

STARK HOUSE PRESS

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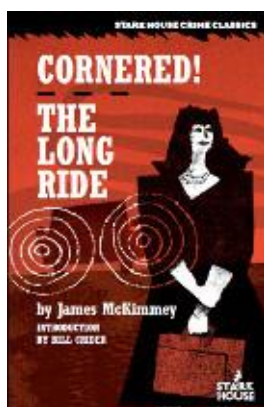
2016

Another doubled-up newsletter from the Stark House Crime Club. For one reason or another, August and September books all came out in August, giving us nothing to discuss in September. However, here we are at the first of October and we've got two fine books to talk about.

The first is a new crime classic two-fer, *Cornered!* and *The Long Ride* by James McKimney. We had been trying to track down the manager of the McKimney estate for years. With much help from author and fellow McKimney fan, Allan Guthrie, we finally succeeded.

If you haven't read McKimney before, the best comparison I can come up with are the stand-alone mysteries of John D. MacDonald. Both authors wrote a lot of paperback originals for Dell Books, and both were masters at the multiple point-of-view situation. You take a group of people with a lot of different agendas—one or two of them at least who are harboring a bit of criminal intent—and mix well. There you have the simplistic set-up for a lot of JDM's 1950s thrillers, and so too, most of McKimney's novels.

Cornered! begins when a young lady witnesses a murder, names the gunman, and must get as far away as she can when the killer puts a contract on her head. The small town where she settles—now newly married—contains its own hotbed of twisted emotions. All it needs is the hired killer to show up to light the keg, and all the best and the worst in humanity is soon revealed to the reader.



The Long Ride starts with a botched hold-up. The heist goes sour and the wrong guys gets the loot. Soon the opportunist and his unsuspecting wife join up with a group of people who are ride-sharing a trip across country. For him, the money represents a new lease on life, and he has no intention of giving it up. But the bank robber and an undercover F.B.I. agent also join the group, so a subtle cat-and-mouse game quickly ensues, with each member of the party motivated to keep something from the rest.

Cornered! / The Long Ride
978-1-944520-12-0 \$19.95

McKimney was born in Nebraska, but after going to college at San Francisco State, settled in the Bay Area for many years. While holding down various jobs--insurance salesman, clothes salesman, industrial chemicals salesman, expediter in an electronics plant--he wrote. During the 1950s, he became good friends with Philip K. Dick and had

a great letter-writing relationship, when they were both trying to break into getting their novels published. After a bit of success, McKimmey moved to the Lake Tahoe area in the 60s, where he lived the rest of his life.

Point Black Press reprinted *Squeeze Play*, one of his best thrillers, back in 2004 with an introduction by Jason Starr. This has been the only attempt to bring James McKimmey back to modern readers since his books were originally published from the late 50s to the early 70s. Time for a McKimmey rediscovery. Our new Stark House edition includes an introduction by author Bill Crider, another great fan of McKimmey's works, as we seek to spread the word. We feel that *Cornered!* and *The Long Ride* are two of his best, both tightly written little gems, and a great place to start.

We already received a very enthusiastic review from Kristofer Upjohn at *Noir Journal*, who had this to say about *Cornered!*: "A goddam fine crime novel with nary a bit of fat, all lean, all muscle, a taut and efficient suspenser that kindles its fires of tension early and keeps em stoked right to the explosive, surprising finale." With this kind of response, we hope this is only the beginning. We would love to see more McKimmey books in print.

And speaking of authors we're championing this month, we also have a new and final Mercedes Lambert book to offer you, *El Niño*, which was originally published under the author's real name, Douglas Anne Munson, back in 1990. We decided to reprint this, her first novel, under her "Mercedes Lambert" pseudonym because this is how she is best known.

Kate Braverman, fellow author/poet and good friend to the late Ms. Munson, has provided a new introduction in which she discusses the Los Angeles of the late 1980s and offers some background to the book. Munson studied law at UCLA with the intention of becoming a lawyer. She wrote *El Niño* while working as a dependency court attorney, and the novel is filled with every darkness imaginable. The main character, Sandy Walker, is a child abuse court attorney, where she encounters the absolute worst in humanity. She is the victim of abuse, too, and seeks to drown her guilt and shame in bottles of brandy. Redemption does not come easy.

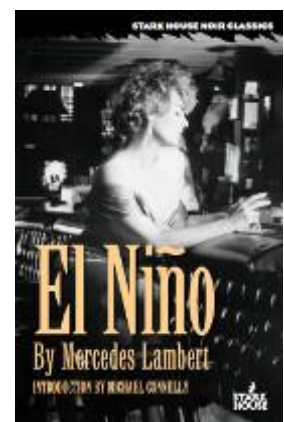
This is not an easy read, but it's a valiant one. The critic for the *Daily News* called it "an eloquent book that's so tough you have to read it with clenched teeth." *Kirkus Review* labeled it "an anguished tour of several kinds of hell." But as the *Chicago Tribune* critic pointed out, "it's not to be missed by anyone who cares about what's happening to our society on the edge of the 21st century."

Or as Kate Braverman said at the time it was originally published, "*El Niño* burns with a radiance and intensity... It doesn't compromise."

El Niño

978-1-944520-10-6 \$15.95

Simply put, *El Niño* is too important a book to let it languish out of print. Viking Press published it in hardback, and Pinnacle Books reprinted a paperback version in 1992 with a new title, *Hostile*



Witness. We thought of using the friendlier Pinnacle title, but felt we owed it to the memory of Douglas Anne Munson to keep the ambiguous title she gave the book. We proudly offer this drama to Stark House Crime Club readers, but also understand that many of you will not want to receive this one as part of the Crime Club plan. That's okay. We'll email you separately and give you a head's up on this one before we publish. (The McKimney book will be the only book to *automatically* ship in the month of October.)

Those are the only two Stark House books for October. November includes a 3-fer by Harry Whittington, a new Black Gat book by Helen Nielsen, and if we can get it finished in time, another double Edgar Wallace classic reprint.

But that's for the next newsletter. For now, we want to make you an offer on some of our backlist. First of all, we asked Charlie Stella if he'd be willing to sign some of his books for us, and he graciously agreed. So we have a special offer of SIGNED COPIES of *Johnny Porno*, *Rough Riders* and *Tommy Red* which we are willing to sell at a 25% discount, or \$11.95 each, while supplies last.

We also have a few damaged returns to offer this month:

- 📖 Little Men, Big World/Vanity Row by W. R. Burnett
- 📖 Leave Her to Hell/Let Me Kill You, Sweetheart/Take Me Home by Fletcher Flora
- 📖 The Cut of the Whip/Bring Me Another Corpse/Time Enough to Die by Peter Rabe
- 📖 Rapture Alley/Winter Girl/Strictly for the Boys by Harry Whittington
- 📖 To Find Cora/Like Mink, Like Murder/Body and Passion by Harry Whittington
- 📖 The Erotics/Gun the Dame Down/Angry Arnold by Gil Brewer
- 📖 Sign for the Sacred by Storm Constantine

These are all more expensive books than our usual two-fers, retailing from \$20.95 to \$24.95. On a first come, first serve basis, we will be willing to sell these books for \$9 each, plus media mail shipping. Just respond to the email address-- griffinskye3@sbcglobal.net – and we'll process your order via paypal.

And now we leave you with a few recent critical quotes for our August/September books:

Mad Dog Barked by Rick Ollerman

“Rick Ollerman just keeps on getting better...This is going to be a strong contender for a Shamus.”—Bill Crider, *Pop Culture Magazine*

“Ollerman has the goods and this one could make a few best-of lists, including some award nominations, if the cards are dealt fair and square.”—Charlie Stella, *Temporary Knuckleline*

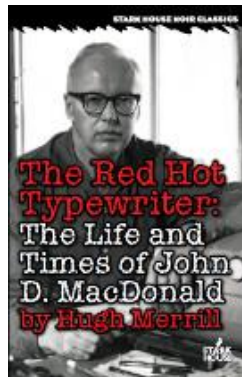
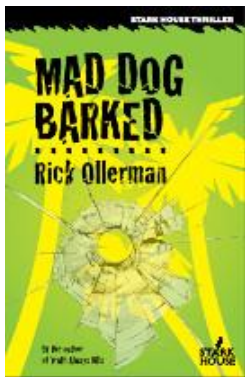
“Ollerman has redefined the detective novel for contemporary crime fiction readers, and gives us a complex and intriguing story at the same time.”—Alan Cranis, *Bookgasm*

The Red Hot Typewriter: The Life and Times of John D. MacDonald by Hugh Merrill

“This short biography by the late Merrill (d. 2015), first published in 2000, is the perfect introduction to author John Dann MacDonald.”—*Publishers Weekly*

She Got What She Wanted by Orrie Hitt

“I haven't read a great many books by Orrie Hitt, but this is the best one of the bunch, by far. It's a serious novel about business, with plenty of details. It has a well worked out crime scheme. If you've never read Hitt's work before, this would be a good place to start.”—Bill Crider, *Pop Culture Magazine*



Until next time....

—Greg Shepard, publisher
Stark House Press

Bring back the mystery!

