

# STARK HOUSE PRESS

Newsletter, Volume 6, Number 2

Feb/March 2017

I don't mind admitting that February got away from me. Like many folks around the country, I seem to have spent the whole month being sick with the nastiest cold I've had in years. I am finally beginning to feel more like a publisher and less like the living dead, so I thought I'd jump at this chance to spend a little time chatting up our February and March releases.

First of all, February is highlighted by a new novel from fan-favorite, Doug Allyn. Allyn's stories more often than not win the Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine Readers Award each year—"The Snow Angel" took first place in 2014—and he's been slowly building a reputation as a fine novelist as well. Our Doug Allyn book is called *The Jukebox Kings* and follows a large cast of characters through 1960s Detroit in a story that is both musical and criminal. If you love old r&b and the blues, and are fascinated by the history of modern music, this book definitely has something for you. If you just happen to enjoy a good gangland romp, that's here, too. Where the two intersect is the genesis of Allyn's story, and he tells it well.

*Publishers Weekly* has given it a starred review, and *Booklist* another set of thumbs up. As their critic tells it, this is the story of a "dangerous climb to power with a heartfelt paean to the Motor City during the years when Berry Gordy's Motown was churning out hits; the radio was playing Ruby and the Romantics or the Shirelles; Brother Jack McDuff, Dinah Washington, and Sam Cooke were performing in local clubs; and Cadillacs and Lincolns with massive V-8s were kings of the road." Doug Allyn's background includes everything from an extended duty with USAF Intelligence in Vietnam to playing guitar for Devil's Triangle. The man knows what

he writes about, and he writes about it well.



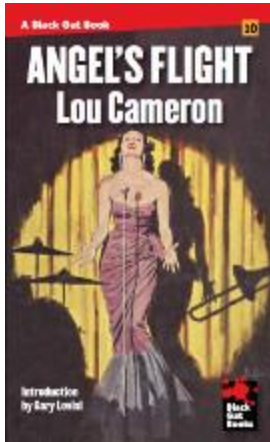
**Doug Allyn**

**The Jukebox Kings**

**978-1-944520-17-5 \$17.95**

But that's not enough musical history for one month. We also have a tour through the days of swing, big band and jazz via Lou Cameron's *Angel's Flight*, our tenth Black Gat book. We couldn't resist the pairing. This is Cameron's first book, first published by Gold Medal in 1960, and it was obviously written in a youthful and cynical white heat. This is the story of a struggling bass player named Ben Parker who is gigging around L.A. in the pre-WWII years. He meets a slimeball named Angel who will do anything to get ahead. Parker plays it straight, but everyone around him gradually feels the tread as Angel walks their backs on his way up. Those are the lucky ones—some get the knife.

I first discovered this book in the pages of *Paperback Parade*, where editor Gary Lovisi was shouting its praises to the rooftops. He was right. In fact, I asked Gary to write the introduction. He calls *Angel's Flight*, "a classic crime masterpiece of darkness and doom set to a jazz and bebop beat." We think it sits well beside *The Jukebox Kings*, and we hope you enjoy the combination this month.



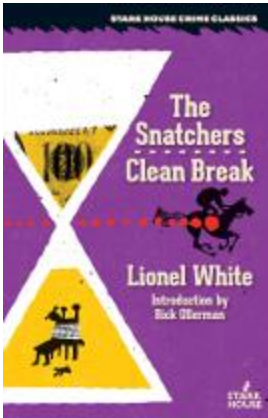
**Lou Cameron**  
**Angel's Flight**  
**978-1-944520-18-2 \$9.99**

March gives a chance to present two of Lionel White's classic caper novels—his first two, in fact. *The Snatchers* is paired with *Clean Break*, also known as *The Killing* since Stanley Kubrick filmed it as such back in 1956. This is the film that stars Sterling Hayden as a criminal who creates the perfect horse track heist out of a disparate group of individuals who don't know each other. He figures that this is their strength, their unconnectedness. But there is always a weak link.

The film *The Killing* also starred Colleen Grey, Elisha Cook, Jr., Vince Edwards, Ted de Corsia and Marie Windsor, with additional dialog written by the noir master, Jim Thompson. If you haven't seen it, check it out after reading the book. The two make a great combination.

Rick Ollerman's excellent introduction, besides detailing what is known about White's career, delves into the films made from these two books. Lionel White was one of the go-to guys for great thriller plots back in the 1950s. Even Quentin Tarantino acknowledged him as one of the inspirations for *Reservoir Dogs*. White was excellent at setting up "perfect crime situations" and then showing how they gradually—piece by piece—tend to fall apart.

*The Snatchers*, White's first published novel, is the story of a group of kidnapers who grab a young heiress, but accidentally end up with the girl's caretaker as well. The effect *she* has on the group is subtle, but strong, and you can almost hear the snapping of the plan's guy wires as each "perfect set-up" is compromised by the character's conflicting emotions.



**Lionel White**  
**The Snatchers / Clean Break**  
**978-1-944520-19-9 \$19.95**

Like Rick, I love White's early novels. But there is much to love in our final book as well, something completely different for those who would like to take a little break in all the action; two occult mysteries from Sax Rohmer: *Brood of the Witch Queen* and *The Quest of the Sacred Slipper*. Rohmer created the criminal mastermind Fu Manchu, and wrote of the many adventures he created for Nayland Smith and Dr. Petrie as they tried to stop his devilish scourge.

As Patrick William Maynard points out in his introduction, Sax Rohmer's first love was the occult history of ancient Egypt. He traveled to the pyramids with his wife during his lifetime, and accumulated much knowledge and information about the period. In fact, one of his early books is a history called *The Romance of Sorcery*. The two novels we have paired have much more in common with Rohmer's first love than the tales of the dastardly Devil Doctor.

However, we realize that a love of noir does not necessarily translate into a love of early 20th century occult mysteries, so we will give our Crime Club members a choice. As usual, Stark House Crime Club members will receive a separate query about this one. It won't ship automatically.

But before you decide, I have to share this great quote with you from *Vintage Pop Fictions* on *Brood of the Witch Queen*, who calls this a "fast-paced, clever, ingeniously contrived and thoroughly enjoyable... with vampires, black magic and occult powers that have lain dormant since the days of Ancient Egypt." How can you not love a combination like that?

Plus, you get a great introduction by Maynard, the fellow who is authorized by the Rohmer estate to continue the tales of Fu Manchu for a modern audience. He knows more about Rohmer than most of us, and gives a great background to these two thrillers from 1918 and 1919.



**Sax Rohmer**  
**Brood of the Witch Queen /**  
**The Quest of the Sacred Slipper**  
**978-1-944520-24-3 \$19.95**

So, a musical month, and a mixed batch of criminal capers and occult menace. Coming up in the months ahead we have more noir fiction from Day Keene, and some truly hardboiled stories by John McPartland. But more on them later.

Don't forget to check the bottom of the newsletter for a brief sale for those of you who enjoy our monthly bargains....

Until next month, thanks again for all your support. Always feel free to write in with suggestions if you have some favorite mystery authors of the past that we seem to be ignoring. There's no telling when a suggestion might bear fruit.

And if you enjoy automatically receiving the new lead titles we present every month via the Stark House Crime Club, encourage your friends to join. There's room for all!

Cheers,  
Greg Shepard, publisher  
Stark House Press  
griffinskye3@sbcglobal.net

The following are, as always, slightly damaged returns, most of them in ones, and available on a strictly first come, first served basis. Reply to this newsletter if you're interested via [griffinskye3@sbcglobal.net](mailto:griffinskye3@sbcglobal.net), and you will be billed for the book plus media mail shipping via [Paypal](#). Sale away....

The Bleeding Scissors / The Evil Days by Bruno Fischer - \$9  
Danger in Paradise / Malay Woman by A. S. Fleischman - \$9  
Sweet Money Gal / Life & Death of a Tough Guy by Benjamin Appel - \$9  
Snowbound / Games by Bill Pronzini - \$4  
My Lovely Executioner / Agreement to Kill by Peter Rabe - \$9

The Box / Journey Into Terror by Peter Rabe - \$9  
The Silent Wall / The Return of Marvin Palaver by Peter Rabe - \$9  
The Cut of the Whip/Bring Me Another Corpse/Time Enough to Die by Peter Rabe - \$13  
Leave Her to Hell / Let Me Kill You Sweetheart / Take Me Home by Fletcher Flora - \$11  
Lady Killer / Miasma by Elisabeth Sanxay Holding - \$8

Speak of the Devil / The Obstinate Murderer by Elisabeth Sanxay Holding - \$7  
Johnnie Porno by Charlie Stella - \$7  
Tommy Red by Charlie Stella - \$7  
Rough Riders by Charlie Stella - \$7  
Ghosts & Gamblers by E. Phillips Oppenheim - \$8

Secrets & Sovereigns by E. Phillips Oppenheim - \$8  
The Yellow Claw / The Golden Scorpion by Sax Rohmer - \$9  
Jimbo / The Education of Uncle Paul by Algernon Blackwood - \$9  
Kitten With a Whip / Kiss Her Goodbye by Wade Miller - \$8  
Night for Screaming / Any Woman He Wanted by Harry Whittington - \$9

Something in the Shadows / Intimate Victims by Vin Packer - \$8  
Only the Wicked by Gary Phillips - \$4  
Stranger at Home by Leigh Brackett - \$4  
Lust Queen / Lust Victim by Don Elliott/Robert Silverberg - \$7

Little Man, Big World / Vanity Row by W. R. Burnett - \$9



*Bring back the mystery!*