

Newsletter, Volume 7, Number 3

March 2018

Out here in Northern California, March came in like a lion. Heavy rains, hail, wind, snow in the hills. Nothing like the East Coast, but still, it roared. Whether it goes out like a lamb remains to be seen. But here in the middle of the month, on a somewhat cloudy, occasionally rainy day, it looks like it could go either way. However, Stark House definitely wants the month to sound off with a rumble and a crash of thunder, and to that end, we've got three books for you instead of the usual one or two.

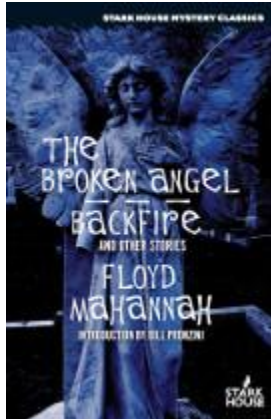
The main title is a two-fer from Floyd Mahannah: *The Broken Angel / Backfire & Other Stories*. Mahannah first appeared on the scene in 1950 with *The Yellow Hearse*, reprinted in paperback as *No Luck for a Lady*. The *New York Times* called him "outstanding," the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* called him "first rate," and the critic for the *Sacramento Union* referred to his work as "spine-tingling." Mahannah followed up with four more novels, and eleven stories. And that was it. By 1957, Mahannah's dependence on alcohol cut short his career, and he published no more after that.

Which is, you should pardon the phrase, a crime. Because as Bill Pronzini points out in his informative introduction, Mahannah "was adept at creating twisty plots, believable characters, realistic dialogue, authentically depicted California and Nevada backgrounds both urban and rural... [with writing that] stands the test of time better than that of many of his peers." In fact, Bill being a Mahannah fan, was very helpful in our putting this book together, xeroxing the stories that have been collected together here for the first time in one volume, and advising us along the way.

In *Broken Angel*, a newspaperman follows the trail of a woman who mysteriously disappears from town. She was his secretary, and he had fallen for her. And then he reads her terse farewell note, "Now forget me quickly." He doesn't, of course. He follows after her—and lands himself in the middle of a murderous scheme that takes him all over Northern California.

The other stories of Mahannah's included in this volume are equally clever, tense affairs, most of them having originally appeared in *Manhunt* magazine. If you've never read this neglected

author, you're in for a treat.



Floyd Mahannah

The Broken Angel / Backfire & Other Stories

978-1-944520-41-0 \$19.95

Stark House Crime Club members get a choice this month, because the second book is a two-fer from one of our favorite crime writers, Gil Brewer. This time we're reprinting *Flight to Darkness* and *77 Rue Paradis*, both first published by Gold Medal in the early 1950s. James Reasoner reviewed *Flight* in his *Rough Edges* blog with this delightful observation: "Murder, madness, swamps, gators, a savagely beautiful woman . . . it doesn't get much better than this for noir fans."

77 Rue Paradis offers something completely different, a European espionage thriller. This was written back when Brewer was turning out two to three books a year at a white heat, trying his hand at westerns (*Some Must Die*), psycho killers (*A Killer is Loose*) and with this novel, a post WWII spy book.

David Rachels, editor of the definitive Brewer story collection, *Redheads Die Quickly*, provides an insightful introduction. And we have designer Jeff Vorzimmer to thank for the production this time, providing some marvelously evocative cover art.



Gil Brewer

Flight to Darkness / 77 Rue Paradis

978-1-944520-58-8 \$19.95



If you are a member of the Crime Club you can choose this month to receive either the Brewer book, or the Mahannah. Or both. Certainly we would never discourage anyone who wanted both books.

And if you're not a member, why not? It's easy and you get to receive a lot of cool books! Just drop us an [email](#)!

But wait...there's more.

We also have a second volume of vintage horror stories from editor Jonathan E. Lewis: *Strange Island Stories*. Nineteen classic tales from Arthur Conan Doyle, Julian Hawthorne, Francis Stevens, Jack London, H. P. Lovecraft, Frank Norris, M. P. Shiel, Henry S. Whitehead, John Buchan and many more; plus one new story from the editor himself. Tales of human isolation, lost civilizations, cryptozoology, the power of nature, the cruelty of man to his fellow man, and lycanthropy ... classic supernatural fiction at its best!

Lewis's first collection, *Ancient Egyptian Supernatural Tales* (July 2016), proved that he knows the classics. *Midwest Book Review* called it "A 'must' for all dedicated fantasy fans." The critic for *Black Gate* blog pointed out that "Lewis has done a fine job assembling a stellar line-up of dark fantasy and horror stories." And noted fantasy fan and blogger George Kelley summed it up by stating, "If you're looking for some suspenseful fiction, *Ancient Egyptian Supernatural Tales* will wrap you up in thrills and chills!"

That was Egypt. This time it's islands. But with Jonathan Lewis at the helm, you can't go wrong. He'll steer you to the creepiest islands on Earth.

Jonathan Lewis (editor)

Strange Island Stories

978-1-944520-43-4 \$19.95

So, a surfeit of thrills this month. Lots to choose from. Again, if you are a Crime Club member, you can choose between Mahannah and Brewer, or receive both. You can also add *Strange Island Stories*, if you'd like. It's almost, dare we say, overkill.

Till next month--when we have three more new titles to offer (one of them a film book, just to add variety to the mix)-- we want to thank you again for all your support. So, enjoy the Ides of March! Spring is almost here.

Cheers,

Greg Shepard, publisher

Stark House Press



We also have some Sale Books to offer you this month. Yes, the damaged returns have begun to multiply again, time to clean house. If you would like to order any of these, please do so quickly as supplies may be limited. Just write to griffinskye3@sbcglobal.net, and we will bill you via Paypal. Here's what we've got to offer:

The Red Hot Typewriter: John D. MacDonald by Hugh Merrill - \$4

Tommy Red by Charlie Stella - \$4

The Babysitter by Andrew Coburn - \$4

Virgin Cay / A Night Out by Basil Heatter - \$5

Shanghai Flame / Counterspy Express by A. S. Fleischman - \$5

Perfect Victim / Winner Take All by James McKimmey - \$5

Lady Killer / Miasma by Elisabeth Sanxay Holding - \$5

The Jukebox Kings by Doug Allyn - \$5

Death and the Naked Lady / The Lady and the Cheetah by John Flagg - \$5

Brood of the Witch Queen / Quest of the Sacred Slipper by Sax Rohmer - \$6



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Bring back the mystery!