

英美现代文学注释丛书



Oil

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by

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Abridged and Annotated

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内 容 简 介

本书为美国七十年代畅销书。本书描写美国诺思卡特国际石油公司和泽西克雷斯特石油公司之间尖锐复杂的斗争。先是前者出现严重危机，最后由于前者抓到后者贿赂能源部长的材料，迫使美国总统同意批准它和中国达成勘探和开发石油的协议。作者通过虚构的情节，反映了美国石油垄断集团之间几十年勾心斗角斗争的情况。

本书经过删节改动，并先后由许国璋、杨树勋、邓炎昌、杜秉洲教授审阅删节处和注释部分。

本书可供中、高级英语程度的读者阅读。

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石 油

〔美〕乔纳森·布莱克 著

陈德彰 删节、注释

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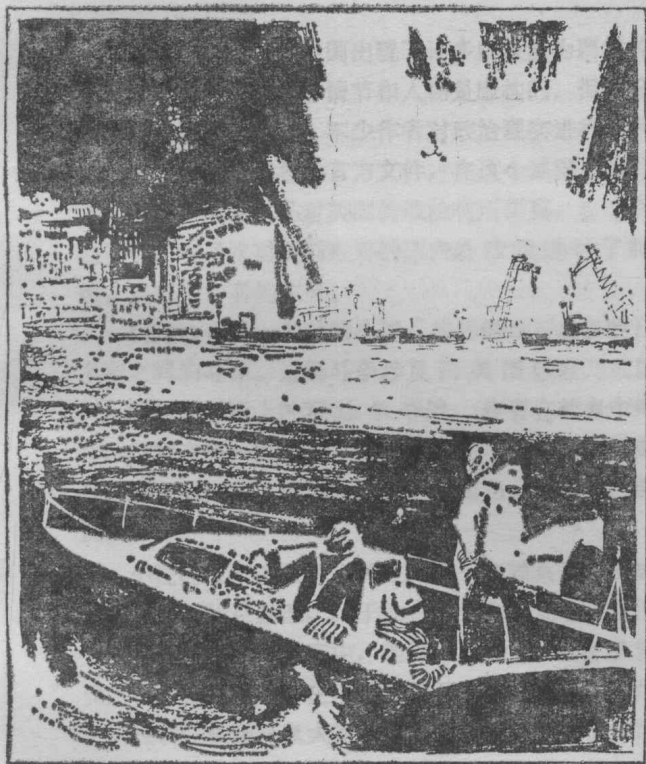
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禾禾 绘

前 言

六十年代以后，美国出现了许多以政治为题材的小说。这些小说的具体情节和人物是虚构的，但是又不完全是凭空杜撰的，不少作者对政治现实进行了调查研究，并参阅了各种官方文件，在这个基础上进行艺术创作。不少作品对美国的政治有所揭露，有的则通过小说的形式对美国政府的国内外政策进行了抨击，或提出作者的主张。

《石油》也是一部政治小说，描写的是石油垄断资本家之间的斗争。这场斗争涉及到美国政府乃至总统，涉及到国际上的石油争夺战。作者在前言中声称，尽管这是一部小说，写作时他在很大程度上依据石油工业的史实，尽可能给读者勾画出一幅真实的图景。

小说的主人公诺思卡特是美国一家颇具规模的独立石油公司的总经理。由于他有远见和事业心，在西方世界一片石油危机声中，他同中国政府达成了协议，他的公司取得了在中国进行石油勘探、开采和加工的权利。美国几家大垄断公司对这件事大为恼火而又不甘于落后，于是联合起来对付诺思卡特。他们雇用职业犯罪组织，烧毁诺思卡特在中东油田的石油库和在美国国内的许多石油销售站，并且以巨资收买总统的首席顾问和能源部长，制造舆论，破坏诺思卡特石油公司的声誉，从而向政府施加压力，不让政府批准诺思卡特同中国达成的协议。在一系列挫折面

前，诺思卡特千方百计进行反击，他一面通过朋友设法找另一个职业犯罪组织进行反破坏，一方面想办法笼络该公司中东油田所在的首长国的酋长，通过他转手向别的石油生产国购买原油，以弥补破坏所造成的原油不足。同时，诺思卡特也通过自己在政府中的代理人，参议院的能源委员会主席，为自己的公司捧场。最后，诺思卡特设法弄到了对手石油公司向总统首席顾问行贿的证词，并以此直接向总统摊牌，迫使总统不得不让他的首席顾问和能源部长辞职，批准了诺思卡特同中国的协议。

小说回顾了诺思卡特从一个钻井工逐步发迹成为大资本家的过程，对二十年代以来美国石油工业发展的情况，石油垄断资本家之间勾心斗角、尔虞我诈的斗争，石油工业和政界的种种关系，第二次世界大战前后以及当前西方石油争夺战等情况有一定介绍。小说的故事生动，情节曲折，语言流畅，对现实的揭露也有一定的深度。小说指出：“石油行业一直是狗咬狗的”，“历史上，大石油公司是碰不得的，连总统都不敢得罪他们”。小说指出：目前西方的所谓石油危机，在很大程度上是人为地造成的，是石油垄断资本家追求超额利润的结果，也是他们要挟政府的一种手段。作者刻划的人物很成功，垄断资本家的唯利是图，政客们的善于钻营，职业罪犯的杀人不眨眼，甚至出场不多的总统都刻划得入木三分，给读者留下深刻的印象。这些左右美国政策的大资本家和政客们过着荒淫的生活，穿得衣冠楚楚，可是满口粗话，不堪入耳，心灵深处只有一个“钱”字。

作者抓住石油这个在西方政治中起着重要作用的因素，精心构思，从而对美国政治进行了无情的揭

露。主要情节虽属虚构，但读来没有丝毫做作的感觉，完全反映了现实生活。因此应该说这是一部很成功的作品。但是作者毕竟站在资产阶级立场上。他要维护的是中等资产阶级的利益，他要争夺的是独立的石油公司在日益激烈的竞争中的生存权。作者把心狠手辣的资本家诺思卡特作为英雄人物歌颂美化，为之树碑立传，把阿拉伯国家的石油禁运说成是“敲诈”，对中东战争不分是非，把那位酋长描写成一个贪得无厌的笨蛋。这些都是小说的局限性所在。

原书用很大的篇幅描写诺思卡特荒淫的私生活，有许多黄色的描写，使作品大为失色。这次出版的是节选本，删除了私生活方面的内容，并相应对有关情节作了一些改动，去掉了一些离题的枝节描写。为了帮助学习英语者阅读，书后作了一些简单的注释。

原书由美国 William Morrow & Company 出版公司于1974年出版。作者 Jonathan Black 的生平不详。

陈德彰

BOOK ONE

1

JUNE 24

James L. Northcutt settled his big frame into a lounge chair aboard his private Boeing 727/100. Although there were other passengers, he had indicated that he wanted to be alone for a while and, since they were all his employees, they deferred to his wishes.

Northcutt's rough-hewn features, permanently weathered to a mahogany hue by the sun and wind, reflected an inner elation. He grinned with satisfaction as he looked out through the window next to him. A large number of Chinese Government dignitaries had come to Peking airport to see him off and to once again emphasize the magnitude of the success that had been achieved.

"Would you care for anything, Mr. Northcutt?" asked one of the four stewardesses who served as cabin attendants aboard the Boeing.

"The usual," he replied.

"A double Jack Daniel's?"

"Yep."

The stewardess beamed a smile, but hesitated.

"Mr. Northcutt."

"Yes?" A thick eyebrow rose.

"I — that is, may I offer my congratulations?"

"You may — and I thank you for them."

Northcutt's gray eyes followed the girl as she went off toward the well-stocked bar at the forward end of the plane's lounge compartment. She returned with his drink, placed it on the table in front of him.

The Boeing's Rolls-Royce engines were whining into life.

What he achieved in Peking would be the capstone of his spectacular career in the oil industry. He had successfully concluded the last difficult round of negotiations with Chinese Government officials. He was carrying off a prize that represented an eight-billion-dollar potential for his company. Now he was eager to return home and impatient to implement the vast sweeping projects he had undertaken.

The plane had begun to taxi.

The Boeing with the words *Northcutt International Petroleum Company* emblazoned in blue on its white fuselage touched down at Orly Airport outside Paris a little before one p.m. local time. It remained on the ground only long enough to disembark the specialists and technicians who accompanied James Northcutt to Peking. Northcutt shook hands with each of them and once again expressed his appreciation for their contributions to the final success of his dealings with the Chinese. The plane received runway priority and taxied to the head of a long queue of commercial airliners and took off for Nice, where it landed less than three quarters of an hour later.

At Nice, James Northcutt transferred directly to a waiting — and also private — Alouette helicopter. He ignored immigration and customs formalities. Many years before, he had given ailing French shipyards a \$55 million transfusion in contracts for tanker construction. A grateful President Charles de Gaulle rewarded the expatriate American oil billionaire by appointing him an officer of the Légion d'Honneur. De Gaulle also ordered that he be permanently accorded Freedom of the Port at all French ports of entry.

Northcutt was especially glad for the privilege

this day. If his presence at the Nice airport became generally known, he was certain to be mobbed by members of the French press. Despite his pride and jubilation over what he had achieved in China, Northcutt preferred to avoid journalists. For more than two months, the world had been sliding deeper into what the media labeled "The Second Global Energy Crisis", a situation worsened by another oil embargo imposed on Western nations by the Arab oil-producing countries. 5 10

The reporters would not be content to ask about the outcome of the already highly publicized venture in China. They would bombard him with questions regarding the energy crisis and Arab embargo. Northcutt had no desire to make public statements on those matters. Appropriate answers could be given out later in his name by vice-presidents or public relations men on his payrolls. 15

"Let's get on our way home — *tout de suite*," Northcutt told the helicopter pilot, his deep baritone voice easily carrying above the sound of the idling engines and clack of the slowly revolving blades. He hoisted himself aboard with remarkable agility and insisted on occupying the copilot's seat. 20

The copter lifted off and headed southwest along the Côte d'Azur. The trip was short. Very soon, the Alouette was settling down on the helipad at Bonheur, James Northcutt's huge estate near Cap d'Antibes, his favorite among the homes he owned in both hemispheres. 25 30

The main structure, a seventy-four-room mansion, was elegantly splendid in its Mediterranean-villa style and surrounded by lesser buildings, all designed and sited to maintain esthetic harmony. One of these buildings contained offices for a corps of aides and secretaries. Bonheur was more than a residence for its owner. It was the headquarters from 35

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and secretaries. Bonheur was more than a residence for its owner. It was the headquarters from

which James L. Northcutt exercised final authority and control over his worldwide network of business enterprises.

5 "Mr. Schlechter arrived shortly after noon," Medding, the English butler, announced. "He was given his usual suite in the west wing."

"Where is he now?" Northcutt asked.

10 "In your study, sir. Shall I tell him you've arrived?"

"No, I'll join him there."

Northcutt turned and, still greatly exhilarated, walked with jaunty, long-legged strides down a corridor that led off to the right. Bowls of fresh-cut
15 flowers from the gardens of the estate stood on tables. Paintings from his superb collection of Impressionists and post-Impressionists hung on the walls.

James Northcutt's study was spacious and high-ceilinged. Large windows looked out over acres of
20 gardens and lawns that sloped gently down to a broad, whitesanded beach beyond which lay the Mediterranean. Inside the study, recessed bookshelves flanked a great fireplace. Furniture in the room achieved an ideal balance between
25 utilitarian efficiency and luxurious comfort.

Samuel Schlechter sat in an armchair, reading a book. When Northcutt entered, he rose to his feet and advanced a step. The two men shook hands, smiling at each other. Their manner of greeting gave
30 evidence of long intimacy and complete mutual trust and confidence.

Their physical appearances were in sharp contrast. Tall, wide-shouldered and still hard-muscled, Northcutt towered over Samuel Schlechter, who
35 was several inches shorter, no more than five-nine in height. Lithe and dapper, Schlechter's features were smooth and more than slightly saturnine in their cast.

Officially, Samuel Schlechter was James L. Northcutt's attorney. In operative fact, he was the oil billionaire's American-based alter ego. Northcutt had lived in France for many years. But the Northcutt International Petroleum Company — NIPCO — and its principal subsidiaries were U.S. corporations. Their home offices were in New York City, where Schlechter resided, had his law firm and served as James Northcutt's first deputy and right arm.

Northcutt formulated the grand strategies. Sam Schlechter strained the concepts through legal sieves, transmuted them into viable plans, saw to their execution and held the reins on Board members and six-figure-salaried executives. Together, Northcutt and Schlechter had built an empire. Together, they were continuing to expand it.

"You didn't tell me much on the phone, Sam," Northcutt said when they were seated. Schlechter had called him in Peking and stated only that he was coming to Bonheur to discuss urgent matters.

"Any idea how many eavesdroppers there must be on a New York-to-Peking hookup?" Schlechter grimaced.

Northcutt's gray eyes expressed curiosity. "So you're here. Should I be glad to see you?"

"Hardly. My news isn't good, Jim."

"Mine is." The oilman evidently chose to ignore Schlechter's reply, for he was bursting with enthusiasm. "It's the best. I got everything wrapped up — but of course, you've heard. All sorts of announcements and communiques were given out to correspondents. We've taken a giant step, Sam."

Northcutt made several trips to Peking, conducted negotiations on a personal level, conferring with Chinese Cabinet ministers. During this last two-week stay in the People's Republic of China, he

had reached agreement with the Chinese on specific projects and contract terms. NIPCO was to receive oil exploration and drilling concessions in vast areas of China, with the American company to have a considerable share of all the oil produced.

In addition, NIPCO was to build — and for ten years operate — a number of refineries, pipelines, petrochemical and fertilizer plants in China. Experts estimated the agreements represented a staggering trade potential of over eight billion dollars for the United States — and for NIPCO.

Naturally, U.S. Government approval would be needed before the agreements became effective. However, considering the new fuel shortage and energy crisis in America, Northcutt was certain the necessary approvals would be granted very quickly.

"Yep, we've taken a real giant step," Northcutt repeated, rubbing his large, powerful hands.

"That's the trouble, Jim," Samuel Schlechter said dourly. "You and NIPCO have taken too many big steps."

"Now wait a minute. I thought everybody was cheering." Northcutt's brow seamed and his jawline hardened.

"Almost everybody," Schlechter said. "The media are calling you 'the one-man answer to the fuel shortage' and 'the oil tycoon who'll close the trade deficit gap single-handed.' Read the papers and news magazines and listen to the television commentators — and you're practically a national hero."

"Then who's making waves all of a sudden?" Northcutt demanded.

"Who? The Majors, of course. NIPCO has always broken every rule of their club. Now it's about to shut the club members out of China. That, my friend, has them in one hell of an uproar."

James Northcutt's frown deepened.

Northcutt International Petroleum was an independent company that had frequently defied and opposed the "Majors", the handful of supercorporations that shared a monopoly of over 80 percent of the Western world's oil reserves and refining and distribution facilities. Ostensibly in competition with each other, major oil companies worked in close concert to maintain their supremacy. They had many grievances against NIPCO, which was the largest of the independents and had never been their docile collaborator.

NIPCO joined in no price-fixing agreements. Its NIPpy brand gasoline sold for two to four cents less per gallon than Major brands. Worse, NIPCO played no part in the manipulations that created largely artificial global "energy crisis" out of basically manageable shortages of crude oil. During the entire previous "oil famine," NIPCO had delivered normal allocations of all fuels to its dealers and distributors. This did grave damage to the public image of the giants who pleaded acute scarcity and slashed their allocations of gasoline, fuel and heating oils by as much as half.

Northcutt International even managed to avoid being affected by either the first or the most recent Arab oil embargo. Its fields in Qantara, a Persian Gulf islandemirate, continued to produce at full capacity.

Now, NIPCO seemed on the verge of success in its negotiations with Peking.

"China's the last great undeveloped source of oil on earth," Schlechter continued. "No limits to the possibilities — or the profits — there. The Majors want the Chinese concessions and plant construction and operation contracts for themselves. Three of them have already joined up to prevent