

# The Post-War Years and the Evolution of the PBO

by Bruce Black

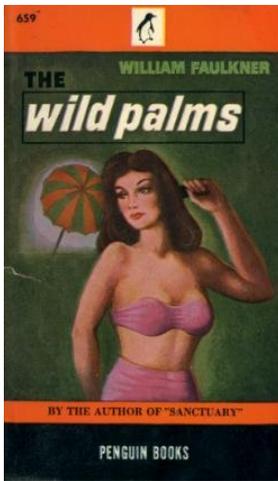
Shortly after the war, the paperback industry exploded onto the U.S. publishing scene with such unrestrained growth, that within a decade, supply would far exceed demand. In an industry with such diversity as this one, the evolution of paperbacks during the late 1940's was predictable, at least from the aspect of an armchair quarterback looking back at the era. Publishers were forced to find gimmicks to make their books stand apart from the others. The market niches were all there to be filled. They only had to pick and choose.

It soon became obvious that post-war tastes had evolved. Returning servicemen were more conservative than they'd been when they left. They longed for life at home; for families, and idealistic family values. On the other hand, soldiers overseas had been afforded a glimpse of books published outside the narrower constraints placed on American printers. American censorship laws were some of the most restrictive in the world, and now many prospective book-buyers in this country had been able to see that fact first hand. This gave further leeway to publishers trying to find their post-war identities, and many chose to "push the limits" of what social conservatives viewed as appropriate.

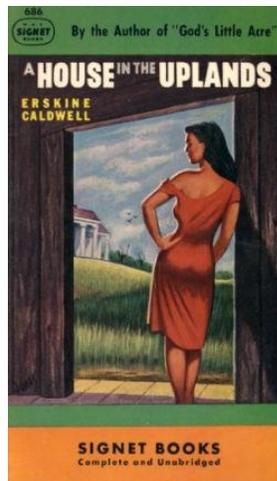
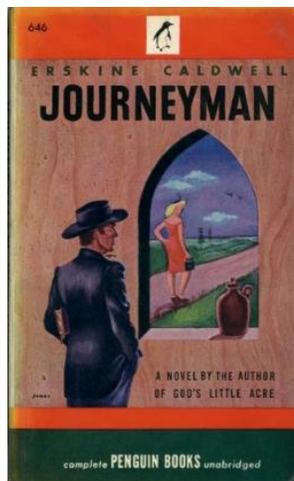
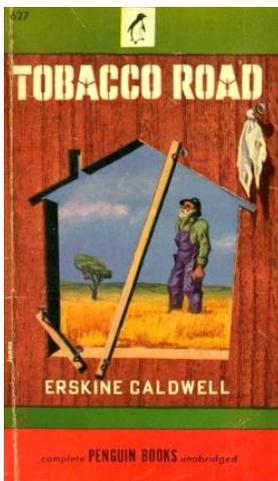
## NAL / Signet

If the explosion had a single source of ignition, it could probably be traced to Penguin, with the arrival of one player in our drama and the departure of another. The arrival was Victor Weybright, who joined the U.S. operation in 1945, and almost immediately aligned himself politically and philosophically with our old friend Kurt Enoch. Ian Ballantine was being seen more and more as a wild, headstrong cowboy by Allen Lane, back in England. Ballantine now found himself constantly at odds with those around him, and finally, in 1946, he walked out in disgust.

But rather than bringing Penguin back into line with the British operation, Weybright and Enoch began a long, carefully planned course of action that would separate the American company entirely from its English parent. The last "official" U.S. Penguin was #659, published in January, 1948. It would be reprinted in March of the same year using the new colophon and company title. *New American Library (NAL)*, would ultimately become the largest paperback publisher in the country. The *Signet* label would soon replace the former *Penguin* fiction offerings; and on the non-fiction side of the fence, *Mentor* would replace *Pelican*.

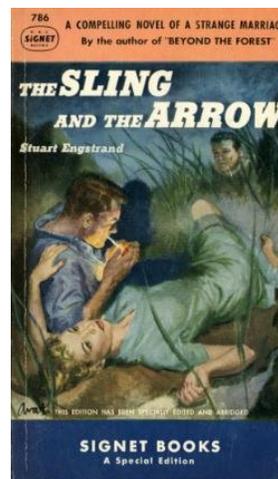
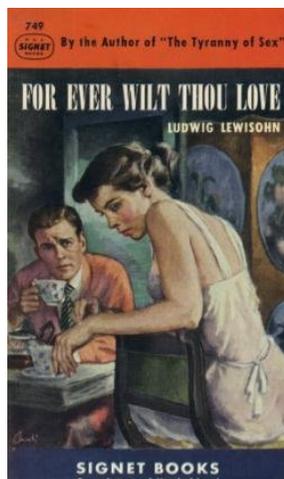


The last official Penguin, #659, and the first reprint. For awhile, the books bore the name *Penguin/Signet*, but they were clearly produced by *New American Library (NAL)*.



Erskine Caldwell  
"Keyhole Covers"  
painted by Robert  
Jonas

Penguin 627  
Penguin 646  
Signet 686



A few Early  
Signet Covers by  
James Avati.

He would  
eventually paint  
about 150 covers  
for NAL

Signet 735  
Signet 749  
Signet 786

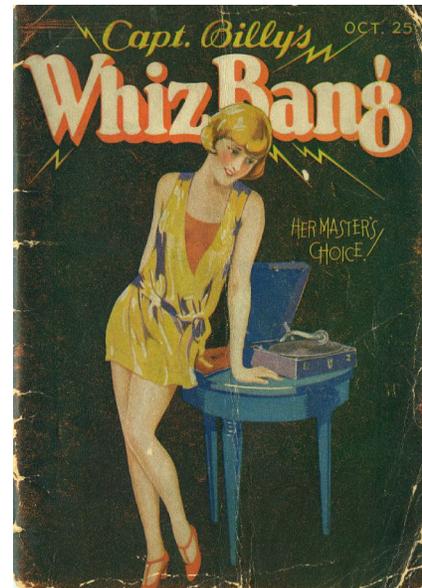
Weybright quickly established himself as the head of one of the most influential companies in the world, considering the number of books the organization put out. Historian Thomas L. Bonn, in his book *Heavy Traffic & High Culture* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), goes so far as to call Weybright “America’s literary gatekeeper,” and he is arguably correct. Overall, the *Mentor* books were extremely conservative, and they were very often used in college classrooms as companion textbooks (and were quite reasonable, at 35¢ per copy). The Signet lineup consisted of reprints of books that could be described as more “artistic” than works from other paperback publishing houses, and they were thought-provoking and very often controversial.

Just as interesting was Weybright’s use of cover art, some of which was already groundbreaking in the *Penguin* line. This included a series of “picture-through-a-picture” scenes painted by Robert Jonas for regular Penguin & Signet author Erskine Caldwell. (Today, they’re known as the “Keyhole Covers” by paperback collectors.) And then Weybright became enamored with the paintings of James Avati; so much so, that it soon became evident among cover artists, that if they wanted to sell to Signet, they’d have to be willing to copy Avati’s style. Weybright’s intention here was clear: the pictures on his covers constituted art ... REAL art. And the unspoken association was that the works between the covers were art, as well.

But Weybright didn’t want to be bothered with the primary concern that had brought Ian Ballantine to Penguin to begin with: distribution. (Ballantine had taken his main distribution contractor, Curtis, with him when he left to start Bantam.) Weybright decided to outsource that little job, and in so doing, he inadvertently opened the door to one of the most important publishers in American history, at least as far as vintage paperback collectors are concerned: Fawcett’s *Gold Medal*. It happened this way:

## Gold Medal

The Fawcett Publishing Company had been around since 1919, when brothers Wilford and Roger Fawcett first printed the enormously popular humor magazine: Captain Billy’s Whiz-Bang. (Wilford, a veteran of WWI, referred to himself as “Captain Billy” throughout his career. “Whiz-Bang” was a nickname for a rather nasty artillery round.) Captain Billy died in 1940, but his four sons continued to be active in the massive publishing empire that included magazines such as *Mechanix Illustrated*, *True*, *Woman’s Day*, and the comics *Captain Midnight*, *Bulletman*, *Spysmasher*, and the most famous, *Captain Marvel*. Their distribution network reached from coast to coast. When they agreed to distribute NAL’s books, they had to sign a non-competition agreement that prohibited them from putting out their own line of paperback reprints for at least ten years.

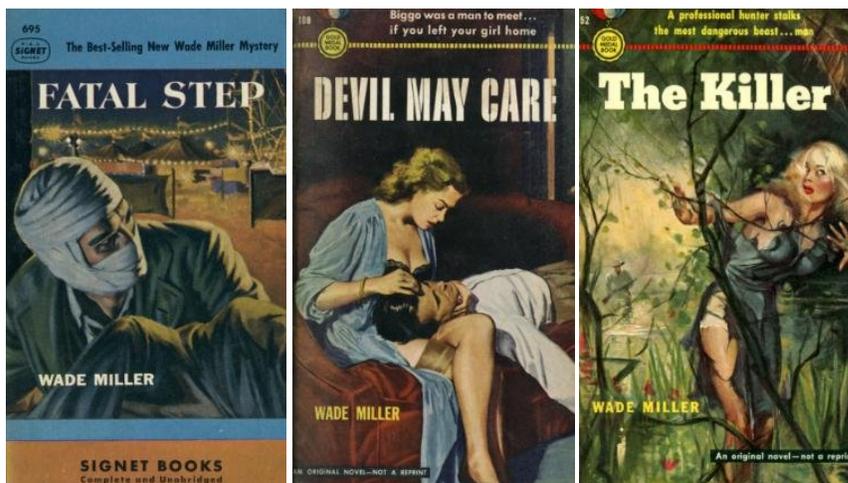


However, as distributors, Fawcett had access to NAL marketing data, and Circulation Director Roscoe Fawcett was astounded by the popularity of the *Signet* books. He very much wanted Fawcett to enter the paperback market, but how could they do so without violating the non-competition agreement? It eventually led to one of the biggest “loopholes” in contract history. Fawcett’s books would not compete with NAL’s “reprints” ... they would market a line of “paperback originals.”

By odd coincidence, *Gold Medal* books were the exact height, width and thickness as *Signets*, and they fit perfectly on the racks that Fawcett had originally earmarked exclusively for that company. There were a few tense moments when legal action was considered, but eventually, NAL decided not to press the point. Maybe they should have. *Gold Medal* books were an immediate success. And it took only a little while before authors discovered the advantages of writing for a publisher that would ONLY print paperback originals (PBO’s).

To illustrate this, let’s consider the case of hardboiled mystery authors Robert Wade and Bill Miller, who jointly wrote 33 thrillers under the pseudonym “Wade Miller.” Their books were primarily issued by hardcover publisher *Farrar, Straus* and pushed into paperback reprint (usually after a single printing) by NAL’s *Signet*. The authors received their full royalty for the hardcover; but by contract, NAL paid half of the authors’ paperback royalties back to *Farrar, Straus*. Also, hardboiled thrillers weren’t exactly *Signet*’s “niche market,” and so the paperback runs were generally small. Wade and Miller (Weybright liked to refer to them as “The Boys”) soon realized that receiving a full royalty on larger paperback runs at *Gold Medal* might easily exceed the amount of money they’d receive from both a hardcover issue plus half-royalties on paperback reprints at their present publishers. Suddenly, writing directly for a paperback company might actually pay MORE than the conventional “pipeline” approach to publishing.

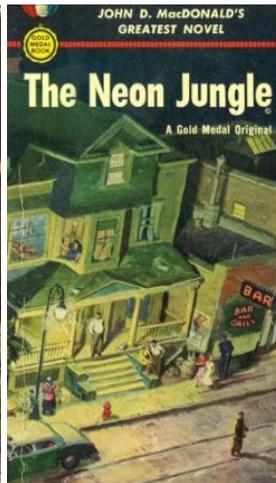
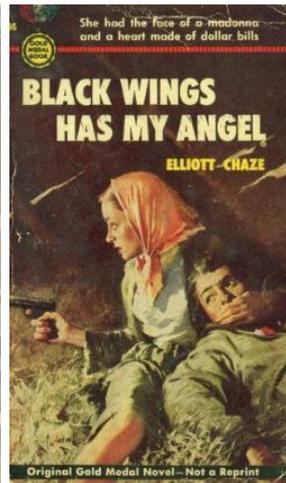
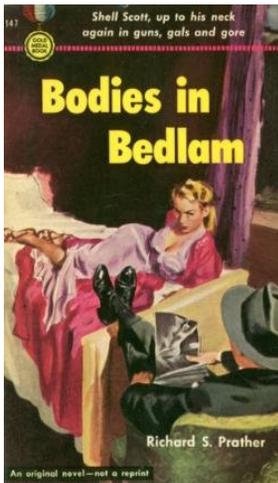
This attracted a huge and very diverse group of writers who became *Gold Medal*’s “staff” of regular contributors of original fiction. Besides Wade Miller, these included John D. MacDonald, Ann Bannon, David Goodis, Theodore Pratt, Bruno Fischer, MacKinlay Kantor, Sax Rohmer, Harry Whittington, Richard S. Prather, Steven Marlow, Vin Packer, John Faulkner, Donald Hamilton, and many, many others.



Three books by Wade Miller (Robert Wade and Bill Miller)

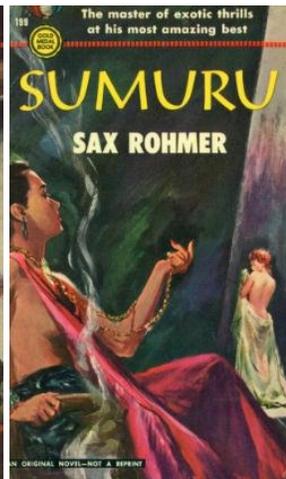
Signet 695  
Gold Medal 108  
Gold Medal 152

The Gold Medals are PBO’s



PBO's by Richard S. Prather, Elliot Chaze, John D. MacDonald

Gold Medal 147  
Gold Medal 296  
Gold Medal 323



PBO's by Theodore Pratt, Sax Rohmer, Vin Packer (Marijane Meaker)

Gold Medal 369  
Gold Medal 199  
Gold Medal 222

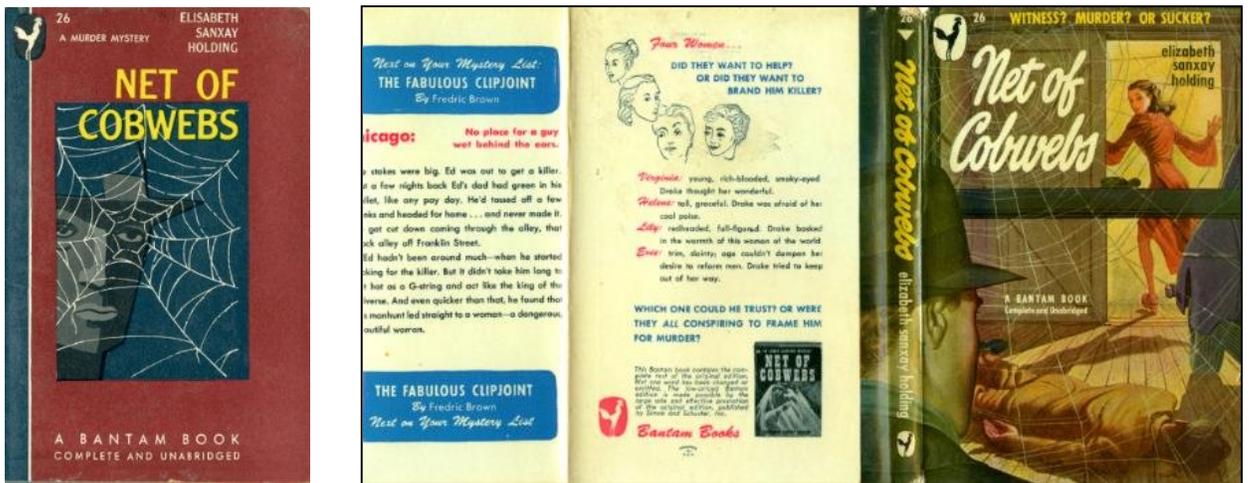
## Bantam

Meanwhile, as I've already mentioned, Ian Ballantine had ceased being Penguin's driving force, and had put all of that effort into a new paperback publishing concern: *Bantam*. He put together a group of publishers and investors to include Bennett Cerf of *Random House*, John O'Connor of *Grosset & Dunlap*, Charles Scribner, Meredith Wood of the *Book of the Month Club*, and other heavy-hitters in New York publishing circles. They provided Ballantine's literary works, and most importantly, his start-up operating capital for the publishing venture, but they also became Bantam's Board of Directors. In other words, Ballantine STILL wasn't actually in charge of the venture. If ever there was a man born to be "in charge," it was Ballantine. Constantly at odds with them, he would last at Bantam until 1952, when the board would declare that it had finally had enough, and they fired him outright.

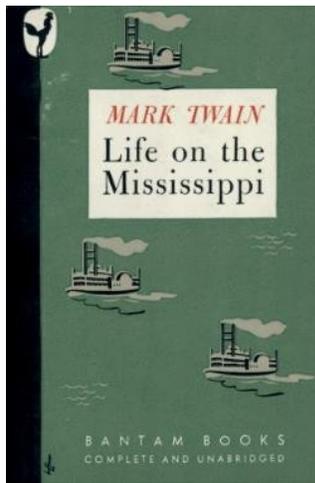
Meanwhile, the books themselves were nothing short of outstanding. They were exceedingly well made, sported exceptional cover art, and were some of the best titles available. While Weybright at *NAL* was busy picking the titles he believed Americans SHOULD read, Ballantine at *Bantam* walked around town and asked people what sort of books they'd LIKE to read. The result may not sound appealing to the majority of today's readers, but looking at literary tastes from that era, it makes sense. One out of four Bantams published during Ballantine's tenure was a western ... more than any other paperback house at the time, and they were immensely popular.

Ballantine pleaded with the Board of Directors for permission to print original works. And even more outlandish in their eyes, he wanted to *increase* royalties to authors in an attempt to attract better works. Both views were directly opposite those of the Board members. After all, these were businessmen who sought more profits from their own publishing companies, and they had no intention of increasing expenditures at a mere paperback reprint operation. (Keep in mind that the board members' various publishing houses were getting half of the authors' paperback royalties by contract.)

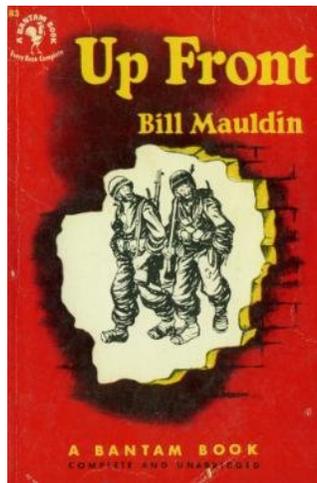
Of all the board members, Bennett Cerf was Ballantine's only real advocate. He probably realized that Ballantine would not simply go away. Instead, he would likely become a formidable competitor. And that, of course, is exactly what happened. Ballantine and his wife, Betty, formed a new paperback house bearing their own name as soon as they left Bantam, and he immediately began publishing original works with greatly increased royalties to attract new authors. The Ballantine Publishing Group is still a major publisher today. (It's a subsidiary of Random House.)



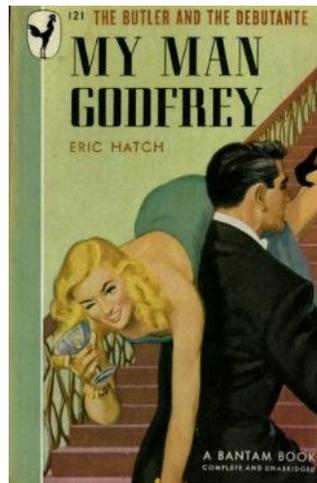
Bantam 26. There were about two dozen dust jackets in the Bantam run



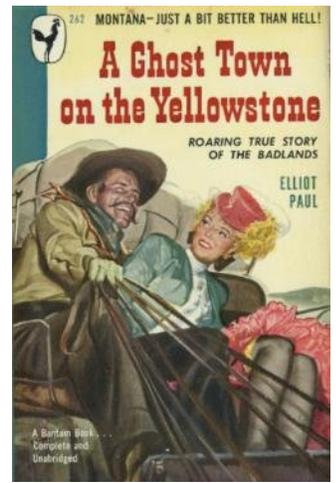
Bantam #1



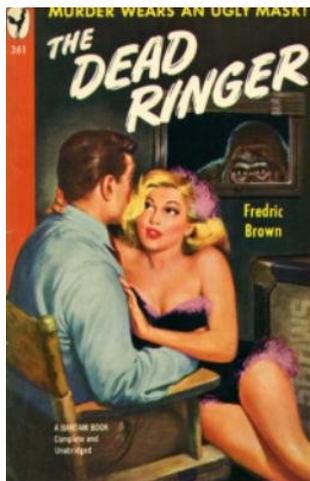
Bantam 83



Bantam 121



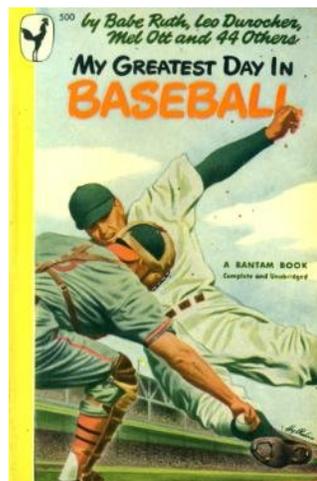
Bantam 262



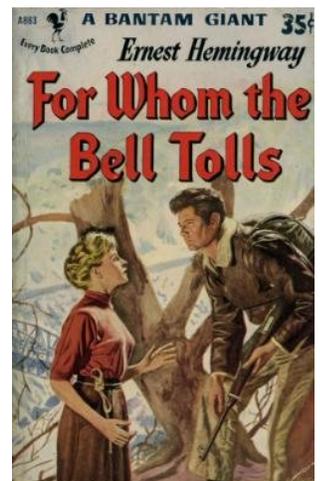
Bantam 361



Bantam 423



Bantam 500



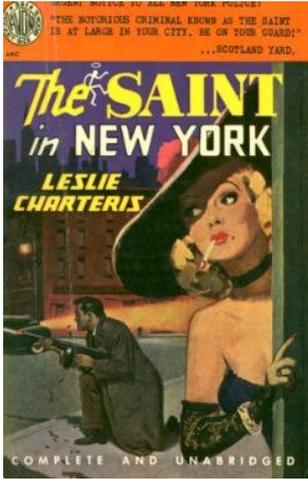
BantamA883

## The Earlier Labels

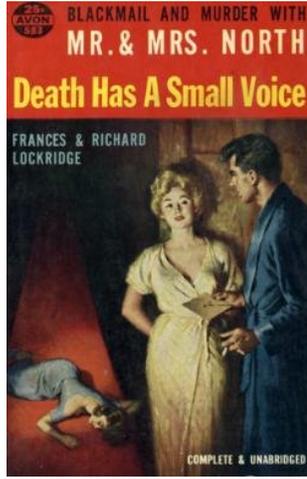
The publishing companies established during the pre-war years were certainly not resting on their laurels during this period. *Pocket Book* evolved into a thinner, more modern format that bore a distinctive silver spine and significantly better cover art. Avon launched a 35¢ “T-series,” and relied heavily on serialized characters, such as Leslie Charteris’ *Saint* novels and Francis & Richard Lockridge’s *Mr. & Mrs. North* .

Dell created several new labels, including Dell First Editions, which contained many PBO’s. In 1951, the “Dell Ten Cent Books” constituted a failed experiment which provided books that have become quite important to collectors today. These were thin, 64-page novelettes, slightly smaller in dimension than regular mass market books. The

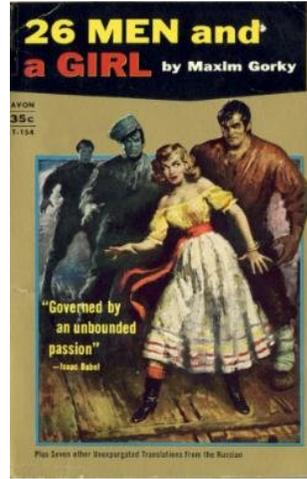
low price simply couldn't sustain a profit, and the project died after just 36 titles. There were some PBO's in the bunch (though they'd been printed before in pulp magazines, this was their first appearance in book form), and they included #11, *Marihuana*, by William Irish; #33, *The Case of the Dancing Sandwiches*, by Fredric Brown; and #36, *Universe*, by Robert Heinlein.



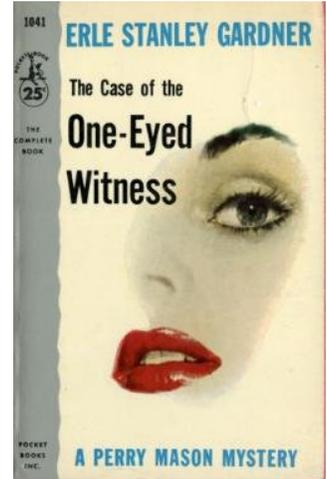
Avon 321



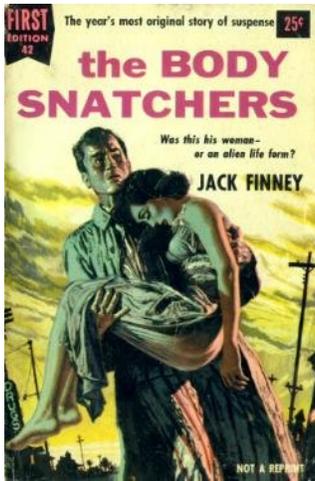
Avon 583



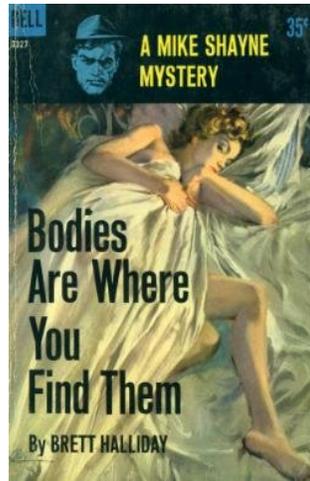
Avon T-154



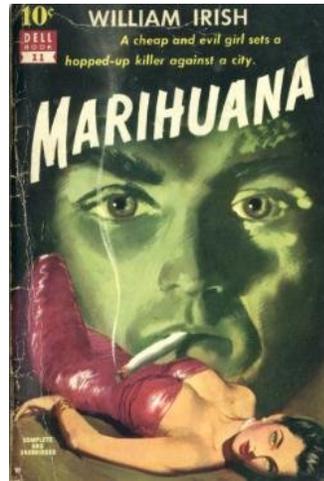
Pocket Book 1041



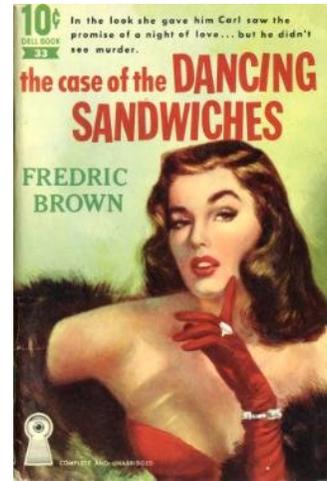
Dell 1<sup>st</sup> Ed 42 (PBO)



Dell D327



Dell 10¢ 11 (PBO)



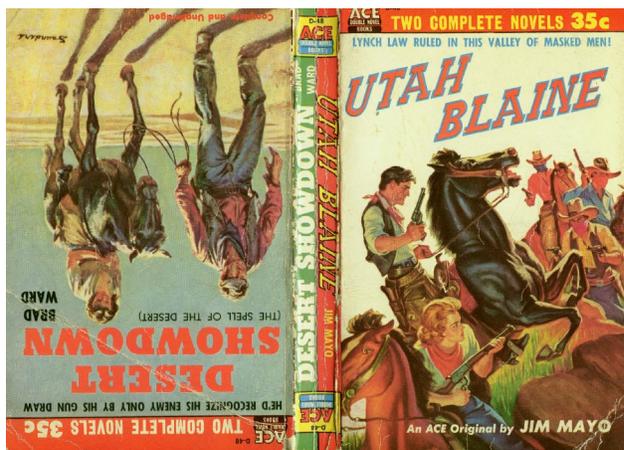
Dell 10¢ 33 (PBO)

## Ace

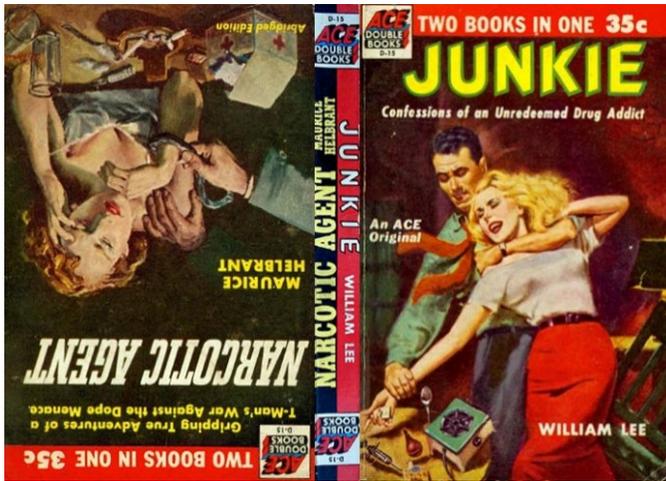
*Ace Books* was the creation of A.A. Wyn, who headed a pulp magazine publishing company that included *Ace Sports*, *Ten Detective Aces*, *Western Aces*, *Secret Agent X*, and many, many others. The paperback concern was launched in 1952, and as its head, Wyn hired a veteran in the pulp and paperback industry, Donald A. Wollheim, most recently an editor at Avon. Wollheim's passion was science fiction, a relatively new art form in the literary world, and he had already compiled two sci fi anthologies, one for *Pocket Book* in 1943, and one for *Viking* in 1945.

Wyn's vision for Ace was the "double-novel," and while this was certainly not a new concept, the way the Aces were printed endear them to today's vintage paperback collector every bit as much as Dell's "mapbacks." Instead of sporting a front cover with both titles and then having one novel follow the other sequentially, each novel had its own full cover, while its companion novel's cover was printed upside-down on the back. The two novels met in the middle. In this format, it was impossible to tell which novel was intended to be "first," since each was given equal coverage, including its own title page.

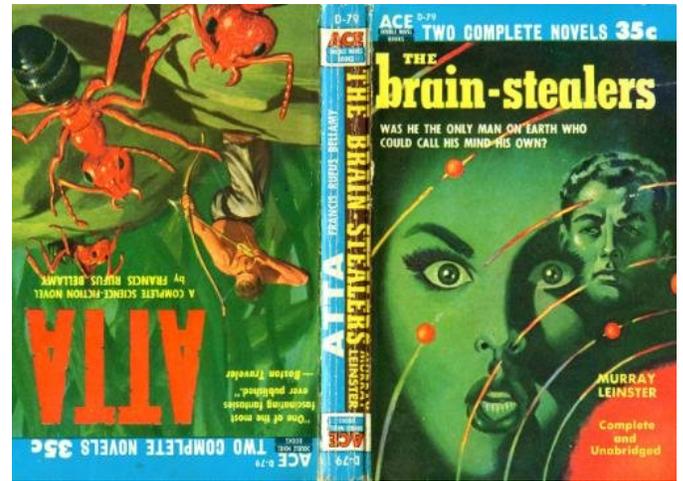
Wyn's other intention with the books (while not a firm rule), was to present one PBO and one reprint in each novel pair. He started with a pair of mystery novels, followed by a pair of westerns, then another pair of mysteries, etc. Adventure novel and humor novel "pairs" were added every once in awhile, but it took Wollheim until Ace D-31 to convince Wyn to allow a pair a science fiction novels (both were by A.E. van Vogt, a relatively well-established author at the time; and true to form, one of the novels was a PBO). Eventually, Ace would become the undisputed leader in science fiction. Wollheim stayed with Ace until 1971, when he left to start his own sci-fi label: *DAW Books*.



Ace D-48 included a PBO by Louis L'Amour, writing under the pseudonym Jim Mayo



Ace D-15



Ace D-79

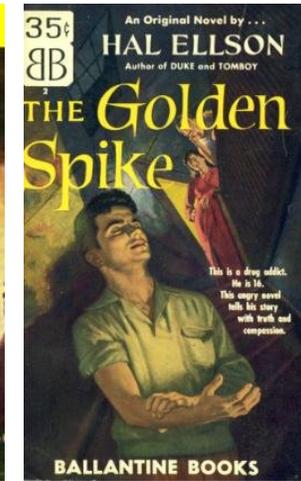
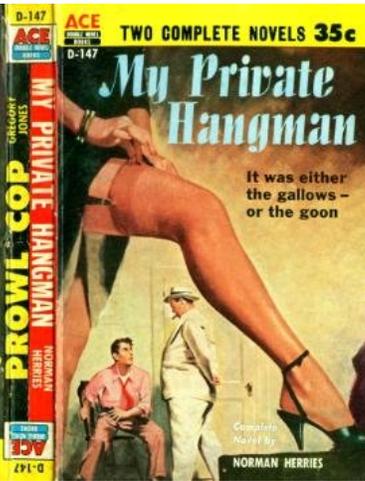
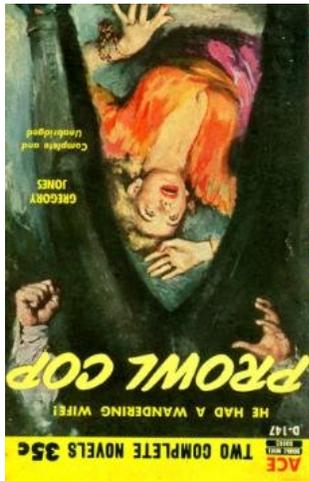
One of the most-sought-after vintage paperbacks in existence is Ace D-15, a pair of drug related crime novels: *Junkie*, by William Lee, and *Narcotic Agent*, by Maurice Helbrant, printed in 1953. Novels about narcotics were relatively popular, but little further interest was shown in the book for years. Then it came to light that “William Lee” was a pseudonym for William S. Burroughs, and that this had been a first printing of his first novel. Almost immediately, the book’s worth increased to a thousand percent of its cover price, and it has only become more valuable since then. (In point of fact, the Ace *Junkie* was heavily “expurgated,” not due to the drug use, but because of homosexual references. The unexpurgated version did not see print until 1977. It was published by Penguin.)

## Ballantine

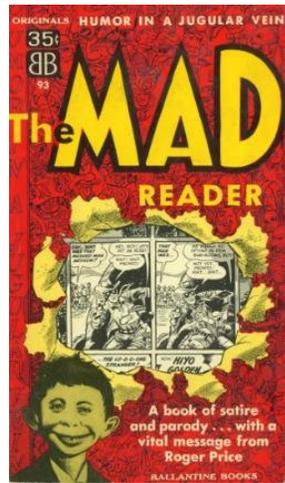
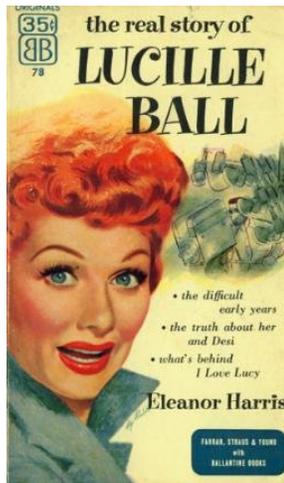
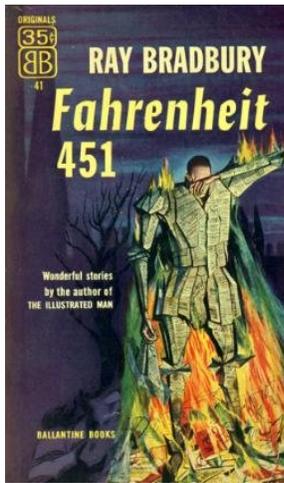
Not all of Ian Ballantine’s ideas were good ones. In order to attract authors to write directly for *Ballantine*, he decided to simultaneously launch a hardcover AND paperback publishing venture and release originals in both media simultaneously.

He actually went to the writers’ guild union halls and pushed his idea of much higher royalties: 8% for the hardcovers, and full royalties for the paperbacks (no “split” with the hardcover publisher, like with other paperback houses). The writers were skeptical, to say the least. There *had* to be a catch somewhere.

As it turned out, the hardcover books weren’t really “full size books,” though they *were* slightly larger than the paperbacks. They sold for much less than other books of the time, usually about \$2.00. And while they WERE hardcovers, their pages were pulp (the same paper used in the paperbacks). The hardcover idea never really caught on, but as with other failed experiments in this era, that actually only makes the hardcover books more valuable to collectors today.

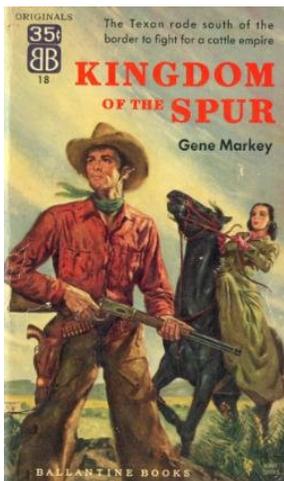


Ace D-147  
Ballantine #2



Ballantine 41  
Ballantine 78  
Ballantine 93

All Ballantines shown on this page are PBO's



Ballantine 18

There was a good assortment of genres, and Ballantine published many more science fiction titles than anyone else during this period, with the exception of Ace. Ballantine #41 was a first printing of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Ballantine #93 was *The MAD Reader*, and was the first MAD book ever published (though the magazine would eventually switch to Signet – but ... What? Me worry?). There would be many, many Ballantine key issues.

## Other Important Mass Market Publishing Houses

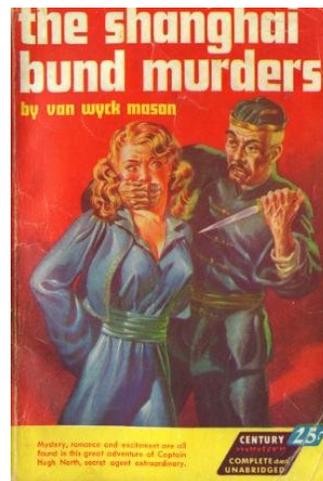
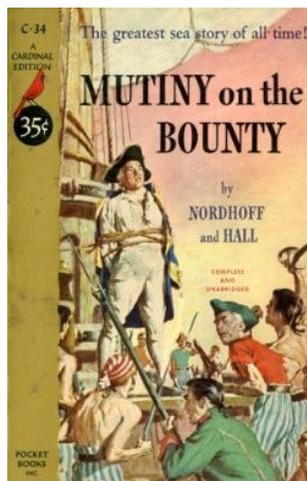
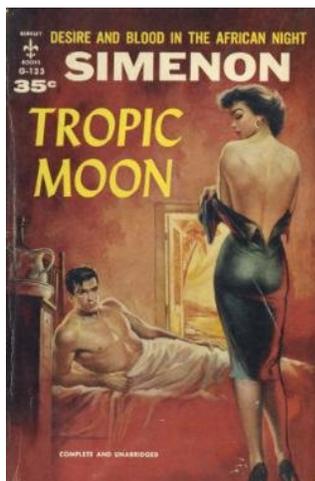
**Berkley** – Established in 1954 by several former employees of Avon, Berkley Books were well made and attractive. Several of them are collectible because of their “sleazy” cover art.

**Cardinal** – Pocket Book’s 35¢ label. Well made and very square, more like modern paperbacks, they are generally not as collectible by today’s paperback enthusiasts.

**Century** – Printed in Chicago from 1945 to 1950, there would be only 126 books issued. Most of the earlier volumes were put out as digests. Among the later mass market sized books, there would be a dozen or so adult titles.

**Crest** – Remember the ten-year deal Fawcett had with NAL where they were prohibited from putting out their own line of paperback reprints? When the contract expired, Fawcett launched *Crest* as its reprint publishing house. Some of the titles were formerly Gold Medal PBO’s. Crest had the dubious distinction of printing the first paperback to break through the one dollar level: The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, by William Shirer.

**Eton** – One of Avon’s many productions, there were 32 numbered books printed from 1951 to 1953. Some of the “sleazier” books are relatively valuable. The cover art was great!

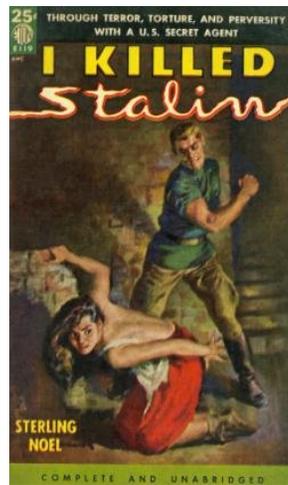
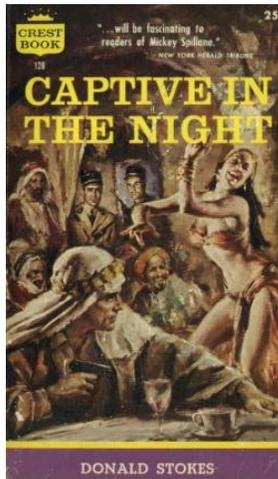


Berkley G133

Cardinal  
C-34

Century 32  
(digest-size)

**“Giants”** – Published by the Universal Publishing Company of New York, there were only 29 numbered books. The first 11 books were dubbed *Universal Giants*, and were almost as large as hardcover books. Books 12 through 29 were called *Royal Giants*. About half of the books were double-novels, i.e., two novels in one volume. Universal Giant #1 included *Prime Sucker*, a PBO by Harry Whittington. Royal Giant #20 included *High Priest of California*, a first printing of Charles Willeford’s first novel.



Crest 126

Eton E119  
(PBO)

Royal Giant  
27  
(PBO)

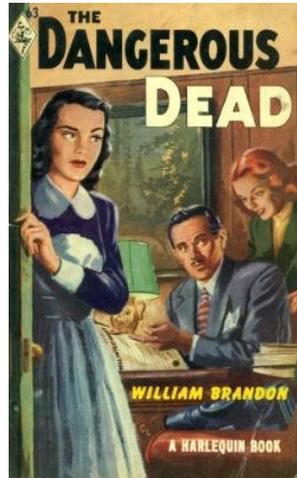
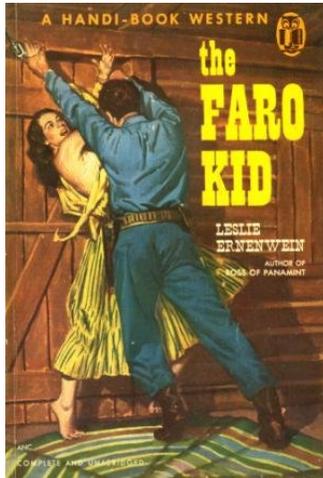
**Graphic** – Fewer than 200 books were printed from 1949 until it went out of business in 1957. It printed some of the best authors of the time, however, and the cover art was first rate.

**Handi** – Started in 1948 by Quinn Publishing in Kingston, NY. It printed only 139 books. The earlier books were an odd size, smaller than a digest, but larger than a mass market book. There were several PBO’s in the run. Handi’s are very collectible.

**Harlequin** – One of two very important early publishing houses in Canada (the other was *Collins White Circle*). The first 500 Harlequins were a mixture of all genres, and they are very collectible today. After 1960, practically all the books were romances.

**Hillman** – Published by Hillman Periodicals, New York. 205 books were printed from 1948 to 1961. Hillman #41 is *The Dying Earth*, by Jack Vance, a first printing of his first novel.

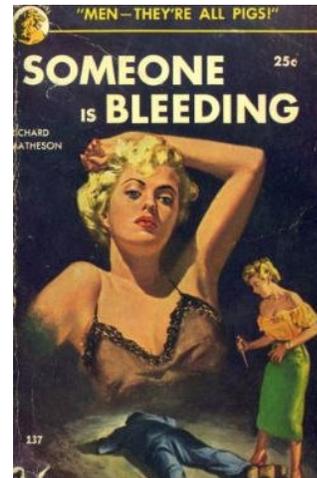
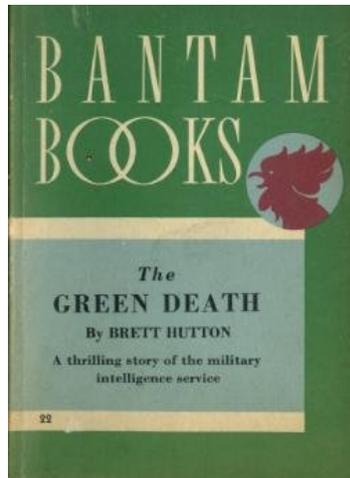
**“LA” Bantams** – *Bantam Books (Los Angeles)* was not connected to *Bantam Books (New York)* in any way. The “LA Bantams” constituted a failed experiment to distribute books using vending machines before the war. The entire run of 28 numbered editions is exceedingly collectible, especially the reprints with pictorial covers. One of these books was the first U.S. paperback to sell at auction for more than \$1,000 (and that was decades ago).



Graphic 30

Handi 83

Harlequin 63



Hillman 31 (PBO)

LA Bantam 22

Lion 137 (PBO)

**Lion** – Launched in 1949, Lion printed only about 400 books before it was sold to NAL in 1957. However, this is one of the most collectible labels by paperback enthusiasts. There were many PBO's, and running across a "Jim Thompson *Lion*" is every collector's dream.

**Mentor** – As already mentioned, this was NAL's non-fiction label. Many of the sociology books were so conservative that they would be considered politically incorrect today, but other books were key texts on astronomy, math, physics, music and the arts. Of particular interest is a series of books called "New World Writing," that took magazine and other published articles and put them into book form for the first time. Mentor MD130, *New World Writing #7*, includes Jack Kerouac's first published writing (under

the pseudonym Jean-Louis), and also Joseph Heller's short story *Catch-18*, a magazine excerpt from the novel that would later be released as *Catch-22*.

**Monarch** – Published in Derby Connecticut, there were 462 books published between 1958 and 1965. The majority of them were PBO's. Cover art was first-rate, and generally, they tended to be pretty risqué.

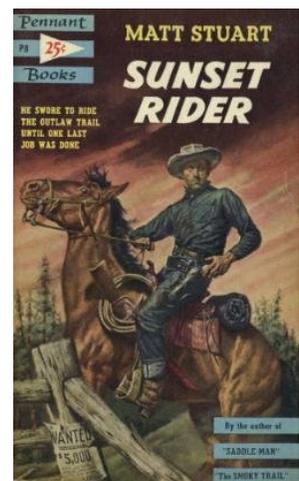
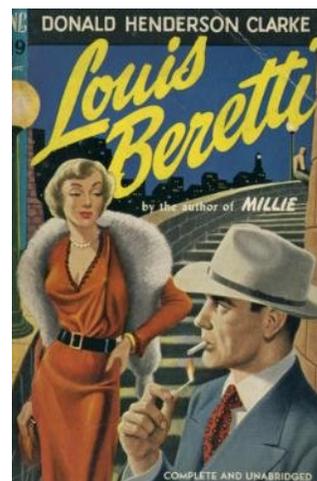
**Novel Library** – Another line produced by Avon. There were 46 titles beginning in 1948. I'm going to guess that most of these were books that were considered too racy for Avon's main line of books. They are extremely popular among collectors today.

**Pennant** – A line of books launched by *Bantam* in 1953. Where Bantams used the short mass market size books, these were the tall format, like *Signets* and *Gold Medals*. There were only 66 books published, the last one in 1955. Bantam then switched to the tall format for their main run of books.

**Perma** – This publisher was launched in 1949 by Doubleday as a means to rapidly roll their hardcover books into paperback. As the “paperback glut” of the early 50's took its toll, the operation was sold to *Pocket Book*, and the books began to mirror the look of Pocket Book's other volumes. Perma was the first American paperback publisher to release Ian Fleming's James Bond novels (Fleming would later switch to Signet).

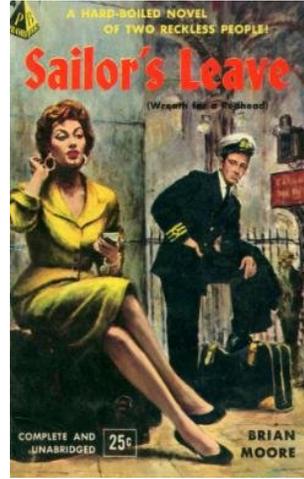
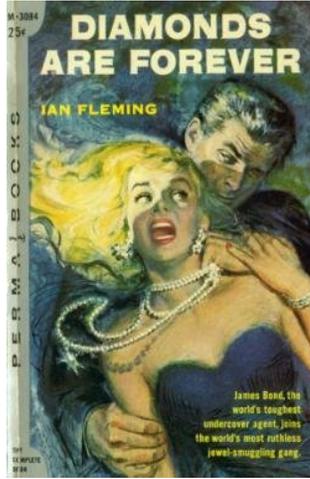
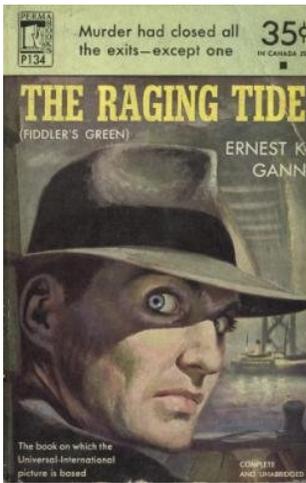
**Pyramid** – Another major New York publisher, established in 1949 and printing books all the way into the late 1970's. There were many PBO's. Pyramid #94 is *Sailor's Leave*, by Brian Moore, a first U.S. printing of his first novel.

**Quick Readers** – Printed by Royce Books, Chicago. Strange little books printed from 1943 to 1944, measuring 4 ½ X 3 ¼ inches. Each was 128 pages, abridged and illustrated with black & white line drawings. The covers were very distinctive, giving an impression of a 3-D view from the lower corner of a hardcover book.

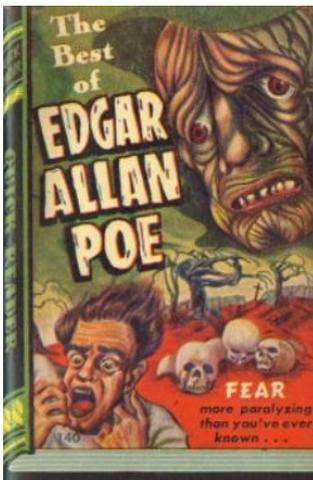


Mentor MD130(PBO) Monarch 162 (PBO) Novel Library 19

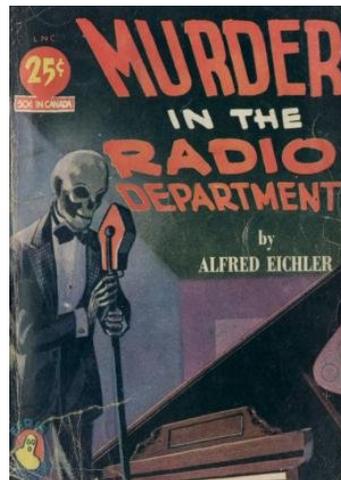
Pennant P8



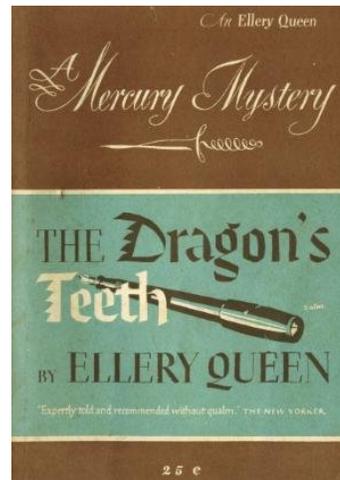
Perma P134  
Perma M3084  
Pyramid 94



Quick Reader 140



Eerie #5 (digest)



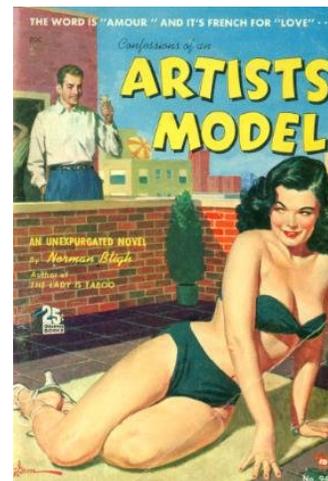
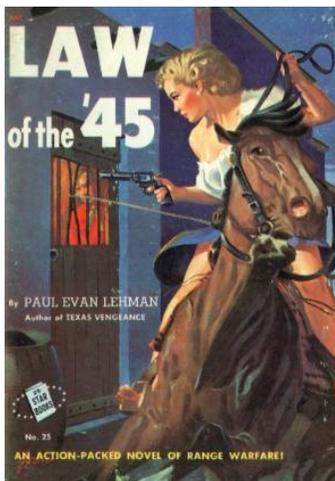
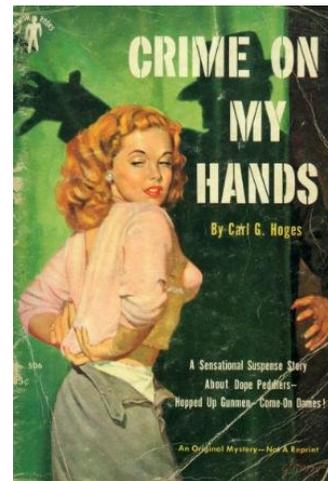
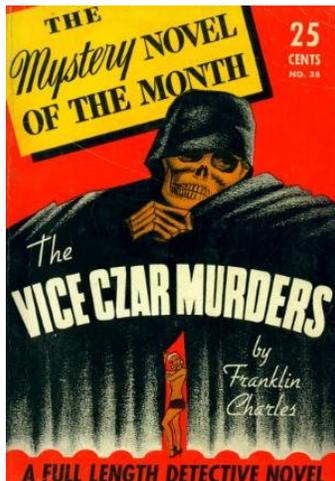
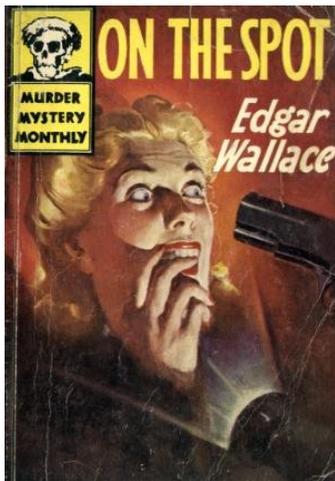
Mercury Mystery 57 (digest)

## Digests

From the early 1940's through about 1960, digest-sized paperback novels were printed primarily in three genres: mystery, western and adult-oriented. *Avon* dabbled in all three, but they dropped out of the market rather early. Many of these labels, including *Avon Murder Mystery Monthly*, *Avon Detective Mysteries*, *Avon Love Book*, *Avon Fantasy Reader*, and others, are very popular with today's collectors

*Mercury*, H.L. Mencken's old publishing company, launched a series of three digest lines: *Mercury Mystery*, *Bestseller Mystery*, and *Jonathan Mystery*. Most books are not considered exceedingly valuable today because of their lack of significant cover art. But there are exceptions, including several volumes comprising the first collected stories of Dashiell Hammett.

Other mystery and western digest publishers are important, and their use of cover art makes them much more collectible. These include (but are certainly not limited to): *Adventure Novel Classics*, *Arrow*, *Atlas*, *Avon Modern Short Story Monthly*, *Avon Bedside Reader*, *Avon Monthly Novel*, (Avon) *Rex Stout*, *Avon Special*, *Avon Western*, *Big Green*, *Black Cat*, *Black Knight*, *Bonded*, *Broadway*, *Comet*, *Crime Novel Selection*, *Croydon Mystery*, *Dagger*, *Death House*, *Detective Novel Classics*, *Detective Novel of the Month*, *Eerie*, *Fighting Western Novel*, *Five Star*, *Galaxy*, *Green Dragon*, *Green*, *Gunfire Western Novels*, *Hangman House*, *Merit*, *Mystery Novel Classics*, *Original*, *Phantom*, *Prize*, *Readers Choice Library*, *Seal Books*, *Star*, *Thrilling Novels*, *Thriller Novel Classics*, *Vulcan*, *Western Novel Classic*, and *Western Novel of the Month*.



**Digests (from top left)**

Murder Mystery Monthly 45

Mystery Novel of the Month 38

Phantom 506 (PBO)

Star 25

Intimate #8

Quarter 94

But by far, the most collectible of all digests are the “sleaze,” or “sexy” digests. Keep in mind that censorship laws prohibited graphic descriptions of sexual situations, and so these novels, as a whole, tended to be little more than melodramatic novels that revolved around plots that hinted at sexual themes. The vast majority of romance novels printed today are far racier than these novels were. But cover art sold the works, and some of THIS cover art was ... well ... just outrageous! All of the books are highly collectible. The labels included: *Archer, Astro, Cameo, Carnival, Croydon, Diversey, Ecstasy, Exotic, Falcon, Griffin, Fiesta, Intimate, Knickerbocker, Leisure Library, Lev Gleason, Original Novels, Prize Love Novels, Quarter Books, Rainbow, Stallion, Star, Stork, Uni, Venus*, and many others.

## Sleaze

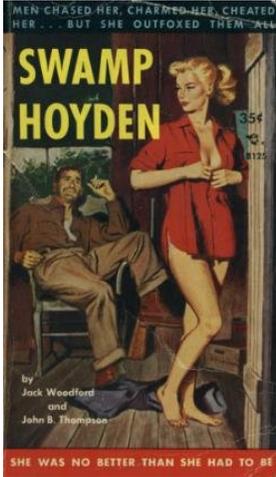
I mention this genre for two very important reasons: first, the stuff is valuable. The earliest adult-oriented novels are exceedingly collectible for, among other obvious reasons, the simple reality that they WERE the earliest. And secondly, and most importantly in my view, is the fact that struggling authors were often forced to resort to this genre to make ends meet financially. If you haven't noticed already, the use of author pseudonyms is an important and necessary side-study for vintage paperback enthusiasts. The early “sleaze” books of the 1960's were sometimes penned by men and women who went on to become some of America's most popular authors of the 70's, 80's and 90's. You simply have to figure out who it is you're reading.

“Sixties Sleaze” books were the direct result of important first amendment rights cases, which were heard pretty often in the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The first to make a difference to paperback publishers was the famous “Lady Chatterley” case in 1959. The publishers of the books that followed, however, still had to walk a fine line. Like George Carlin's famous “seven words you can't say on television,” there were many things you couldn't print in books for fear that communities would ban the products immediately. (“Lady Chatterley” only addressed the issue of *Federal* intervention, such as sending books through the U.S. mail.) And so, these “adult” books were often simply mysteries or romances, with a hint of sexuality (and a whole bunch of innuendo), that were *packaged* as adult books. (Bruce Kimmel quipped in his short story *How to Write a Dirty Book*: “His hand caressed her euphemism.”)

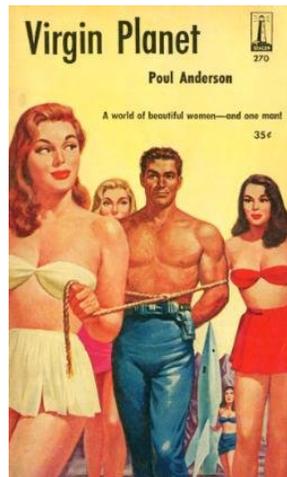
But the dam burst with the U.S. Supreme Court case *Redrup v. New York* in 1967. The Supreme Court defined “pornography” in terms that would allow practically anything, and I mean *anything*, to find its way into print. By the new definition, they might not be “pornography,” however they were most certainly “dirty books.” But still, many authors, despite the subject matter, are hugely collectible. For example, Edward Wood, Jr, the famous eccentric who produced “the world's worst movie,” *Plan 9 From Outer Space*,

made his REAL living writing dozens of dirty books, many of them were penned using different pseudonyms, and ALL of them very valuable today.

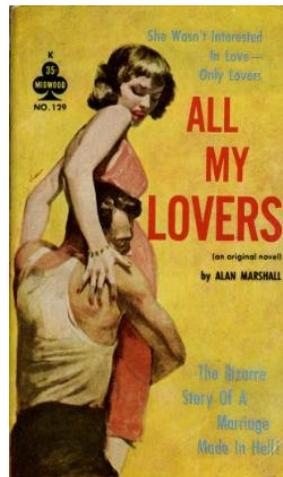
Harry Whittington, Lawrence Block, Peter Rabe, Donald Westlake, Robert Silverberg, Harlan Ellison, John Jakes, Hal Dresner, Evan Hunter, and many, many others wrote PBO's for adult genre publishers under pseudonyms.



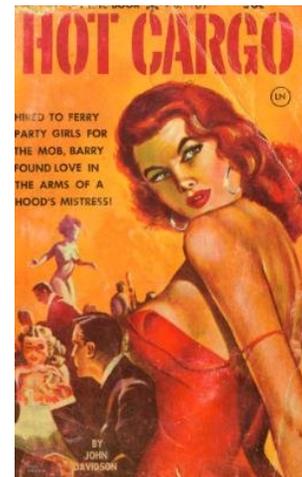
Beacon B125



Beacon 270



Midwood 129



Epic 101

Midwood 129 – by Alan Marshall, pseudonym for author Donald Westlake

Epic 101 – by John Davidson, pseudonym for author Charles Nuetzel