchases. Just don't neglect the Spider project. We have to have priorities. 

Our Featured Issue and Back Cover:

Our back cover this time features a Paul Stahr cover illustrating, "Cross and Crescent," a Theodore Roscoe historical adventure novelette.

The cover from the November 1940 Cavalier Classics illustrating a reprint of this story, by Belarski, was run in Eldorado in issue number five.

Stahr normally is not a very dynamic cover artist. He always seems to capture the scene just before or just after something interesting happened. His figures seem to have a lack of motion or life to them. But this cover is one of his best. I suppose you could argue that his knight is caught just before he attacks, but I prefer to think of it as the start of a forward swing.

The issue is the June 17, 1933 edition of Argosy.

The cover story is set during the siege of Antioch by Christian forces during the First Crusade.

Roscoe is a competent pulp writer, but the plot, with the hero, Dennis of Briton, being accused of cowardice because he, gasp, has a secret that prevents him from meeting the enemy champion in battle, is old and tired, even in a story from the 1930s. I also found it hard to believe that a young lady could have held off three armed knights so that her lover could escape. And if the hero could have beaten the Lion of Islam, previously established as the baddest of the bad, without armor, he should have had no trouble dispatching the said three wimpy knights.

If it wasn't for the tired plot, this would have been a good story to put into "The Mammoth Book of Sword and Honor" as it actually has a lot of sword-swinging action and a plot that revolves around the honor of the main character.

Despite the cliché plot, Roscoe can write a thrilling story.

The love interest is not well developed, and Roscoe should have had a scene or two at the hospital camp between the two lovers to both give her a real personality and heighten the tension with Dennis having to sneak off to carry out his secret mission.

Roscoe has a brief piece in the Argonotes with

some historical background used in the story.

Talbot Mundy has a story of the hills of India titled "The Man From Poonch." This is a typical Mundy tale of a British Secret Service agent who, disguised as the title character, infiltrates a ring of terrorists who seek to trigger an uprising.

The story is hindered in that we don't get the point of view of the main character. For the entire story, he stays in character and we are not told that he is a secret service agent, even though that is pretty obvious. There isn't a lot of action either, the main character has already infiltrated the ring at the start of the story and the bulk of the story consists of the terrorists suspecting him of being an agent and then demanding that he fly the plane that will drop the gas bomb on the government officials. The terrorists are not very bright, if he is a government agent, as they half-suspect, putting him in a plane and letting him fly off probably not a good idea. I'd think they'd have made sure of his loyalty prior to leading him, and the shadowing forces of law and order, to the plane.

Erle Stanley Gardner has a Whispering Sands story featuring series character Bob Zane. "Carved in Sand" is the first Whispering Sands story that I've read.

Even though I'm a Gardner fan, I've never been interested in this series, but I may read more of these now. This isn't Gardner at his best, but it's a competently written and interesting story.

In it, desert rat Bob Zane and a friend come to the rescue of a pretty girl in the desert against some rude men, who end up being law officers trying to arrest her for aiding her father, an accused murderer, to escape from jail.

Zane's friend is captured along with the girl, and so the desert rat has to investigate the murder and find the real murderer in order to clear himself and his friend of charges of aiding a fugitive.

While there are some too-convenient tracks "carved in sand" that allows Zane to figure out what really happened, this is a pretty good mystery. The ending is

similar to a Perry Mason story with Zane arriving dramatically during his friend's preliminary hearing with a surprise witness and the evidence to convict the guilty party, who proceeds to bolt from the courtroom and thus establish his guilt. It's interesting in that this is written about the same time as the earliest Perry Mason novels. While Zane is not as tricky and underhanded as the early Mason is, there are certainly some similarities in how the story is handled.

The story I was most excited about in this issue, however, is "Much Too Artistic" by Donald Barr Chidsey. It isn't really a very good story, the detective work is somewhat contrived. However, it features an early appearance by series character Nick Fisher. Fisher is a tough insurance detective who specializes in jewelry thefts. His attempt to keep an eye on a major jewel thief involves him with a murder in a boarding house. The murder is incidental to Fisher's presence and he seems to be shoehorned into the plot. He claims he is completely uninterested in the homicide, that's a matter for the local authorities, not an out-of-town insurance company dick, yet he does stick around and solve the murder.

The murder is a variant of a locked room mystery, only with the murder taking place in a hallway, yet no one could have fired the fatal shot.

The gimmick used by the murderer, a gun attached to a clockwork mechanism, isn't new and isn't very convincing. Any competent police detective could have found it by looking at the wound trajectory. Of course Fisher and his police detective friends let the crook provide the damning evidence by waiting for him to remove the device.

I don't see any reason why Fisher is the hero. The story has nothing to do with jewelry theft, and Chidsey has to engage in some gymnastics to put his hero on the scene and get him involved..

Fisher shows up again in Argosy later in the 1930s teaming up with reformed gentleman crook Eddie Savoy in a much better series of stories.

With complete stories by three big names, and one small name, Chidsey, that I collect, this is a pretty good issue.

Serials include part two of Loring Brent's "The Sapphire Death." I've been unable to find a copy of the issue of Pulp Vault that reprints the first part of this serial, so I'm pretty happy about finding it a part of it here. If I can find parts one and three I think I'll have the full set.

This episode has Peter Moore undergoing the training and conditioning he will need to pass himself off as a contestant for The Blue Scorpion's game of death. Within six months, aided by "yogism" he transforms himself into a superhuman capable of winning the trials.

The ever-present Fred MacIsaac has part five of the six part "Burning Billions." I keep thinking that I ought to find a MacIsaac that sounds really interesting and see if

he's any good. This serial, about a bank teller in old Virginia City Nevada and his adventures on the Comstock, isn't going to be the one. (I see that I've read and enjoyed a Rambler Murphy story by MacIsaac, so maybe I should give him a try in Argosy.)

Ralph Milne Farley's "The Golden City" concludes here. This is the story of a man who is lost overboard in the mid-Atlantic and finds himself in the sunken continent of Mu. There is the usual bit about the local girl he falls in love with, the rival for his love's affection who is working with the evil mastermind who is trying to take over the peaceful utopia. This isn't a relict-culture story, instead it's the kind of thing you'd find in interplanetary romance stories, but taking place in some sort of alternate time/dimension where Mu is still above the waves instead of being set on Mars or Venus.

Cliff Farrell has a gold country story here called "Thread of Life." I would usually skip this kind of story, but it was a decent, if somewhat formula, tale about a crooked prospector who takes in a gullible greenhorn for nefarious reasons. The bad guy knows where there is a rich claim, because he previously killed the owner, and wants to trick the greenhorn into helping him work it, and then kill him to keep the gold for himself.


The hero is dumb enough to allow the villain to trap him down a mine shaft, even though he suspects his partner of not being honest.

I enjoyed this story despite a few plot implausibilities.

Edmond Du Perrier has a boxing story called "The Flaw." The champ is past his prime, and has one last fight against his protege, who knows every trick the old man taught him. Except the one that will give the champ the means to win his last fight.

I don't usually read the sports stories in Argosy either, but this one wasn't bad. It won't make me pick up any copies of Sports Stories, but I didn't mind reading this one even if it didn't have the freshest of plots. It helped that this was a very short story. It might have been a bit better with a little more description of the blow by blow of the fight, but then too much of this would have gotten old fast.

Stookie Allen has a Men of Daring on Major Merian C. Cooper, a soldier of fortune who seemed to be as much villain as hero, but whose exploits make him sound like a W. Wirt character. Sometimes I wonder how accurate these Stookie Allen features are. His item on Bat Masterson in another issue, for example, differs substantially from another reference I have on gunfighters.

The narrative crossword puzzle has been filled in on my copy. I've never felt any interest in this feature, although some of the crime puzzles in Detective Fiction Weekly have caught my eye. I'd much rather see a Men Who Make The Argosy than this kind of filler, but it looks like whoever filled in this one had fun. 

The Men Who Make The Argosy



STAHR, PAUL
Argosy Cover Artist

Paul Stahr, who painted this week's cover and many other outstanding Argosy cover illustrations, is a New Yorker born and bred. He attended school in Yorkville, at P.S. 86 and Morris High School. From the very beginning he turned to art as his life-work, studying at the Academy and the Art Students' League, where he had the benefit of instruction by George Bridgman.

Stahr was one of the pioneers in the art colony, on Washington Heights, which has probably replaced Greenwich Village as the actual, if not the traditional, center of New York's palette-wielders.

Like all budding artists, Stahr had to do considerable hack work at the start; and he chose the theatrical field, painting posters for new shows. If the Shuberts or Savage or some other big producer of those days opened a new show, Stahr would be sent on a moment's notice to the city where the play was being "tried out on the dog," to sketch some of the people and scenes of the drama. Then would come the hectic business of getting the posters made from his drawings or paintings in time for the Broadway opening. More than once he had to do his sketches on the train as he was rushing back

to New York—no mean feat, as any one can testify who has tried the comparatively simple task of writing a letter on the train.

This early poster work, of which artists are never very fond, was turned to fine patriotic account by Stahr in war days, when he did many of the most successful posters for the Hover Food Administration, the Red Cross, the Liberty Loans, and the various branches of national defense. This work contributed gratis by Stahr and his fellow artists was an important factor in keeping up the country's morale during those troublous times.

Besides Stahr's vivid and interesting cover paintings for Argosy, he has done a good many pictures for *Life* and other publications. He says it has often surprised him how many people react personally, and even vehemently, to some feature of a painting. There was a letter he received from a mining town in Canada, whose entire population, of some fifty souls, had taken sides in a dispute over the interpretation of one cover design.

Another time, he drew a picture of a man and a girl kissing—and received a letter actually threatening in tone, claiming that no man ever kissed a girl that way, and

warning Stahr that unless he drew his kisses differently, the writer would come to New York from his distant town and make him change!

—The Men Who Make The Argosy, April 26, 1930



Paul Stahr

Ongoing Research Report:

The above MWMTA is part of my ongoing attempt to collect all of the biographical data that was printed in Argosy and Argosy All-Story. In addition to retypesetting all of the MWMTA columns and scanning the photos or drawings, I'm also collecting the biographical data that often appeared in Argonotes or was printed before some stories.

The final version will be similar to the above, and will list the information in alphabetical order.

The project is about one quarter to one fifth complete, although there are some issues that are going to be

hard to obtain. Among these is the issue with the MWMTA for Burroughs and the 1926 issues that fill out the remaining obituary information on Frank Munsey.

Of course I will never be able to find every bit of biographical or bibliographical data printed, but I hope to be able to assemble the majority for a small booklet. (Small booklet, he says, the current draft runs to more than 45 pages.)

A list of needed items or issues that have not been checked will be published here in Back Numbers once I get closer to the end of the project. 