

WEST COAST BLUE

The 1960s began in 1957.

That was the year the United States Supreme Court upheld publisher Samuel Roth's conviction for manufacturing and selling obscene material. The Court rejected Roth's argument that obscenity was protected by the First Amendment.

But in Roth the Court developed a three-part formula for defining obscenity. The material had to appeal to the prurient interest of the average person, violate contemporary community standards, and be without redeeming social value. While ostensibly drawing a line in the sand, most obscenity cases since the 1930s ironically wound up obscuring that line.

In 1966, the Supreme Court was asked again to decide on obscenity. The case was *Massachusetts vs. Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (AKA *Fanny Hill*), which had been wending its way through the appellate process since 1963, when the Massachusetts Supreme Court decided the book to be obscene. Now the U.S. Supreme Court decided that a work could not be proscribed unless it was, in the majority opinion of Justice Brennan, "utterly without redeeming social value. This is so even though the book is found to possess the requisite prurient appeal and to be patently offensive."

Suddenly, community standards regarding prurient interest were trumped by any value whatsoever. The publication of almost the entire corpus of explicit erotic literature became a reality. This was an epochal event, heralding nothing less than the democratization of reading in this country, for this kind of

literature had prior been almost exclusively available to the wealthy or well-connected only, printed in small editions and generally cost-prohibitive for the average citizen.

With few exceptions, all porn book publishers of the era marketed and distributed books as they did their magazines: a 30-day shelf life with new titles to turn over every month. The publications looked like books but were actually magazines in book drag. Publishers played the numbers game, with profits based upon aggregate sales for the entire line. Newsstands, drug stores, liquor stores, cigar stores, any place that had space for a wire bookrack, were the primary point of sale.

The dawn of the paperback as a mass phenomenon came in 1939 when Pocket Books published 34 titles at 25 cents each. Together they sold more than a million and a half copies. By 1960, Americans were buying more than one million paperbacks a day. Their sales were, says E.R. Hutchison in *Tropic of Cancer on Trial*, a "godsend to the men who tend the newsstands in a period when magazine sales were sagging."

But "censors rose up like dragons when the first paperbacks were displayed in neighborhood stores," writes Hutchison. "Before the paperback revolution, censors had only some 1,500 bookstores scattered lightly across the country and slightly more than one percent of the adult population regularly patronizing those bookstores to worry about. This widening of book distribution channels to 95,000 outlets brought anguish to brooding censors who vividly imagined day-to-day corruption of children in their neighborhood haunts."



SINNER'S TOWN (1966)
By Stan O'Dair
Brandon House
Cover Artist: Fred Fixler



THE GAY DETECTIVE (1961)
By Lou Rand
Saber Books

Secondary periodicals distributors had always featured the marginal and risqué in their product lines, including comics, tabloids, “spicy” magazines, pulp romance, western, gossip, and movie fanzines. When, in the late-'50s to early '60s, distributors were pressured by local authorities to drop sexually-oriented titles from their rosters, many pornographers filled the void by establishing their own distribution infrastructures. And when counterculture publications began to experience difficulties with authorities, many found shelter with porn distributors who shared a common *epater le bourgeois* attitude. Art Kunkin's *Los Angeles Free Press*, for example, was distributed by pornographer Milton Luros' Parliament News.

RABBI PORN

“He’s a diffident little guy with a slouch, a comfortable paunch hanging over baggy slacks and wearing a rumpled short-sleeved shirt ... a constant bemused smile beneath his slightly crooked nose ... continuously jingling keys and coins in his front pocket ... [he] never speaks above a whisper, even when angry and more than anything loves reciting Talmudic parables and aphorisms for the benefit and enlightenment of his employees,” a former employee recalls.

How did a nice Jewish guy, a *haimisher mensch*, wind up building the biggest, classiest porn operation on the planet?

Born in the Bronx, New York in 1911, Milton Luros began his career in the fine arts. For close to 20 years prior to entering the porn trade, he illustrated leading science-fiction magazines. When the sci-fi market declined during the mid-'50s, Milt began illustrating “spicy” men’s magazines, selling work to, among others, Bentley Morris for *Adam* and *Knight* magazines. Morris recalls:

“Milt was a very charming guy, and an intellectual. The first time I meet him, he’s sitting in the reception area of our office—this is the late '50s—and he’s got his portfolio of art; he’s there to sell us some artwork. He’s really an artist, a very fine artist. He’s got pastels, oils, charcoals; a very, very talented guy. He’s like, ‘you want erotica? Michelangelo? Whatever you want.’ He was an art director in New York. Came out here [Los Angeles], needed work. The best part about it was we didn’t have to pay him top dollar!”

This last remark by Morris is telling. Once a highly-paid illustrator, Luros was now hustling for money. In the can-do spirit of American

entrepreneurship, he set out on his own, contacting an L.A.-area periodicals distributor and receiving an advance for printing costs after selling the idea of publishing a high-quality girlie magazine at a time when all had poor production values.

Milt began building his empire. He named his publishing group “American Art Agency” (renamed “American Art Enterprises” in the late '60s). When his distributor ran for cover, Milt started his own secondary wholesale operation, and revolutionized nudist magazines by making them glossy, with attractive models. Then he turned nudism magazines into softcore publications, and made a fortune doing so. Soon Milt established his own printing operations, London Press and Oxford Bindery, and developed the slickest mail order of the industry. He was a corporate finance genius; the stock in his many corporations was held by a real estate holding company trust¹.

Though he played it safe, allowing others to fight the battles before he stepped in, Luros was, as Bentley Morris observes, “the master of the stretch,” cautiously and incrementally pushing boundaries. But his caution didn’t make much difference: because of his success, Milt Luros became a favorite target for prosecutors. Consultations with renowned 1st Amendment lawyer Stanley Fleishman became so frequent that Milt provided Fleishman with an office in the San Fernando Valley Luros porn compound.

Bentley Morris, who in addition to publishing *Knight* and *Adam* issued Holloway House and Avanti Art Editions, fine reprints of vintage erotica, says of Luros’ Brandon House imprint for original erotica: “He did it well, superbly well—his books were fast, entertaining, good writing.”

Barclay House was added by Luros for sexual nonfiction, and though many of these titles would stretch the definition of nonfiction to the breaking point, Milt had an in-house fact-checking department to vet every manuscript so that no matter how outlandish, the basic facts would be correct.

Brian Kirby, a young rare book dealer and jazz drummer from Detroit, migrated to L.A. in mid-1965. Soon after meeting Luros and supplying him with a copy of *Candy*² by Maxwell Kenton [Terry Southern and Mason Hoffenberg], Kirby joined his staff. Everybody loved Milton, and he paid the highest salaries in the business.

In the wake of the new Supreme Court decisions, Milt allowed Kirby to establish his own autonomous imprint, Brandon House

Library Editions, in 1966. This line reprinted vintage erotica, much of which had never been translated into English. Kirby designed the covers, wrote the cover blurbs, supervised his team of translators, and hired novelists and poets to write Introductions at a time when most industry Intros were written by bogus Ph.Ds to provide the legally required redeeming social value, no matter how tenuous.

Soon Brian pitched Milt on publishing original erotic novels by talented novelists and poets, no pseudonyms allowed. Milt agreed, and Brian Kirby became the Maurice Girodias of American publishing, issuing under the Essex House imprint a series of original American erotic novels. Before he departed the Luros organization, Kirby was in negotiations with The Doors’ Jim Morrison for the singer-poet’s first book, an erotic original. Alas, the book that got away.

The sales slump that plagued every publisher in the late '60s took its toll. Luros folded Essex House, and Brandon House Library Editions issued reprints of prior titles. With legal pressures secondary to the Miller decision and the business squeeze of shady competitors, Milton Luros sold his company to Paul Wisner, head of Parliament News in 1974; but the shadowy co-owner was Reuben “Ruby” Sturman, the Cleveland-based porn magnate and longtime friend of Wisner. Ruby succeeded in his quest to rationalize the crazy quilt of regional secondary distribution into a smooth-running national network.

DILLIES OF THE FIELD

During the mid-'50s, Fresno, an agricultural community in central California and “Raisin Capital Of The World,” had a sociocultural *raison d’etre*: the books of Sanford E. Aday, a failed writer turned publisher and distributor, whose softcore imprints included Fabian, Vega, and Saber.

“Probably no one has given the FBI more trouble in the obscenity area than Sanford E. Aday. Certainly the Justice Department lawyers have had no tougher or more frequent customer on Interstate Transportation of Obscene Material (ITOM) than this man.”³

The most infamous of his books was *The Sex Life Of A Cop* by Oscar Peck (pseud.), issued in 1959. By today’s standards, it is innocuous stuff; by Cold War-era standards, it was evidence of Satan’s influence upon American culture. Prosecuted by the Justice Department in 1963, Aday was indicted on

18 counts but convicted on five; of the eight books named in the indictment, *Sex Life Of A Cop* was the only one found obscene under the Roth legal formula. Aday and partner Wallace de Ortega Maxey were both sentenced to 25 years in prison, the stiffest in U.S. history for obscenity.⁴

Aday belonged to the early gay rights Mattachine Society with Ortega Maxey, a retired Catholic priest who became minister of the Universalist Church in Los Angeles (where the Mattachine Society held their meetings). Aday was among the first to openly publish gay and lesbian-themed books.

THE SOLITARY VICEROY OF SMUT

Nobody liked Marvin Miller. A reckless sociopath with a volcanic temper, Miller grew up in the slums of Chicago,⁵ where he was first arrested for stealing a doughnut at an early age. Sent to a series of foster homes, it was discovered that he was a genius with numbers. While in high school, Marvin worked at a printing company, learning the mechanics of a business that would serve him later in life.

Barely out of high school, he went to work for Reynolds Aluminum. Within a year he'd made his first million, at the age of 17, by undercutting his employer. When Reynolds couldn't fulfill its contracts due to a strike, Marvin secretly traveled to Cuba, and made a deal with a consortium of Cuban manufacturers to supply them with aluminum. With a letter of credit from Chase Manhattan he made a deal with Hershey's Chocolate to buy their aluminum remnants, and went back to Cuba to sell the goods for a cool million profit, a million he soon lost when his partner looted their newly established household appliances business. Miller sucked it up and emigrated to California in the early '50s, where he embezzled more than \$35,000 from his employers at a linen-supply house. After his release from prison, he became a master of insurance fraud, gaining the moniker, "Marvin the Torch." With his silver goatee, Miller was described by Carolyn See in *Blue Money* as looking like "a pleasant, blond Satan."

After his release from prison in 1961, Miller inched his way into publishing with novelty titles like *It's Fun To Be A Beatnik!* But when he came across Maurice Girodias' Olympia Press copyright-free catalog, he saw his opportunity, siring Collector's Publications.

"He prints the shoddiest books of all of us," Brian Kirby said⁶ of Marvin, who used the low-

est grade of paper available. Miller not only refused to pay his debts on principle, he kept operating expenses to a bare minimum, cutting manufacturing costs to the bone. He worked out of his house, waking every morning at four and editing manuscripts before dropping them off at the printer. Within 11 months, Miller issued 170 Collector's Publications titles.⁷ Soon, he was a multi-millionaire.

Said Marvin: "I printed the dirtiest ones first. Apollinaire's *Autobiography of a Flea* [Apollinaire did not actually write the English classic], Pierre Louÿs' *She Devils* [*Trois Filles et Leur Mère*]. The government wasn't even on me yet. They hadn't even noticed. I kept putting the money I made back into the business. If I kept the millions I'd made in the first eight months, before the government got on me and I had to pay it all out in fines and lawyers, I'd be... I'd be a *millionaire*, that's what."⁸

Miller reveled in litigation and infamy. "Here, look at this," he told Peter Collier of *Ramparts Magazine*, holding out a mimeographed page listing a series of porn titles and their publishers. As Collier relates, "It is headed, 'Books On Which Complaints Should Be Filed,' and is handed out by Citizens For Decent Literature, the national censorship organization that is particularly strong in Southern California. With something akin to pride, Miller points to the fact that Collector's leads the list with 49 Books On Which Complaints Should Be Filed; his nearest competitor, Greenleaf, is a poor second with seven."⁹

In 1969, Miller was arrested and arraigned in seven Southern California jurisdictions for violating California obscenity statutes. Prosecutors dropped the charges in six of the communities offended, and ran with the case in Orange County, where Marvin had sent four of his explicit advertisements to a mother-and-son-owned restaurant. Marvin lost, appealed, and in its 1973 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld his conviction on obscene solicitation, but tweaked the obscenity formula, devolving standards to the local level. At this time, disreputable Marvin Miller made U.S. legal history. He also earned a place in our social history with two pregnant footnotes: in mid-December, 1963, he published a quickie JFK assassination commemorative magazine, *Four Dark Days In History*, that contained the Mary Moorman photograph of the assassination with a view of the grassy knoll. When the Warren Commission began its investigation, they relied upon Marv's exploitation rag for evidence.

PLAN 10 FROM OUTER SPACE

In the late '50s clandestine labs of Blake Pharmaceuticals medicated U.S. citizens on sleaze: the Chicago-based shell corporation was a mask for the manufacture of softcore porn fiction.

The operation was engineered by sci-fi superfans who became giants in that world: William L. Hamling as publisher, Earl Kemp as Hugo Award-winning editor. Hamling, founder and publisher of Phenix [sic] Publications, Ltd. aka Greenleaf Publications, and Kemp, his V.P. and Editorial Director, would make First Amendment history on more than one occasion, becoming, as Kemp states with no little satisfaction, "national nuisances."

When the sci-fi market entered a black hole, Hamling established *Rogue* magazine, at the time the only serious competition for Hugh Hefner's *Playboy*. At the time *Rogue*, *Playboy*, and many other men's mag start-ups were limited to newsstand sales; deemed obscene, they were on the Post Office's Black List enjoined from offering subscriptions. Hamling offered subscriptions anyway. The Post Office seized every copy they could get their hands on, and Hamling sued the government for an injunction. Hefner also sued for an injunction in 1957, but Hamling's case wound up in the Supreme Court's docket ahead of *Playboy's* suit, though Hefner filed earlier. Hamling theorizes that, "by that time *Playboy* had already made its image in the culture and the marketplace, the government undoubtedly presumed that they would have a better chance of victory attacking *Rogue*. So we went to court. We beat the government!" It was a landmark decision, second class mailing privileges were granted, and the magazine was declared not obscene¹⁰ under the Roth decision guidelines. But legal expenses had put a dent in the company's balance sheet.

Softcore paperbacks, an extension of Hamling's periodicals business, assumed a primary role to generate cash in 1959. His many imprints featured work by up-and-coming and established sci-fi, mystery and romance writers. Harlan Ellison, who wrote *Sex Gang* under the pseudonym Paul Merchant, worked as an editor for Hamling's imprints, not the least of which was Regency Books, a superior line devoted to non-sexual literature featuring titles by Robert Bloch, early Ellison, *Dragnet's* Jack Webb, B. Traven, Philip José Farmer, Lester del Rey, and many others, including the first edition of Jim Thompson's *The Grifters*.



SEX GANG (1959)
By Paul Merchant (Harlan Ellison)
Nightstand Books
Cover Artist: Harold W. McCauley

Hamling distributed through Ray Kirk's Chicago-based All-States News Co., and with titles like *Born For Sin*, *Sin Girls*, *Sin Camp*, *Isle of Sin*, *Sin Cruise*, and *The Sinful Ones*, the books flew off the shelves. Kemp joined Hamling in 1961 as an apprentice editor, eventually inheriting Harlan Ellison's role of overseeing all editorial affairs. And Kemp began tapping "the grandfather of all porn mills ... the original science fiction mill operated by the Scott Meredith Literary Agency" which had switched to soft porn when the sci-fi market dried up. The Meredith soft porn operation began as a clandestine affair with a special mailing address and "black box" shipping cartons to deflect attention from the esteemed literary agency. Meredith collected \$2000 per manuscript from Hamling/Kemp, theoretically \$1000 to the writer plus a \$1000 override for his agenting services, but was, in reality, paying his stable of writers only \$500-\$800 from the proceeds. "These prices, for 1961," recalls Kemp, "were in the neighborhood of grand larceny," an agent's wet dream.

But a nightmare began for Hamling when in 1961 Attorney General William M. Ferguson of Kansas brought an action against Nightstand, asking that 1,715 copies of 31 Nightstand titles be destroyed in accordance with Kansas law. Fighting it to the Kansas State Supreme Court, Hamling lost, but in 1964 won on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, thanks to the efforts of his attorney, Stanley Fleishman.¹¹



SHAME AGENT (1964) By Don Bellmore
Ember Library

By now, Hamling and Kemp were the number one publishers of softcore porn books in the nation. Forced to make routine payments to local police and public officials in Chicago and fed up with the parade of palms seeking grease, Hamling folded *Rogue* in Chicago in 1965, and moved to San Diego where he reorganized his firm as Phenix Publishers, Ltd., setting up Reed Enterprises, Inc, his own distribution arm.

In contrast to the Chicago years, when Hamling and Kemp routinely used all manner of subterfuge to camouflage their activities, they decided to become as in-your-face as possible after the 1966 Supreme Court obscenity decisions cleared the way for the sexually explicit. But the government hadn't forgotten them.

"At times there were as many as half a dozen competing agencies bugging the lines," Kemp recalls. "At times we could get nothing but police radio calls on our phones. I remember going out to a payphone and calling the cops and demanding that they release at least one phone line for business purposes." The post office routinely seized incoming and outgoing mail, opening it, copying it, diverting it, analyzing it, and, on occasion, delivering it—late. A post office inspector has the right to suppress material simply by notifying the "offender" that what he is mailing is illegal.

And who judges what's illegal? Why, the post office, of course. "It was necessary for us to travel as far as 100 miles to mail routine business mail and even then we could only

use the same post office a couple of times," Kemp remembers.

Though Kemp and Hamling published their share of copyright-free Olympia Press titles, they also printed hundreds of original works. At its height, Greenleaf and allied imprints issued close to 500 books a year.

From July 11 through September 4, 1966, Hamling was tried in Houston, Texas on a 25-count indictment, though he escaped conviction. Stanley Fleishman routinely assigned a local legal ace as defense counsel when clients were in trouble elsewhere. Here, Fleishman hired the flamboyant Texas attorney Percy Foreman, famous for gaining acquittals for clients with gossamer-thin possibilities. Kemp, amazingly, was not part of the indictment; he was, in fact, subpoenaed by the prosecution as a potential witness. "The FBI tried a couple of times to rehearse me in a script they had prepared for my testimony," Kemp recalls. "I asked Percy how to handle it. He said, 'Don't give the FBI cocksuckers the time of day!' And Percy really meant it. They never called on me to testify." The jury hung, a mistrial was declared, and when it was all over the judge told the prosecutor, "Don't you ever bring a case like this before this court again!"

That the jury couldn't make up its mind was testament to the confusing, subjective nature of federal obscenity statutes. The trial cost Hamling \$300,000 in legal fees. Partners in Fleishman's office absconded with a sign from the Los Angeles Superior Court's Public Defender's office, which they proudly hung on a wall in their suite, blocking out the "L" in Public.¹²

A year after the trial, Hamling shelled out another \$100,000 for legal services. As publisher of *Lust Pool* and *Shame Agent*, he assumed responsibility for Robert Redrup's legal woes in New York State through the U.S. Supreme Court. Legal scholars considered this decision to be the virtual end of book censorship in America.

"Hamling was ecstatic. As he saw it, the courtroom battle that had begun more than 30 years before in the case of *United States v. One Book Called Ulysses*, resulting in a victory for the literary elite, had now ended in 1967 with a triumph for the man in the street."¹³

The business had been sweet for Hamling. A millionaire several times over, he had homes in Palm Springs and La Jolla. He occupied the penthouse suite in Reed/Phenix/Greenleaf's offices. As Brian Kirby reported for the *L.A. Free Press*, "to call it lavish would do it an injustice. His desk is as large as my office. A painting that looks like a Miro hangs behind Hamling."¹⁴

In the sleepy village of Ajijic, Jalisco, Mexico, Kemp bought a house, turning Ajijic into a South-of-the-border porn Yaddo. Gallons of tequila, good Mexican pot, and lines of coke fueled the festivities. Many of Kemp's writer friends purchased homes there. Twenty-five miles away, Donald H. Gilmore, Ph.D (diploma-mill), AKA "Douglas H. Gamlin" and probably "Dale Gordon," and his wife Betty, established their own porn mill in Guadalajara, moving their work through Greenleaf.

Back in the States, sci-fi writer Mike Resnick, who claims to have written porn under 150 pseudonyms, became a subcontractor, collecting \$1000 from Greenleaf, paying his stable of writers \$500, hiring an assistant to edit each manuscript at \$50 apiece, and another assistant the same fee to type the edited manuscript. When Kemp cut fees to \$600 Resnick shifted to producing illustrated photo-porn, buying 100 stills at \$400, and novelizing them for \$250 more. He even cut typist fees to \$25 each. Kemp ponied up \$1200 per photo-illustrated manuscript.¹⁵

Porn publishers, more so than sex researchers, psychologists and psychiatrists, understood the human sexual psyche with singular perspicacity. By the early '70s, Greenleaf, according to Kemp, became number five in number of titles released annually, right behind mainstream paperback publisher Bantam Books.

There was, to be sure, other porn activity in San Diego during the Phenix/Greenleaf era. Don Partrick, a smooth-talking salesman for Reed Enterprises, went out on his own with Publisher's Export Company. PEC was also fed by the San Diego and Mexico porn mills and had an extensive line including Rapture Novels, PEC Giants, Girls Together, Colorful Novels (featuring African-Americans), a male-oriented (gay) imprint, a Narcissus Series amongst many others, not the least of which was Pompeii Press, an imprint devoted exclusively to sado-masochist themes.

The end came for Greenleaf in 1971 when Hamling and Kemp published an explicitly-illustrated edition of the U.S. government's *Report of the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography*. Soon after the Greenleaf illustrated edition came to market, the Feds went after Hamling, Kemp, Corporate Secretary Shirley Wright, and corporate controller David Thomas. While a mistrial was declared regarding the publication's obscenity, the four were convicted of pandering through the mails, and Kemp and Hamling endured humiliating and embittering

jail sentences. Greenleaf, once known for story with sex, now followed the industry pattern: sex with as little story as possible.

BIRTH OF A PORNSTER

In August, 1965, Hugh A. Jones, a twenty-something living in Boulder, Colorado, picks up a writer's magazine and spots an ad: publisher of adult books seeks new ideas. He responds, and the publisher, Dave Zentner, likes his ideas.

Spanking: Sex or Sadism is the first of 49 sexual pseudo-documentaries Hugh A. Jones writes for Zentner, a bi-coastal character known primarily for his imprints Bee-Line and Century, and many West Coast imprints yet to be untangled. Aside from Bentley Morris, distributor of Zentner's imprints through his All-American Distribution Company (AADC), who asserts that Dave Zentner was "a great raconteur," few have kind words for him. Hugh A. Jones, who wrote for Zentner under the pseudonyms "Harvey T. Leathem, M.D." and "Dr. Sadie Cousins, Ph.D.," says Dave Zentner was "a nasty SOB."

According to Jones, Zentner "nursed me through my first four books—meaning he hollered, mostly about deadlines." For the first few years of their association, writer and publisher never met; all dealings were conducted over the phone. Hugh pitched ideas to Dave; if Dave liked them, he gave Hugh the green light. Sometimes Dave published them himself but as often as not laid them off to other porn publishers at a profit.

Soon, Jones began writing for Dick Sherwin, owner of RNS Publishing, distributed through Ed Scheff's Columbia News, a mid-size secondary periodicals distributor in L.A.'s San Fernando Valley. Sherwin published girlie mags and packaged the porn imprints, Venice Books and Private Editions, as well as issuing his own imprints. His operation was "a classy place with photographers, editors, a very professional organization," Jones reports.

Just prior to getting out of the business in 1971, Hugh says he "was bored and went on the Joe Pyne TV show to publicize my writing." Pyne was among the first TV talk show insult-interviewers. On this episode, he provides an example of the cultural hypocrisy intrinsic to erotica: during a commercial break, after unmercifully slicing and dicing Hugh for the last 15 minutes, Pyne jots a quick note. "Here," he tells Hugh, "get in touch with this guy; he pays better."

Believe in censors. . . ?

It seems that self-styled censorship is mounting. Every person who doesn't want to read a certain thing strives to see that you, too, cannot read it. The rage nowadays is that the people are see-crazy. If so, haven't they always been? These people who harp about what others are reading, and about what they themselves would not read, appear to want you to believe that they do not engage whatsoever in acts of sex, even though their offspring stand as evidence against them.

If writers are to portray life as it really is, rather than the way some people wish it were, they cannot very well scribble some rubbish about aspects of life which no longer exist, and doubtfully ever did. It would seem sensible to say TO EACH HIS OWN when it comes to anything someone else might want to read, so long as he doesn't try to give it down another's throat.

Sample rant from Sanford Aday's Saber Books' backpages.

CAST THY BOAT UPON THE WATERS FOR THE BREAD

Milton Van Sickle, an editor-writer for Luros, Bentley Morris, and Pendulum Books, heard about an overseas editing job offered by an American in Monte Carlo, Monaco.

Monte Carlo? What's an American porn publisher doing in Monte Carlo?

The short answer is the promise of glamour. After all, Monte Carlo is the city that Somerset Maugham called "a sunny place for shady people,"

The publisher was Jim Stevens, Harvard graduate and high roller. But Stevens knew little about publishing, so he hired as his editor-in-chief Jim Cardwell—a respected writer of mysteries, horror fiction, and ribald short stories, and, ironically, a former teacher of police science. Cardwell was the modern Mephistopheles whose efforts would make Liverpool Library Press the best-selling imprint in the business.

"From 1969 to 1972 I perpetrated some 25 novels for Liverpool Library Press—ten or so solo efforts, the rest collaborations with Jeff Wallmann."

Witness testimony from a latter-day hearing of the House Un-American Activities Committee?

No, the confession of six-time Mystery Writers of America (MWA) Edgar Award nominee Bill Pronzini, who declares that Stevens was involved in a scheme to evade U.S. tax law. Either due to Liverpool Library's profits or those of one of his, as Bill puts it, "quasi-legit ventures," Stevens fled the U.S. in late '69, escaping the IRS's tentacles after establishing, in 1967, the Liverpool Library imprint in Sausalito.

Stevens insisted that his writers move to Europe; their checks were drawn on European banks and had to be cashed there. Stevens paid his writers \$1200 per manuscript and often their European rent as well.

When most porn paperbacks were selling an average 32K-40K per title, the books Cardwell produced for Stevens often sold 80,000 copies apiece due to his excellent European distribution. "A great many of the sales were to English-speaking readers in Scandinavia and other parts of the world. Stevens' distribution network was at least as good and maybe better in foreign countries than it was here," Pronzini recalls. Additionally, Stevens was a master of branding: all LLP books had a standardized wrapper design featuring softcore line drawings. Luros and Thevis would copycat LLP with their Bristol Library Press and Little Library Press, respectively.

"We were assigned a 'theme'—incest, mother-son variety," for instance, Bill recalls, "and given strict guidelines: eight to ten chapters, each of at least 20 manuscript pages, each to contain an extended and lavishly detailed sex scene involving one of the obvious variations and two, three, four, or more participants, the last couple of chapters to be an orgy in which everybody takes part. We were also given a two-page style sheet consisting of columns of words and phrases headed 'Turn-Ons' (i.e., to be used often) and 'Turn-Offs' (not to be used at all). These were allegedly the result of a survey of LLP readers but I suspect they came from Stevens' febrile imagination. We were encouraged to use 'fuck,' especially in dialogue; other vulgarisms such as 'cocksucker' were a no-no. Go figure.

"My own favorite 'turn-ons' were the elaborate euphemisms with which we larded our LLPs: 'the hot, throbbing core of her being' and 'his mighty quivering penile member.' Two other things we were required to do: write a scene in which the heroine is briefly ashamed of her sudden plunge into sexual excesses; and write an introduction lauding the 'social relevance' of the novel and containing psychobabble about changing mores and 'neoteric concepts for succor in interper-

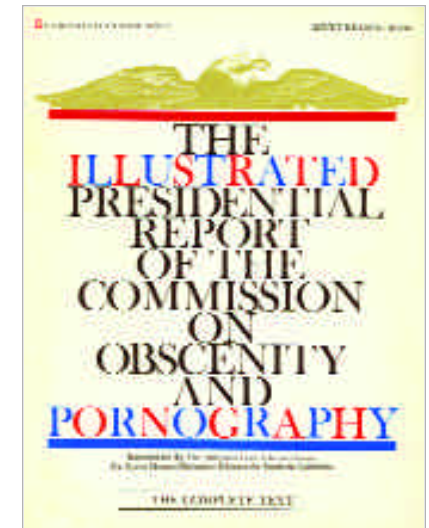
sonal relationships' (Wallman's great non-sense phrase). This and every other LLP we wrote, collaboratively or individually, contains a post-coital shower scene and some variation of "Oh God, oh God, her tortured mind screamed, what have I done! How can I ever hope to overcome this terrible debasement!"

REQUIESCAT EN PACE

By 1970, the open publication and ready availability of explicit sexual-themed books had lost its novelty: the sales slump of the late '60s; the wholesale move to adult bookshops after local communities legislated the reduction of strong story elements to a mere skeleton; the acceptance and publication of erotic novels of exceptional literary strength by mainstream publishers; the move away from print media to visual; and the hijacking of the business by organized crime. This unlucky combination tolled the death knell for the golden age of American erotica. Yet there was another nail in the coffin: the edict issued throughout the industry that the serious was now supreme, all humor in pulp porn was now verboten. Throughout the decade, pulp porn writers often reveled in the comic aspects of human sexual behavior. As plummeting print runs indicated, the audience for

notes

1. Buried in legally mandated circulation notices in his magazines is the fact that Title Insurance and Trust, a Los Angeles real estate concern of long standing, holds the Luros stock in trust.
2. *Candy* had been originally published in Paris by Maurice Girodias' Olympia Press. Because of the Manufacturing Clause in contemporary U.S. copyright law, any book printed outside of the United States did not receive automatic copyright protection. A foreign publisher could, however, receive ad interim protection for five years if the publisher simply filled out a form and paid a small fee. Girodias never availed himself of this protection and as a result virtually every book in his catalogue—with the possible exception of Nabokov's *Lolita*, Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*, and Donleavy's *Ginger Man*—was without copyright protection of any kind whatsoever in the U.S.
3. Roberts, Edwin A., *The Smut Rakers*, Silver Spring, MD, *Newsbook—The National Observer*, 1966, p. 81.
4. Aday and Ortega Maxey did not, fortunately, have to serve their full terms.
5. I am deeply indebted Carolyn See for permission to liberally use early biographical material on Miller from her 1973 book, *Blue Money* (NY: David McKay, 1973).
6. Collier, Peter. *Pirates of Pornography*, Ramparts, Aug. 10, 1968.
7. Collier, *ibid.*
8. See, C., *ibid.*, p. 24.
9. Collier, *ibid.*
10. *Los Angeles Free Press*, June 21, 1971.
11. *A Quantity of Copies of Books v. Kansas*, 84 Sup. Ct. 1723 (1964).
12. I am indebted to Stephen Rohde, Esq., who was an associate in Fleishman's office, for this golden nugget.
13. Talese, G., *Thy Neighbor's Wife* (Garden City: Doubleday), 1980, p. 400.
14. *Los Angeles Free Press*, June 21, 1971.
15. Resnick, Mike. "How I Single-Handedly Destroyed The Sex Book Field For Five Years And Never Even Got A Thank You Note From The Legion of Decency," *Mimosa* #26 e-zine, 2001, pp. 19-20.
16. Secondary to the Supreme Court's 1969 *Stanley v. Georgia*, which legalized the private possession of obscene material but gave license to locals to get the stuff out of the sight of children.



This 1970 Greenleaf Classics production, with hard-core photos illustrating The Presidential Commission on Pornography helped land editor Earl Kemp and publisher William Hamling in the big.

pulp porn had dwindled considerably to those interested simply in masturbatory inspiration. The audience had changed and it was no laughing matter.

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