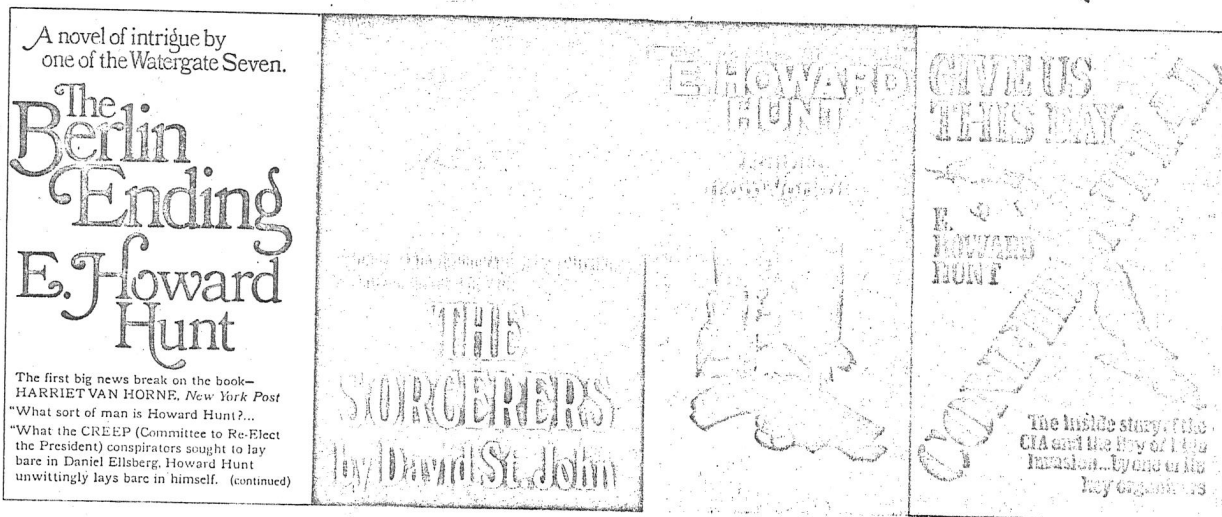


A Boost for the Backlist from E. Howard Hunt



Ex-CIA agent E. Howard Hunt, most famous for his activities as Watergate burglar, has a long literary career behind him: according to "Who's Who" he has published 44 books, and two more are just around the corner.

At one time, that part of his career promised to be distinguished as well. Mr. Hunt's first novel, "East of Farewell," a 1942 account of life on a destroyer, won excellent reviews. Said the *New York Times*: "A fine realistic novel, without any doubt the best sea story of the war." "Limit of Darkness," published in 1944, received good, if somewhat less enthusiastic, notices, but when "Maclstrom" came out in 1948, the *Herald Tribune* dismissed it as "a standard thriller-romance," while *Kirkus* sniffed, "cheap, tawdry melodrama."

Kirkus apparently held fast to its opinion, for when "Bimini Run" appeared in 1949, the verdict was again "cheap and tawdry," while the *Times*, once so complimentary, was reduced to "lifeless and unexciting." Shortly after this, Mr. Hunt, apparently despairing of the vagaries of hardcover reviewers, turned to publishing paperback originals, mainly spy thrillers, under numerous pseudonyms—Robert Dietrich, David St. John, John Baxter and Gordon Davis. A curious note: "Who Done It?" the standard compendium of writers of mystery and suspense fiction lists his real name as Robert Dietrich, with Howard Hunt as a pseudonym. Surely this is not a mistake, but can be traced to Mr. Hunt's penchant for intrigue.

Dell, Fawcett, Lancer and NAL all published Hunt titles, mostly under the pseudonyms. Most of them are rushing to reissue the titles they still hold rights to, using Mr. Hunt's real name. Thus NAL will release six St. John thrillers, all starring a CIA agent named Peter Ward, and all written in the 1960s: "On Hazardous Duty," "Return from Vorkuta," "The Towers of Silence," "Festival for Spies," "The Venus Probe" and "One of Our Agents Is Missing." These will appear "as soon as NAL's schedule permits," probably early August, while Lancer will also reissue "My Body" in August; this was a Robert Dietrich novel which now, using the same cover, will feature Mr. Hunt's real name.

Fawcett is the only house which actually has current Hunts, or, more accurately, David St. Johns. These are "The Sorcerers" and "Diabolus," both starring secret agent Peter Ward, and they will be joined by "The Coven" in November. All three came out first in Weybright hard covers, and *PW's* response to them was unwelcoming if not exactly negative ("Maybe there are readers for this sort of thing"). Fawcett also has a Gordon Davis, "Where Murder Waits," which it will get out in October.

Dell put out a number of Robert Dietrich titles, but has allowed the rights to all of them to revert to the author. Said a spokesman when queried as to the reason for this, "They were dated, not contemporary enough." Donald MacCampbell, Mr. Hunt's agent, had to say on this subject that Mr. Hunt's novels may be *politi-*

cally dated—"A lot of them have Russian Communists as the Bad Guys, and this seems sort of dated now that the Russians are our friends"—but that there is nothing dated about the writing. Berkeley apparently concurs, for it has just acquired the rights to "Bimini Run," which it hopes to have out some time this fall.

Two new Hunt titles, both using his own name, of course, will be in bookstores shortly. The first is a novel, "The Berlin Ending" (reviewed in *PW*, June 25), which has a print order of 20,000 and is due August 28 from Putnam. The second, a nonfiction account of the Bay of Pigs fiasco and Hunt's own involvement in it, is called "Give Us This Day," and Arlington House will have it on November 7.

Mr. Hunt's future literary plans remain indefinite, though there seems to be no doubt that he will continue writing. According to Mr. MacCampbell, he doesn't want to talk about what he'll do next because there seems to be some question as to whether the Danbury prison authorities will permit him to write. Still, books have been written in prisons before, and it looks as though Mr. Hunt will have more time for the literary endeavor in the immediate future than in the immediate past.

ALICE K. TURNER

Macmillan has signed a contract with William Barry Furlong, a free-lance writer, for what is expected to be the first book on the Chicago Symphony's popular director, Georg Solti. "Season with