Dennis Ray McMillan: FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

"For the past twenty-six years I have been seeking out and publishing writers who are bothered—indeed, tormented—generally of boards covered with hand-made Spanish-marbled paper existence. These writers react to that torment with certain attitudes uncompromising literature. The usual limited first edition consists present in their art, which happens to be that of the manipulator Johnsonburg, New Jersey, with tasty foil-stamped endsheets, flap created by the foremost authority on the process, Iris Nevins of Dennis Ray McMillan: Publications. Von George Pelecanos and Scott Phillips (Frank Nowatzki/Pulp Master benannt Alles in einer Nacht als jenes Buch, das er selbst gerne verlegt hätte) gibt es Taschenbuch-Auflagen. Die meisten seiner anderen Autoren finden kein größeres Verlagshaus für eine kommerzielle Verwertung ihrer Werke, trotz erfolgreicher Rezensionen bleiben sie nur einem kleinen Publikum zugänglich. Kent Anderson (Night Days—the best Cop Novel since Joseph Wambaugh’s Choirboys) and Bob Troluck (The Art of Redemption) sind bisher nicht ins Deutsche übersetzt worden. Pulp Master ist es zu zu verdanken, dass Jim Nisbet und Rick DeMarinis auch dem deutschen Publikum nähergebracht wurden.

Bo-lo-hum-da-lan-dar-to—Dennississimo Stonosenhosis, the Elder (Jr.) is speaking:

I get back from Wichita, Kansas last night (a truly grueling six-day trip, by myself, with only a radio for company, which I will NEVER do again, I guarantee you; the 6-CD changer in my H-2 was broken by a friend of mine who had been seen in 20 years about six months ago, and now I’ll be SURE to get a rebuilt one installed before my Montana Festival of Books trip, on which I’ll leave about Oct. 20. Being in Austria, you’re probably not aware that there now is no National Public Radio station in Amarillo, Texas—only EIGHT [yes,!!!] extreme-right-wing religious stations, on the FM dial, PLUS, three AM stations running the Sean Hannity show simultaneously [another right-wing moron], and two other extreme right-wing idiots with talk shows that I’d never heard of before; in fact, this is the case all the way from Albuquerque, New Mexico to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: nothing but ‘nattering nabobs of right wing nothingness’ to paraphrase Spiro Agnew from back in the day.

"Without his measure of poison, any man will flatly refuse his invation to dance."

—Charles Willeford

Im Frühjahr 2004, äußerten darauf von zwei Kinospielfilmen, die ich gerade fertiggestellt hatte, machte ich mich nach fast zwei Jahren der Literatur-Abstinenz auf die Suche nach inspirie-
tät, die man sonst nur von exklusiven Kunsthänden kennt. Der Verlag: Dennis McMillan Publications. In meiner Buchsammlung befanden sich bereits drei seiner Papier Titel: Before She Kills (Fredric Brown, 1985), Kiss Your Ass Goodbye (Charles Willeford, 1988) und Who-


"Dennis has ‘definitive’ tastes for the fiction he calls ‘rude’. You know, a flat stretch of highway. The lones-
ely diner rank with the smell of rancid vinyl. Tongue searched by bad coffee. A 38 cool against the skin under your belt. Nowhere to go. Not a thing to lose. We all get that feeling, right? No publisher on earth is better than Dennis at scratching that itch."

—Don Herron

As with all American enterprises of novelty and note, Den-
is McMillan Publications offered from the three great moral wellsprings of Modern Times: Fortuity, Despera-
tion, and Ennui. The Fortuitous finding of the very scarce vanity-published American edition of the Australian mys-
tery writer Arthur Upfield’s first book, The House of Cain (Dorance, 1929), allowed me to assure both the first twinges of Desperation and an ever-present Ennui brought on by my departure from the tempest-in-a-teapot existence of academia. In short, once I realized that the satisfac-
tion I thought I would derive from doing pharmacological research was as illusory and had about as much chance of being realized as winning the lottery, I was at loose ends, casting about for something I might actually ‘enjoy’ doing while still surviving the larger tempest that quenches our fires, buffers us and beats us down.

I had been a ‘serious’ book collector since 1975, when I discovered that certain Philip Jose Farmer titles that I’d not been able to locate were worth more than their cover price(s), and that there were people who actually collected...”

—Don Herron
After dropping out of the University of Florida's Ph.D. program in Pharmacology and moved to San Francisco with the idea that I would go into a more interesting and worthwhile program in Molecular Genetics at the University of California Medical Center, in the summer of 1982 I found the copy of *The House of Cain*. It occurred to me that I might possibly follow in the footsteps of Underwood/Miller, who were by that time fairly successful publishers of (mainly) science fiction. I would try to do just the same type of "genre" publishing for collectors, concentrating on obscure and sought-after mystery material, which by that time had replaced science fiction as my main reading and book collecting interest. I contacted Tim and he told me how to go about it.

By the time UCSF rejected my by-now-jackadadistically-pursued application, I had already published *The House of Cain* and *The Brazilian Guitar* (with my friend jazz guitarist Brian Hodel), and any return to academia had become a moot point. The rest, as they say, is history.

Reprinting small trade editions of scarce and desirable mysteries and publishing small print runs of true first editions of writers I admire has allowed me to live wherever I've wanted and has brought me into contact with an erudite and good-hearted group of people trying to communicate with their fellowes—to give their readers some ease, some artifice, wrought from a common pain.

After a four-and-a-half year hiatus (during which I made both a 1930's-style Hawaiian shirt and several types of hand-embroidered classic Western shirts and failed to reach my audience—if in fact one existed!) I moved to Tucson, AZ, and returned to publishing in mid-1995 with the limited first edition of Jon Jackson’s *Dead Folk*.

In November 1995 the "second incarnation" of my publishing vesture got into full swing with the appearance of an unusual short story collection by my good friend Janwillem Van de Wetering: my first trade hardcovers, *Mangrove Mama & Other Tropical Tales of Terror* (the "terror" referred to being of the metaphysical rather than the corporeal variety). Soon after that, I published a couple of titles that well-justify the "outré" literature designation on my masthead: *Silent* by famed science fiction writer A.A. Attanasio (a very lyrically written outlawiker vs. the Mafia novel based on the life of one of his friends who had been a biker and heroin addict in Boston in the late 60s—ending up a bookseller in Hawaii!) and *Rude Awakening* by Purnell Christian (text) and Joe Servello (graphics), a collection of startling social satire that can best be described as what an unholy marriage of Charles Bukowski and Robert Crumb would be like sans the typical sugar-coating of the latter two writers' bitter effors.

Books came fast and furious after my reentry into the field, and I was fortunate to be able to do both limited editions and modest trade print runs of some of my favorite writers (and people): James Crumley (Rendezvous), Howard Browne (of his collected pulp detective fiction, *Dead Horse* by Walter Satterthwait, a book about a semi-outsider of Hawaiian society, that society being the result of what I call "internal colonialism," with which no person who hasn’t lived there as part of it will be familiar, whereas almost all readers will be quite familiar with their own version of the "Portland, Oregon" of the Wiley novels, even if they live in a fairly small Mainland town.

As a publisher, Dennis McMillan is no stranger to risk, and does not care to. Risk is a factor, of course, but it does not rule his taste. More generally, we might borrow a phrase from Jean Genet and put it at the head of the bibliography of D-Ray McMillan: "If I examine my work, I can perceive in it, patternly pursued, a will to rehabilitate persons, objects and feelings reputedly vile."

—Jim Nisbet
In the “old days,” and I’m now talking about the period before 2000, and probably pretty much before 1997 even, if a book was starred-review in either PUBLISHER’S WEEKLY and/or BOOKLIST (the official journal of the American Library Association), and was published by a house as small as mine, then at least SOME corporate New York publishing houses would be interested in at least SEEING the book, and determining if they thought they could reprint it and sell enough copies to make it worth their while. This only happened with ONE SINGLE BOOK that I ever did myself looking for somebody else, I haven't used that many different artists: Joe Svelto, Clay Wilson, Scott Mangrove, Carol Collier.

Michael Kellner is finally starting to get his due, or at least some “some” recognition in the larger world, other than from just those people who know him as the designer/artist who's done all these great dustjackets for me. Way back I started out with my brother William, and after he died, I was looking for somebody else. I haven't used that many different artists: Joe Svelto, Clay Wilson, Scott Mangrove, Carol Collier.

“Dennis has an encyclopedic love of noir and damn near exquisite taste mixed with a solid sense of what should be preserved. These books, his publications, are a truly unique and magnificent achievement. Nobody has ever done it better. In fact, nobody but Dennis McMillan has ever done it.”

—James Crumley

Some writers that AREN'T well known in the hard-boiled genre, or are less well known than Hammett, would be Benjamin Appel (Brain Guy, in fact, probably anybody published by Knopf, when it was still RUN by Alfred A. Knopf, you wouldn't go wrong in checking out), and of course, Raymond Chandler. But, somebody like Leigh Brackett, whose No Good from a Corpse is a pastiche, was actually AS GOOD AS Chandler himself (on the basis of the novel, anyway). she just didn't become more well known for her science fiction work, and the very last thing she ever wrote was the screenplay to The Empire Strikes Back, in 1977—Howard Hawkes was a movie director, you know. She got good, then she moved over to television, did the screenplay of The Big Sleep with Bill Faulkner,” and, when it turned out that the “gay” was a 26-year-old young woman, Hawkes went ahead and hired her anyway, and the rest is Hollywood history, as she went on to write Westerns, sci-fi, adventure movies, etc., that he directed, as well as a pretty large body of superb fiction in every genre that exists. Howard Brown, of course, in the 1940s and 1950s. Many aficionados think that The Taste of Ashes is THE best hard-boiled novel written by anybody in the decade of the 1950s, in fact. I recently became aware of William Francis, who was Rought on Rait, published in hardcover by Morrow in 1942, a book dealer whose opinion I highly respect told me that that book was as good as anything Hammett ever wrote, and he was right. Francis also wrote a number of interra- lote/crime novels as “Curtis Lucas,” many of which were published as Lion original paperbacks. Going back to the 1940s again for a minute, Robert Reeves, to MY mind, would undoubtedly have become one of the heavyweights in the hard-boiled genre, and in fact, IS, with just three novels: No Love Lost, Dead and Done For, and Collinis Smith, Detective, but he was killed in early 1945, in WWII, so that's what we're left with, plus a handful of short stories that appeared in the Black Mask detective pulp during the 1940s. I can see that this would turn into an essay in itself, so I'll stop here, but I WILL say that Dic des los Muertos is a landmark in the hard-boiled/noir genre—and “instant classic,” really.

“Nordless to say, I am very proud to be in the McMillan stable.”

—George Pelecanos

The big achievement for me, so far, is the reprinting of The Given Day by Robert Hans van Gulik. As Charles Willeford and Dan J Marlowe, as they were before 2000, and probably pretty much before 1997 even, partly due to simple economics, and partly due to people spending their free time in more of these new, “social networking” ways. If I quit publishing, as I now am about 95% certain that I will, and liquidate my own book and pulp and art, etc., collections, I, too, will have a Kindle (or whichever of it or its competitors seem to give the most bang for my buck at the time I end up buying one) to read on, as I simply won’t be ABLE, if I’m living as an itinerant flamenco guitarist, playing in cafes, etc., for my daily bread, to haul around a book/pulp/art/etc. collection with me: these are sedentary pursuits, and I may not BE sedentary for several years in the foreseeable future.

When you get almost to the age of 60, and HAVEN’T found the right mate, and are not even living in a country you can STAND anymore, well, you realize that the next 10 years are probably “it” as far as really doing anything in the way of traveling around, seeing different cultures and places that you may have always thought about seeing and/or experiencing, and you'd better do it NOW, if possible, and quit kidding yourself that you’ll BE ABLE to do it af- ter the age of 70, even if, given your genetic composition, the best thing about going down there was just talk- ing to Dennis about everything from Nazi war history, and learning what he taught me about music, all kinds of music.”

—Kent Anderson

As I’ve probably raved about before, it's my considered opinion that, if a person, either male or female, doesn’t “get into” or “learn” to read for pleasure (and, admittedly, just as some people can’t learn, for example, calculus, there are, indeed, a number of people who simply can’t turn those words-on-the-page into images-in-their-heads in ANY WAY AT ALL, and, hence, can NEVER “learn” to read for pleasure; again, just as some people are totally tone-deaf, and can’t enjoy music, AT ALL; it’s just "noise" to them: but, those people aside—and I have no idea exactly what PERCENTAGE of the human race this is, but perhaps, as a guess, as high as 20-25%, seriously, sometime between the ages of say, 5 and 12 or 13, they NEVER WILL. Unless, as is the case with the very few men that I've met (and no women) they “get into” reading for pleasure while incarcerated for a long term, or terms, de- pending on the extent of their recidivism(!). Nylander bash, and true words were never uttered, I'm sorry to say. What this means, essentially, is that, starting back in the mid-1970s, when the average household in the U.S. was getting hooked up to cable TV, and kids started fanaticly watching movies on said cable TV instead of, say, reading even a COMIC book for entertainment: SINCE that time, moving on along through all the other technological "advances" of the last 40 years (well, the last 30 years, I suppose really put the scientific revolution into effect), what ELSE are we going to call them!, such as the advent of the home computer and playing games on it, right on up through the present era where people spend all their free time “social networking”—twittering, tweeting, face-booking, sex-ting, and whatever other ways they can jack-off either mentally or physically or BOTH, using all the new communication technologies that seem to come online every few months like clockwork. I cannot predict where it will lead, in terms of whether ANYBODY will still be reading books for pleasure (they'll always be reading books, in some way, shape, or form—Kindle being only the latest incarnation—but mainly for information content alone, and not for the PLEASURE ITSELF of reading brilliantly crafted stories, novels, sentences, ideas, new ways in which to put old and/or newly coined words together, etc. I DO know that the core population of what I would call “serious book collectors” has shrunken by more than half in the past couple years alone, partly due to simple economics, and partly due to people spending their free time in more of these new, “social networking” ways. I quit publishing, as I now am about 95% certain that I will, and liquidate my own book and pulp and art, etc., collections, I, too, will have a Kindle (or whichever of it or its competitors seem to give the most bang for my buck at the time I end up buying one) to read on, as I simply won’t be ABLE, if I’m living as an itinerant flamenco guitarist, playing in cafes, etc., for my daily bread, to haul around a book/pulp/art/etc. collection with me: these are sedentary pursuits, and I may not BE sedentary for several years in the foreseeable future.

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Holding a grudge is like letting somebody live rent-free in your head.

“...he-wanted....” The girl reached through the window with both hands and clung to his neck. “Oh... Mr. B2. He watches those porn-movies. He-he...” She dissolved into sobs, her head on his shoulder. Banerjee’s wasn’t particularly taken back at this small revelation, but he was pretty sure it wasn’t any of his business. “Certainly if...” he began tenta-

tively. “Have you been...? I mean... against your...”

“No, Toby? Out of control? Let me out of the car.”

But the girl wouldn’t turn him loose. Her head smelled of suntan oil and marijuana and cigarettes and other things he only involuntarily recognized.

Jim Nisbet Dark Companion

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set” stupidity, even when it comes to book reviewing (!)

The Indisch-stämmige Akademiker Banerjee Rolf, glücklich verheiratet, hat es in Kalifornien zu einem schmucken Eigenheim gebracht; in der Biotechno-Branche scheinen ihm die Türen offen zu stehen. Doch die Idylle trügt: Eine feindliche Übernahme seiner Firma kostet nicht nur Job und Karriere, auch im privaten Umfeld gehn ihm gesell-

schaftliche Verfallserscheinungen in Person seines mit Dro-

gen drallenden Nachbarn an die Nieren. Toby Price, ein
dramatisch Kiffer und Tänzchentüftel, ist merkwürdig kommu-

nisch, seit irgendwann unpatriotische Videopamphlete in

seinem Pay-TV-Pornokanal einspeist. Rolf, der in sich ruht und sich von den Verlockungen der Welt nur wenig reizen lässt, befreit sich aus diesem Trümmerhaufen und schreitet—in stoischer Ruhe—dem unvermeidlichen Ende entgegen—

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Allesamt sind zweiundachtzig Millionen Schleifen im Jackpot. «Die Schleife sieht mir gegen die Scheibe. Was musst du tun!»

In puncto Geldgewinn unterschied sich Banerjee’s Umsat-

zung von der von Toby Price. Banerjee’s Meinung nach hatte ban größere Chancen, wenn man zwei Millionen Dollar in eine geheime und die, in der Hoffnung, die Schleife mögen sich paaren, in eine feuchte Ecke, anstatt auf den Jackpot zu spekulieren, den Millionen von Menschen mit einer Kombination aus sechs Zahlen knappen. Die Chance, die Zahlenei-

neration waren zu treffen, liegt genau bei 1 zu 37 oder anders gesagt, eins auf einer Billion. Das ist eine sehr geringe Wahrscheinlichkeit, wie, was die Jäger, die für den Hammer-Preis 2006 nominierten Noir-

 psychological studies in the future. One of the challenges for the field is to develop more comprehensive models that account for the complex social and psychological factors that influence group behavior. The findings from this study suggest that there is a need for further research on the topic. Continued investigation into the factors that influence group behavior is necessary to increase our understanding of the phenomenon.

In the upcoming Pulp-Master-Preis 2006 nominierten Noir-

thriller—eine philosophische Tragikomödie—dominieren unübersehbare Zufälle und Chaostheorie. In Niessets Welt schützen weder intellektuelle Überlegenheit noch Gutem-

schertum vor Kollaterschäden.

Jim Nisbet, Jahrgang 1947, stammt aus North Carolina, wo er die Universität in Chapel Hill besucht. Er war Tankstellenführer und führte ein Warenhaus, arbeitete als Geometer, als Nuclear- und Tontechniker. Er ist Au-

tor von neun Romanen und mehreren Lyric-Bändern. 1985 erschien "Todliche Injektion" als deutsche Erstaufführung. Seine


The Dummen Don Dic (die The Gourmet, Black Label, 1981)


Deutsche Ausgabe: Tödliche Injektion, Pulp Master 00, 1989.

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