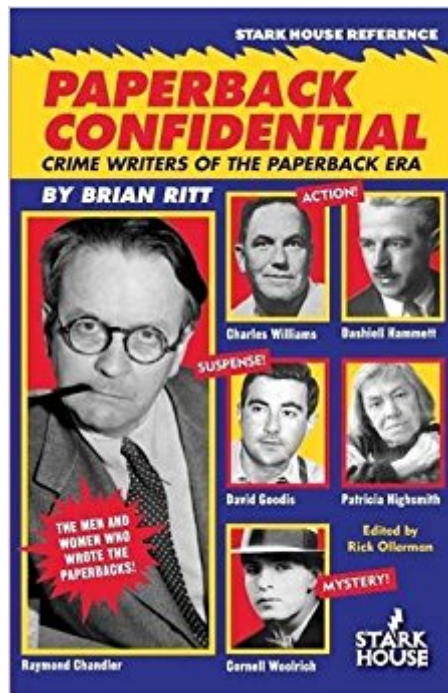




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Paperback Confidential: Crime Writers Of The Paperback Era



Synopsis

132 profiles of the men and women who wrote the books that became the backbone of the Pulp and Paperback Era from the 1930s through the 1960s. Each profile contains details about the author's life and explores key works; also covered are screenplay and teleplay work, as well as movies based on the authors' stories.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Paperback Confidential is an essential reference book for lovers of hard-boiled/noir paperbacks of the 1930s through the mid-1960s, most of them forgotten by most readers today. Ritt profiles 132 of the best loved, and also some of the most obscure, authors of the era. Authors include David Goodis, Norbert Davis, Marvin Albert, Dolores Hitchens, Fletcher Flora, Cornell Woolrich, Ann Bannon, Harry Whittington, and so many others. Ritt not only tells you all about them and their books, he also provides their pseudonyms and a selected bibliography of their work (some of these authors wrote dozens, if not hundreds, of books). Now whenever I pick up a vintage paperback from some author I've never heard of, this book will save me the hours I would have spent on the Internet searching for more information. It's no surprise that this terrific book comes from Stark House Press, the people who've so lovingly republished "lost" and/or long out-of-print books by Harry Whittington, Gil Brewer, Dan J. Marlowe, and James Hadley Chase among others. The people at Stark House are doing God's work, as far as I'm concerned.

This is a terrific reference book for anyone interested in the paperback crime novelists that flourished in the late 1940s and 1950s. Many of these writers were extremely popular, often selling over 400,000 copies of their books and were at the cutting edge of the paperback revolution that changed the nature of American publishing forever. This book offers succinct, well written essays on both major figures like Cornell Woolrich and Patricia Highsmith and lesser lights like Jada M. Davis and Richard Jessup. In addition, each profile is accompanied by a snapshot of the author and a selected bibliography that provides excellent suggestions for further reading. The essays often include a brief synopsis of the author's major work as well as interesting biographical details. Taken as a whole, the book offers an entertaining picture of the Pulp and Paperback era of American publishing and I would highly recommend it for any fan of modern fiction or anyone interested in the history of American literature.

This alphabetical who's who of paperback writers from the late 40s through the early 70s comprises three types of writers: 1) Writers I knew 2) Writers new to me 3) Writers I thought I knew. The biographical information is very well researched, and is often presented in a way that is in itself very entertaining, such as when Mike Hammer tells us about Mickey Spillane, or the tragic figure of Cornell Woolrich is revealed in such dark tones as could have come from one of his own novels. After each biographical section, which usually contains a photo, the major works of a writer are listed, grouped by series and/or pen-name. Speaking of pseudonyms, author Brian Ritt makes a very noble attempt to correlate all the various names used by the writers...I have no idea if he is successful, given that one writer could write under a dozen or more names for as many different publishers, but the attempt is impressive. While this book is invaluable to collectors of pocketbooks of the era, it will also be of interest to writers and readers, a glimpse into the world of paperbacks originals, as lost now as the pulp magazines which they themselves replaced.

Brian Ritt's book is a one stop reference for paperback crime writers. It includes mini bios of all the writers of the era along with fascinating anecdotes about them. At the end of each bio, is a bonus sentence which reads: "If you like xxxx, you might like: . . . " followed by the name or names of other writers in the reference manual he provides. Ritt's reference also includes a "pseudodex" -- a list of all the known pen names of the authors listed in Paperback Confidential. This is definitely a great and fun read, if you like crime fiction, or wondered about any authors associated with the genre.

This book is essentially an encyclopedia of the writers who specialized in crime fiction paperbacks of the '50s and '60s. It is full of useful information, but it feels like a convenient compendium of Wikipedia entries. While I like the book I think some of the entries are less fleshed out than others. The entries for Raymond Chandler, David Goodis and Jim Thompson, for example, really give a strong sense of the writers' personalities, but many other profiles are impersonal and short on biographical detail. I suppose some of these writers are simply less well known than others and therefore less information is available. Well done, but room for improvement. For example, it would be cool if there were representative vintage book covers shown for each of the writers and not just "mug shots" as shown on the cover.

Great Reference source for fans of hard-boiled, lesser-known paperback authors -- as well as some well known ones. Nice details and coverage of a wide variety of writers of the vintage paperback era.

I always enjoy reading about the life of authors after I have read their books. I found this book extremely interesting and one that I can reference on a constant basis. It's very well written and has just the right information about each author. It will save a lot of time when looking for more books by particular authors.

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