

RIGHTS AND
PERMISSIONS
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TRANSATLANTIC THRILLS

Next September will mark the launching of two series of thriller, mystery and suspense novels, mostly translations and mostly by Americans, under the aegis of Sweden's Lindqvist Förlag.

The editors of the series, Iwan Hedman ("Hedman Thrillers") and K. Arne Blom ("Bulldog Crime Club"), have just concluded a visit to New York—their first—during the course of which they made the personal acquaintance of a number of their authors, looked into possible future acquisitions and, in Blom's case, met with the editor who will introduce his own work to the American public. With an offer of a \$3000 advance, Joan Kahn recently tied up rights for Harper & Row to "Sanningens Ögonblick" ("The Moment of Truth"), published by Almqvist & Wiksell, for which Blom has won the 1974 Sherlock award for the year's best suspense novel bestowed by *Expressen*, Scandinavia's top-circulation newspaper. Danish rights, including book club, also have been sold by Swedish agent Lennart Sane to Lademann.

Blom currently is represented on his country's television screens by a dramatic series based on an earlier novel. He has written five so far, all police procedurals; the fifth, "The Triumph of Violence"—about "young people who need violence as they are growing up"—is due shortly from Almqvist & Wiksell. Blom has come to the conclusion, he told me, that in this day of impoverished communication within the family, violent activity is the only way in which many adolescents know how to express themselves.

While Blom has been earning his living entirely through books, Hedman is an

army career man whose job it is to train medics—a somewhat anomalous assignment, he acknowledges, in a land that has gone without war for more than a century and a half. Over a 14-year period he pieced together a bibliography of all the crime novels, both indigenous and translated, published in Sweden from 1864, when the first appeared, to 1973. This volume, "Deckare Och Thrillers Pa Svenska, 1864-1973," gives titles in their original languages as well as Swedish and is widely used as a reference work in British libraries. Hedman has produced the book under the imprint "DAST"—for Detective, Agents (secret), Science fiction and Thrillers—which is also the name of a magazine he issues six times a year.

Authors in line for Blom's Bulldog series range alphabetically from Frederic Brown through Arthur Upfield. The Hedman Thrillers list, which ends with Edgar Wallace, starts with K. Arne Blom.

In addition to Blom's "Moment of Truth," Joan Kahn has bought another Scandinavian suspense novel, "Galgesangen" by Torben Nielsen ("Gallows Songs," if I interpret my Danish dictionary correctly). Again, Lennart Sane was the agent. Nielsen's latest, "Nitten Røde Roser" ("Nineteen Red Roses"), published by Lademann, received the Danish equivalent of the Sherlock and Edgar awards, the Poe award, and has been filmed in Denmark—and successfully, it would seem—as Warner Bros. has taken over the picture's world distribution rights.

AND HERE AT HOME . . .

Closer to home, mystery and suspense surround the motion picture "Breakout," originally scheduled for Easter release but at last report postponed to the end of May. Is the movie an adaptation of the book "The 10-Second Jailbreak: The Helicopter Escape of Joel David Kaplan" by Eliot Asinof, Warren Hinckle and William Turner? Hinckle certainly thought so when I talked to him in New York the other day. Cyrilly Abels and the Ziegler agency, who cooperated in selling "The 10-Second Jailbreak" to Columbia Pictures for \$140,000, have been under the same impression. And so, obviously, has Bantam Books, which reportedly paid \$25,000 for paperback rights and till recently expected to issue a tie-in edition when the picture came out.

But now Columbia is taking the position that "Breakout" is "fictionalized"—that it is not a film version of the Asinof-Hinckle-Turner account of the actual incarceration in Mexican prisons and escape after nine years of the young American businessman, sometime gun runner and convicted murderer Joel David Kaplan. Speculation regarding possible CIA involvement on Kaplan's part is included in the book. Kaplan has an Uncle "Jack"—J. M. Kaplan—also mentioned,

whose Kaplan Fund, associated with various cultural good works, was charged by Senator Wright Patman during government hearings with serving as a CIA conduit. Is there any truth to rumors that Uncle Jack has seen, or wants to see, the Columbia movie in advance of its opening? An assistant who took my call when I phoned J. M. Kaplan's office denied frigidly that there is.

Even though film and book have different titles, it is suggestive of a connection between the two that *Playboy*, running a condensation of the Holt hardcover, used the same title Columbia is using. Backing up its contention that "Breakout" is not "The 10-Second Jailbreak," the studio has refused to cooperate with Bantam in its anticipated tie-in and has withheld permission for the book to carry the picture's title or cover copy naming its stars, Charles Bronson and John Huston. Bantam, for its part, has decided not to do the reprint at all. The rights are now up for resale by Holt's Connie Sayre.

SHORT SUBJECTS: Since the report here last week of the sale of "The Moneychangers" to television for a record price, word has come from London of its acquisition by Pan Books for £75,000, believed to be a record, also, for that reprint house. Souvenir Press continues as Arthur Hailey's British hardcover publisher. . . . Fletcher Knebel's latest novel, "The Bottom Line," based on an idea advanced by one picture producer, has been bought for filming by another. Dick Berg will make the movie about the backstage drama of a big-business convention in Acapulco for Stonehenge Productions in association with Charles Fries Productions. The contract, providing for a \$100,000 guarantee plus a percentage, was negotiated by H. N. Swanson, who also set the "Moneychangers" TV deal. . . . Was it ever mentioned here that "Sybil" figures importantly in the trend now under way to "long form" television? A four-part movie is being readied by NBC, with Flora Rheta Schreiber serving as consultant on the adaptation of her book. . . . *Bride's* magazine will run the chapter on marriage from Shana Alexander's state-by-state guide to women's legal rights (*Wollstonecraft*). . . . German rights by Pyramid's Expedition series—nine books to date—have gone to Verlag Ullstein for DM2160 per title, French rights to Les Presses de la Cité for 3000 francs apiece. . . . Dell has acquired softcover rights to "Meeting at Potsdam" by Charles L. Mee, Jr. (*Evans*), and Fawcett to Colin Forbes's "The Year of the Golden Ape" (*Dutton*), which is being filmed for Universal Pictures release. . . . William Kozenko's "Disputed Plays of William Shakespeare" (*Hawthorn*) has been chosen as an alternate by Readers Subscription. . . . Quality Paperback Book Service is offering "Visions of Code" by Jack Kerouac (*McGraw*).