

## Newsletter, Volume 6, Number 8

Oct. 2017

October is an exciting month at Stark House Press because we get to premier what we hope will be the start of a new reprint program bringing the Al Wheeler series by Carter Brown back. The Wheeler books—featuring Lt. Al Wheeler of the sheriff's homicide division in fictional Pine City, California, somewhere near Hollywood—sold hundreds of thousands of copies starting in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s.

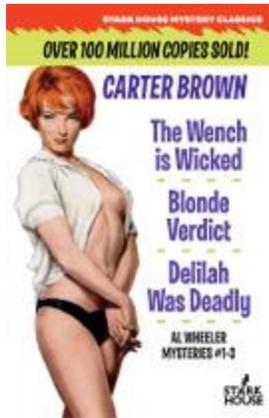
Set in the L.A. world of the rich and the glamorous, the Wheeler books combined clever plots with a bawdy humor, and could be found at any newsstand and drugstore 50 or so years ago, usually with voluptuous cover art by Robert McGuinness to tempt the predominantly male audience (including President Kennedy, supposedly a big fan). Wheeler and other Carter Brown characters like private eyes Rick Holman, Danny Boyd and Mavis Seidlitz, lawyer Randy Roberts, and scriptwriter Larry Baker, were the creation of Alan G. Yates, an Englishman who settled in Australia and began to write for Horwitz Publishing House as Peter Carter Brown.

The folks at Horwitz were pretty canny. They hired full-time writers to turn out every type of genre fiction, producing new books every month in short, snappy editions. They contracted with publishers around the world to export the Carter Brown books (starting with Signet Books in the U.S.), and began flooding the market with these delightful pulp stories, slightly revised for the American market.

The first Al Wheeler book to be published in the States was *The Body* in 1958, a re-write of *No Law Against Angels*. This wasn't the first Wheeler book, however. The series actually began six books before that with *The Wench is Wicked* in 1955. In fact, five books in the series were only published by Horwitz in Australia, including the third book in the series, *Delilah Was Deadly*.

These two novels—*Wench* and *Delilah*—plus *Blonde Verdict*, which was revised here as *The Brazen* in 1960, are together again for the first time in the new Stark House edition, featuring a new introduction from Chris Yates, the author's son. We have even gone back to the original Australian version for the reprinting of *Blonde Verdict*, so that one might be slightly new to old fans of the series.

The humor is broad and the action a-plenty, and the corpses pile up fast. Al Wheeler wisecracks his way through every story, encountering a bevy of gorgeous women, but always solving the mystery in the end. Of course. Yes, finally, the first three Al Wheeler books will be available in one volume.

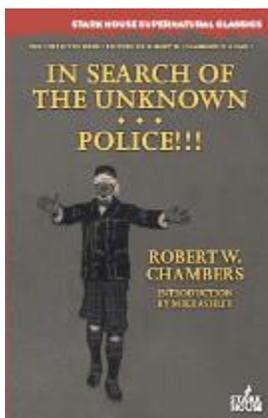


**Carter Brown**  
**Al Wheeler #1: The Wench is Wicked/Blonde Verdict/  
Delilah Was Deadly**  
**978-1-944520-33-5 \$19.95**

Also this month, we will be offering another in our ongoing series of “The Collected Weird Fiction of Robert W. Chambers.” Volume 2 includes *In Search of the Unknown* and *Police!!!*, two very oddball books, a collection of interconnected tales featuring an anthropologist from the Bronx Park Zoological Gardens who travels here and there in search of strange, exotic, and sometimes even extinct, creatures.

Robert Chambers made his mark with *The King in Yellow* in 1895, a collection of supernatural stories that still enchant audiences today. *In Search of the Unknown* and *Police!!!* (what a title!) were originally published in 1904 and 1915, and still hold a lot of Chambers charm for those who are willing to be seduced by it. The stories may exhibit a slightly outdated sense of chivalrous romance, but the social satire at their core still comes through. And some of the stories, like “The Harbour Master” and “A Matter of Interest” (as they originally appeared in their first magazine appearances before they were incorporated into the book), are positively eerie, harkening back to Chambers’ early success.

Anthologist and biographer, Mike Ashley, who has graciously provided a new introduction to the book, points out that “the stories are generally light-hearted but have moments of sudden drama that take you by surprise.” Or as Hugh Lamb wrote in his introduction to the Chambers’ collection, *Out of the Dark 2* (Ash-Tree Press), “the stories from *In Search of the Unknown* are Chambers at his best, eminently readable.”



**Robert W. Chambers**  
**In Search of the Unknown / Police!!!**  
**978-1-944520-38-0 \$17.95**

As usual, Stark House Crime Club members will receive the Carter Brown 3-fer automatically. If you are a member and want the Chambers book as well, you will have a chance to respond to a separate email query on that one. It won't be shipped unless you ask for it.

If you enjoy classic supernatural literature from the turn of the century, there is more from Robert W. Chambers to come. More Algernon Blackwood as well. Everything old is new again at Stark House.

Which brings us to Rick Ollerman's *Hardboiled, Noir and Gold Medals*. This recent collection of essays, many drawn from introductions to various Stark House books, was a hit at summer conventions, selling out at Bouchercon and generating some good word of mouth. If you haven't picked up a copy of Rick's book yet—Crime Club members received theirs back in July—ask for it by name at your local bookstore. Here are what the critics are saying...

“A 'must read' for all dedicated fans of the noir mystery/suspense genre.”

—*Midwest Book Review*

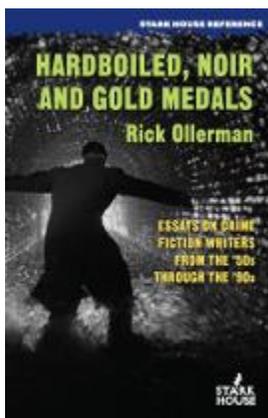
“*Hardboiled, Noir and Gold Medals* ought to be read by anyone wanting to know more about the world of pulp writers.”

—Jim Burns, *The Penniless Press On-Line*

“Noir revisionists Stark House Press's go-to-guy and pulp-savant Rick Ollerman has been pumping out feisty, personal intros to their awesome collections of lost and rare pulp and noir novels and their creators for years and now it's his turn to shine, with this equally feisty and personal collection of those essays, plus a slew of new material written specifically for this volume.

Hmmmm.... recycling old intros to make a new book? Who's this guy think he is? Lawrence Block? Highly recommended.”

—*Thrilling Detective*



**Rick Ollerman**  
**Hardboiled, Noir and Gold Medals: Essays on Crime Fiction Writers from the '50s**  
**through the '90s**  
**978-1-944520-32-8 \$17.95**

Meantime, we're still selling plenty of Peter Rabe's new one, *Girl on a Big Brass Bed/The Spy Who Was 3 Feet Tall/Code Name Gadget*, featuring reluctant agent Manny deWitt. Again, here are what the critics are saying:

"Plenty of international intrigue ... swift and fun."

—Kristofer Upjohn, *Noir Journal*

"The deWitt series comes as close to the popular spy fiction of the time as Rabe ever got. But in typical Rabe fashion, the deWitt novels are decidedly different from other works of spy or espionage fiction...

of particular interest to Rabe's many devoted readers."

—Alan Cranis, *Bookgasm*

"These droll adventures, which come with a helpful and admiring intro by Rabe aficionado Rick Ollerman, are amusing and well-told, their eccentric humour really setting them apart from the scores of similar thrillers that littered paperback shelves in the 1960s.

—Sergio Angelini, *Tipping My Fedora*

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Next month we present another classic pair of noir westerns. Last year it was Harry Whittington. This time we offer two by Clifton Adams. We hope you enjoy the addition of a few westerns to the list. Crime fiction is crime fiction no matter when and where it is set, and we feel that if you take a criminal out of his car and off the mean streets and put him on a horse with a six-gun strapped to his waist, he's still the same old badass with a hard-bitten story to tell. More on that next month.

And to whet the noir appetites for next year, it might be a good time to mention that we just signed a new contract to bring back Gil Brewer's *The Red Scarf* and *A Killer is Loose*, two of his best novels.

Also, Bill S. Ballinger's *Portrait in Smoke* and *The Longest Second*, too long out of print. Enough said for now, but 2018 is already looking good.

Now it's time to offer a few more sale books from the slightly dinged pile of Stark House returns. As always, it's a first come, first served sale, and if you're interested, just write to us at [griffinskye3@sbcglobal.net](mailto:griffinskye3@sbcglobal.net), and we'll bill you via **paypal**, or hold the books for you if you want to send a check.

Here's the list:

Sleep With the Devil/Wake Up to Murder/Joy House by Day Keene – \$8  
The Jukebox Kings by Doug Allyn - \$6  
Sweet Money Girl/Life & Death of a Tough Guy by Benjamin Appel - \$6  
Nude on Thin Ice/Memory of Passion by Gil Brewer - \$6  
The Erotics/Gun the Dame Down/Angry Arnold by Gil Brewer - \$7  
False Starts by Malcolm Braly - \$6  
Little Men, Big World/Vanity Row by W. R. Burnett - \$7  
Lust Queen/Lust Victim by Don "Robert Silverberg" Elliott - \$3  
Hero's Lust/The Man I Killed/House of Evil by Jaediker/Walker/Lipman - \$8  
The Lady Killer/Miasma by Elisabeth Sanxay Holding - \$6

And three early fantasy titles...

Calenture by Storm Constantine - \$7  
Sign for the Sacred by Storm Constantine - \$7  
The Oracle Lips by Storm Constantine (hardback)- \$5

Till next time....

Cheers,  
Greg Shepard, publisher  
Stark House Press



*Bring back the mystery!*