

The more I got into this, the third of the St. John-devil-worship-as-Red trash, the more I began to wonder if they were no more than Hunt's personal expressions of his own political beliefs.

They were written while he was still CIA. Szulc reports his (unnamed) novels were in Helms' office. He left CIA and with that he appears to have abandoned Red ~~Deviltry~~ Deviltry for more conventional politicizing.

In the three he may have exhausted his targets and this may have led to the switch from them.

He went after the Russian and Chinese Reds and those he regarded as domestic, the Kennedys. One in each book.

It is too early in the morning to go to where The Coven is to see if the sequence can be determined from it. It may not be important but if I am correct, the presumptions can bear slightly on whether there was official interest in this writing.

It appears to me that The Sorcerers was first. The Coven appeared in hardback before this Fawcett reprint of Diabolus, for the flyleaf says the other two had been bestselling novels. However, Fawcett reprinted The Coven third. Its only St. John before Diabolus was The Sorcerers.

In this work, all three, he also covered the areas of "Communist" operation that bothered him/CIA: Africa for the Russians, Latin America for the Chicoms and home for the domestic. Of course, there was always Europe, in parts of all three and in The Sorcerers.

A minor observation, perhaps, but there are few heroes in Hunt's writing other than Hunt. One of these minor heroes is the priest Gilles. I find it interesting that of all the names he could have selected for a Frenchman he chose this one, not a common French name to American audiences. It happens to be the name of an extreme-right French writer, historian of the colonies in formerly French Africa and ghost of the Romero book in which I earlier postulated intelligence interest if not sponsorship.

From the record one is left to wonder what Hunt did for half of his CIA career to justify his salary. He was in more or less disgrace after The Bay of Pigs. Szulc has him participating in Second Naval Guerrilla in 1965, but that can't have taken much time, if any. Hunt, secretly, has himself in domestic operations beginning in 1962 (1964 in the fiction leaked by Baker). In publishing, taken by the Post to mean in watching publication of books against US Vietnam policy. I think this is too restrictive a view and not nearly enough work to justify the size of the staff of which he was part.

So, I think that if we assume that Hunt was in pasture for the last 10 of his 20 years at CIA, why not wonder if he spent this time writing novels whose political doctrine was consistent with what CIA wanted believed? Aside from the political content, in all of these there is good mass public relations for the CIA. It is always good guys. There is no single bad guy in them. They do wondrous things, spending money only wisely and always in the national interest and on endeavors beyond the comprehension of the average citizen until he reads of their noble purpose and accomplishment in these novels.

These books are potboilers. Nonetheless, it took time to write them. Assuming that Hunt spent most of his non-working time on them, indicated by his children in the Rolling Stone interview, the fact remains that even a fast writer might not have been able to produce an average of two a year (measured in publication rather than output) on a part-time, own-time basis.

If he had really been an operational spook it would have been impossible, for the nature of clandestine operations (distinguished from operational bureaucracy, administration) would preclude it in some if not all years.

Fawcett's listing of books by E. Howard Hunt in Their edition of The Coven is in this order: Where Murder Waits, The Sorcerers, Diabolus and The Coven.

The three on devils were Weybright and Talley hardbacks. Diabolus but not the later The Coven identifies W&T as a McKay division. One can't project too far or too certainly with publishers, but I note that in 1965 Howard Cady, who had been in OSS headquarters, was managing editor of McKay, when I was there. He forecast that Whitewash would be a best seller and wrote regrets at not being able to get McKay to go for it. This really means

Mrs. Rawson, wife of the owner, for she ran the place. There may be no connection or meaning, but I think it is worth recalling what happened that I know of.

When I walked into Cady's office and introduced myself, despite the fact that we had never met he remembered my name from OSS days. He recalled what I had done in the Paris case. After more than 20 years! And quite favorably. For a man he had never met, quite a recollection.

(In that case some of your boys, framed by the Washington MPs, had been convicted and their appeals had all failed. They were in jails. Six weeks after I was on the case, working with the materials in the files only, I have built a case that freed them.)

Cady asked me if I objected to his letting a friend in whose judgement he had much confidence read the manuscript. I didn't ask him who the friend was because I was willing for anyone to sit in judgement. I didn't dream he would involve a partisan and a ~~propaganda~~ propagandist. Only after I agreed did he tell me it was Isaac Don Levins! Naturally, McKay did not go for Whitewash, while predicting it would be a best-seller.

Where Murder Waits, 1965, appears to be Cuban, not inconsistent with pro-CIA, political writing for CIA, under the W & T imprint.

It is interesting to note that Hunt's interest in diabolism and tying it to what to him is left politics only coincides with the emergence of right-oriented pseudo-religious groups in the U.S. The Process comes to mind. There are others similar, if the political line is not clear. The Manson family, etc.

There is a dedication in Diabolus to those I believe may be negative characters in The Cove. With regard to "Hugehead" I am certain. This seems strange.

All the foregoing may be coincidence or invalid by itself. However, I believe that if taken together with what I have noted about the other two books, it is less easy to dismiss these things. Certainly they tell much about the strange man Hunt, more than about his wierdo political and self-concepts. We learn much of his mind in them. We learn a little about his personal habits and his attitudes, as toward women (sexist). They would provide an open-minded shrink with enough for a psychological profile. One need not be a shrink to evolve what should be a dependable one.