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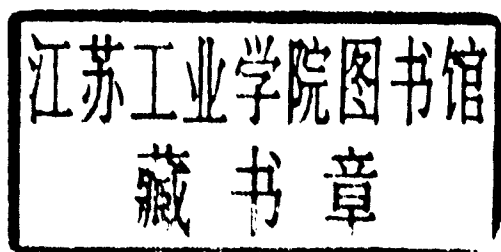


CRIME FICTION

Edited by Martin Priestman

THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO
CRIME FICTION

MARTIN PRIESTMAN



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MARTIN PRIESTMAN is a Professor of English at Roehampton University of Surrey. Books on crime fiction include *Detective Fiction and Literature: The Figure on the Carpet* (1990) and *Crime Fiction from Poe to the Present* (1998). He has also published *Cowper's Task Structure and Influence* (1983) and *Romantic Atheism: Poetry and Freethought, 1780–1830* (1999). He is currently editing the works of Charles Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus.

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CRIME FICTION: A CHRONOLOGY

(No list can hope to cover this vast genre adequately. In general, this one follows the emphases of the chapters in the present book; otherwise, the texts named are their authors' earliest and/or most significant. Historical events are in bold typeface.)

- 1722 Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (UK)
- 1725 **Execution of 'Thieftaker General' Jonathan Wild** (UK)
- 1728 John Gay, *The Beggar's Opera* (UK)
- 1743 Henry Fielding, *Jonathan Wild* (UK)
- 1749 **Fielding becomes chief London magistrate; he and his brother John go on to form the Bow Street Runners** (UK)
- 1751 Fielding, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers* (UK)
- 1773 *First Newgate Calendar* (UK)
- 1783 **US achieves Independence from Britain**
- 1789 **The French Revolution**
- 1794 William Godwin, *Caleb Williams* (UK)
- 1796 Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (UK)
- 1798 Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Wrongs of Woman* (UK)
- 1799 **Joseph Fouché heads first efficient police force** (Fr)
- 1809 **Eugène François Vidocq chief of police** (Fr)
- 1821 James Fenimore Cooper, *The Spy* (US)
- 1828 **Sir Robert Peel founds Metropolitan Police** (UK)
Vidocq, *Mémoires* (Fr)
- 1830 Edward Bulwer Lytton, *Paul Clifford* (UK)
- 1832 Bulwer Lytton, *Eugene Aram* (UK)
- 1834 William Harrison Ainsworth, *Rookwood* (UK)
- 1839 Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (UK)
- 1840 Ainsworth, *Jack Sheppard: A Romance of the Robber-Hero* (UK)
- 1841 Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' (US)

- 1842 Detective Police established in London
- 1843 'Day and Night' Police established in New York
- 1852 Allan Pinkerton founds National Detective Agency (US)
- 1853 Dickens, *Bleak House* (UK)
- 1856 London Police model established throughout UK
'Waters' (William Russell), *Recollections of a Detective Police Officer* (UK)
- 1857 Married Women's Property and Matrimonial Causes Acts enable married women to own property and seek divorce for cruelty (UK)
- 1860 Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (UK)
- 1861 Ellen Wood, *East Lynne* (UK)
- 1861-5 American Civil War
Anon., *Experiences of a Lady Detective* (UK)
- 1862 Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret* (UK)
- 1863 Emile Gaboriau, *L'Affaire Lerouge* (Fr.)
- 1866 Capital punishment abolished for most crimes except murder (UK)
- 1868 Collins, *The Moonstone* (UK)
- 1869 Gaboriau, *Monsieur Lecoq* (Fr.)
- 1878 Plain-clothes CID established at New Scotland Yard (UK)
Anna K. Green, *The Leavenworth Case* (US)
- 1886 Fergus Hume, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (Australia)
- 1887 National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies founded (UK)
Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (UK)
- 1892 Doyle, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (UK)
- 1894 Catherine Louisa Pirkis, *The Experiences of Loveday Brooke, Lady Detective* (UK)
- 1899 E. W. Hornung, *Raffles, the Amateur Cracksman* (UK)
- 1900 Matthias MacDonnell Bodkin, *Dora Myrl, The Lady Detective* (UK)
- 1901 Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (UK)
- 1903 Erskine Childers, *The Riddle of the Sands* (UK)
The Great Train Robbery (US film)
- 1905-10 Suffragette campaign of civil disobedience (UK)
- 1905 Edgar Wallace, *The Four Just Men* (UK)
William Le Queux, *The Czar's Spy* (UK)
- 1907 Maurice Leblanc, *Arsène Lupin, Gentleman-Cambrioleur* (Fr.)
Gaston Leroux, *Le Mystère de la Chambre Jaune* (Fr.)
Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent* (UK)

- 1908 Richard Austin Freeman starts Dr Thorndyke stories (UK)
G. K. Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday* (UK)
Mary Roberts Rinehart, *The Circular Staircase* (US)
- 1910 Baroness Orczy, *Lady Molly of Scotland Yard* (UK)
A. E. W. Mason, *At the Villa Rose* (UK)
- 1911 **Isabella Goodwin becomes first detective policewoman in New York**
Chesterton, *The Innocence of Father Brown* (UK)
Pierre Souvestre and Marcel Allain, *Fantômas* (Fr)
- 1912 **British Board of Film Censors established (UK)**
- 1913 E. C. Bentley, *Trent's Last Case* (UK)
Sax Rohmer, *The Insidious Fu Manchu* (UK)
- 1914-18 **First World War**
- 1915 John Buchan, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (UK)
- 1918 **Women over thirty get the vote (UK)**
- 1919 **Prohibition of alcohol (US)**
First women police (UK)
- 1920 'Sapper' (H. C. McNeile), *Bulldog Drummond* (UK)
Agatha Christie, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (UK)
H. C. Bailey, *Call Mr Fortune* (UK)
Freeman Wills Crofts, *The Cask* (UK)
E. Phillips Oppenheim, *The Great Impersonation* (UK)
- 1922 **US film industry sets up self-censoring 'Hays code'**
- 1923 Dorothy L. Sayers, *Whose Body?* (UK)
- 1925 Wallace, *The Mind of Mr J. G. Reeder* (UK)
- 1926 **General Strike (UK)**
Christie, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (UK)
Joseph T. Shaw edits *Black Mask* magazine (US)
- 1927 S. S. Van Dine, *The Benson Murder Case* (US)
- 1928 William Somerset Maugham, *Ashenden* (UK)
- 1929 **Wall Street Crash, leading to Great Depression (US)**
Anthony Berkeley (A. B. Cox), *The Poisoned Chocolates Case* (UK)
W. R. Burnett, *Little Caesar* (US)
Dashiell Hammett, *Red Harvest* (US)
Ellery Queen, *The Roman Hat Mystery* (US)
Margery Allingham, *The Crime at Black Dudley* (UK)
Josephine Tey, *The Man in the Queue* (UK)
- 1930 Christie, *The Murder at the Vicarage* (first Miss Marple novel) (UK)

- John Dickson Carr, *It Walks by Night* (UK)
 Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (US)
- 1931 Francis Iles (A. B. Cox), *Malice Aforethought* (UK)
 Georges Simenon, *Pietr-le-Letton* (Fr)
 William Faulkner, *Sanctuary* (US)
Little Caesar (US film)
Public Enemy (US film)
- 1932 Gladys Mitchell, *The Saltmarsh Murders* (UK)
Scarface (US film)
I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang (US film)
- 1933 **Prohibition repealed** (US)
- 1934 Ngaio Marsh, *A Man Lay Dead* (UK)
 Rex Stout, *Fer de Lance* (US)
 James M. Cain, *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (US)
- 1935 Sayers, *Gaudy Night* (UK)
 Carr, *The Hollow Man* (UK)
 Nicholas Blake, *A Question of Proof* (UK)
 Michael Innes, *Death at the President's Lodging* (UK)
The Thirty-Nine Steps (UK film)
- 1936 James M. Cain, *Double Indemnity* (US)
- 1938 Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock* (UK)
Angels with Dirty Faces (US film)
- 1939–45/6 **Second World War**
- 1939 Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep* (US)
 Geoffrey Household, *Rogue Male* (UK)
 James Hadley Chase, *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* (US)
 Eric Ambler, *The Mask of Demetrios* (UK)
The Roaring Twenties (US film)
- 1940 Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely* (US)
 Cornell Woolrich, *The Bride Wore Black* (US)
- 1941 **US enters Second World War (-1946)**
 Christianna Brand, *Heads You Lose* (UK)
The Maltese Falcon (US film)
- 1942 Jorge Luis Borges, 'Death and the Compass' (Argentina)
- 1943 Graham Greene, *The Ministry of Fear* (UK)
- 1944 Edmund Crispin, *The Gilded Fly* (UK)
Double Indemnity (US film)
- 1945–51 **Labour Party establishes Welfare State** (UK)
 Lawrence Treat, *V as in Victim* (US)
- 1946 *The Big Sleep* (US film)
The Killers (US film)

- 1947 Mickey Spillane, *I, The Jury* (US)
 Julian Symons, *A Man Called Jones* (UK)
- 1949 Patricia Highsmith, *Strangers on a Train* (US)
 Ross Macdonald, *The Moving Target* (US)
The Blue Lamp (UK film)
- 1950–52 **Joseph McCarthy heads anti-Communist drive in US**
- 1951 *Strangers on a Train* (US film)
The Lavender Hill Mob (UK film)
 Simenon, *Les mémoires de Maigret* (Fr)
- 1952 Allingham, *The Tiger in the Smoke* (UK)
 Hillary Waugh, *Last Seen Wearing* (US)
 Jim Thompson, *The Killer Inside Me* (US)
- 1953 Chandler, *The Long Goodbye* (US)
 Ian Fleming, *Casino Royale* (UK)
 Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Les Gommages* (Fr)
- 1954–6 *Fabian of the Yard* (UK TV series)
- 1955 J. J. Marric (John Creasey), *Gideon's Day* (UK)
- 1955–68 *Dragnet* (US TV series)
- 1955–76 *Dixon of Dock Green* (UK TV series)
- 1956 Ed McBain, *Cop Hater* (US)
- 1958 Colin Watson, *Coffin Scarcely Used* (UK)
 Greene, *Our Man in Havana* (UK)
- 1959 Robert Bloch, *Psycho* (US)
- 1959–67 *No Hiding Place* (UK TV series)
- 1960 *Psycho* (US film)
Perry Mason (US TV series)
- 1961 **Berlin Wall marks intensification of Cold War**
 John le Carré, *Call for the Dead* (UK)
- 1961–9 *The Avengers* (UK TV series)
- 1962 **Cuban missile crisis**
 Nicolas Freeling, *Love in Amsterdam* (UK)
 P. D. James, *Cover her Face* (UK)
 Dick Francis, *Dead Cert* (UK)
 Len Deighton, *The Ipcress File* (UK)
Dr No (UK film)
- 1962–78 *Z Cars* (UK TV series)
- 1963 **Assassination of President Kennedy** (US)
 le Carré, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (UK)
- 1964 **Civil Rights Acts outlaw racial and sexual discrimination** (US)
 Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* launches 'second wave' feminist movement (US)

- US embroiled in Vietnam War (till 1973)
 Ruth Rendell, *From Doon with Death* (UK)
 H. R. F. Keating, *The Perfect Murder* (UK)
 Amanda Cross, *In the Last Analysis* (US)
 Chester Himes, *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (US)
- 1965 **Anti-police riots in Watts, Los Angeles** (US)
Capital punishment abolished (UK)
 John Ball, *In the Heat of the Night* (US)
 Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood* (US)
- 1966 **Miranda v. Arizona** case establishes suspects' rights against self-incrimination (US)
 Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (US)
- 1966-9 *The Untouchables* (US TV series)
- 1968 **Martin Luther King assassinated** (US)
'Police riot' in Chicago, against protestors at Democratic Party convention (US)
 Peter Dickinson, *Skin Deep* (UK)
- 1969 **Special Patrol Groups set up to tackle specific problems** (UK)
- 1970 Joseph Wambaugh, *The New Centurions* (US)
 Peter Lovesey, *Wobble to Death* (UK)
 Reginald Hill, *A Clubbable Woman* (UK)
- 1971 Frederick Forsyth, *The Day of the Jackal* (UK)
 Ross Macdonald, *The Underground Man* (US)
 James McClure, *The Steam Pig* (South Africa)
Get Carter (UK film)
Dirty Harry (US film)
- 1972 **Capital punishment suspended** (US)
Knapp Report on New York police corruption (US)
'Bloody Sunday' escalates Northern Irish troubles (UK)
 Lillian O'Donnell, *The Phone Call* (US)
The Godfather (US film)
 James, *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* (UK)
- 1972-9 *Columbo* (US TV series)
- 1974 **Watergate scandal forces President Nixon's resignation** (US)
 le Carré, *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (UK)
- 1975 **Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts outlaw workplace discrimination** (UK)
 Colin Dexter, *Last Bus to Woodstock* (UK)
- 1975-8 *The Sweeney* (UK TV series)
- 1975-9 *Starsky and Hutch* (US TV series)

- 1976 **Capital punishment restored in some states (US)**
Race Relations Act (UK)
Dell Shannon, *Streets of Death* (US)
- 1977 Rendell, *A Judgement in Stone* (UK)
Marcia Muller, *Edwin of the Iron Shoes* (US)
Ellis Peters, *A Morbid Taste for Bones* (UK)
Elmore Leonard, *Unknown Man 89* (US)
- 1977–82 *Charlie's Angels* (US TV series)
- 1978 William Hjortsberg, *Falling Angel* (US)
- 1979 **Conservative victory under Margaret Thatcher (UK)**
- 1980 Liza Cody, *Dupe* (UK)
- 1981 **Republican victory under Ronald Reagan (US)**
Thomas Harris, *Red Dragon* (US)
- 1981–7 *Magnum PI* (US TV series)
- 1982 Sara Paretsky, *Indemnity Only* (US)
- 1982–8 *Cagney and Lacey* (US TV series)
- 1984 Barbara Wilson, *Murder in the Collective* (US)
Katherine V. Forrest, *Amateur City* (US)
William Caunitz, *One Police Plaza* (US)
Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose* (It.)
James Ellroy, *Blood on the Moon* (US)
- 1985 Leonard, *Glitz* (US)
- 1985–90 *Miami Vice* (US TV series)
- 1986 Sue Grafton, *A is for Alibi* (US)
- 1987 Paul Auster, *The New York Trilogy* (US)
Ian Rankin, *Knots and Crosses* (UK)
Caroline Graham, *The Killings at Badger's Drift* (UK)
Val McDermid, *Report for Murder* (UK)
- 1987–2000 *Inspector Morse* (UK TV series)
- 1988 Michael Dibdin, *Ratking* (UK)
Eleanor Taylor Bland, *See No Evil* (US)
Elizabeth George, *A Great Deliverance* (UK)
- 1989 **End of the Cold War**
Thomas Harris, *The Silence of the Lambs* (US)
James Lee Burke, *Heaven's Prisoners* (US)
- 1990 Patricia Cornwell, *Postmortem* (US)
Walter Mosley, *Devil in a Blue Dress* (US)
Valerie Wilson Wesley, *When Death Comes Stealing* (US)
R. D. Wingfield, *A Touch of Frost* (UK)
Goodfellas (US film)

- 1991 Bret Easton Ellis, *American Psycho* (US)
Reservoir Dogs (US film)
Boyz N the Hood (US film)
Prime Suspect (UK TV drama)
- 1992 Peter Høeg, *Smilla's Sense of Snow* (Danish; trans. 1993)
Barbara Neely, *Blanche on the Lam* (US)
James Sallis, *The Long Legged Fly* (US)
- 1993 Carl Hiaasen, *Strip Tease* (US)
Minette Walters, *The Sculptress* (UK)
Frances Fyfield, *Shadow Play* (UK)
Murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence, leading to charges of police negligence and institutional racism (UK)
- 1994 Linda Grant, *A Woman's Place* (US)
Pulp Fiction (US film)
- 1994–
1995 *The Bill* (UK TV series)
Ellroy, *American Tabloid* (US)
Val McDermid, *The Mermaids Singing* (UK)
Susanna Moore, *In the Cut* (US)
Seven (US film)
- 1997 **Labour victory under Tony Blair (UK)**
Grace Edwards, *If I Should Die* (US)
- 1999 James Sallis, *Bluebottle* (US)
Rendell, *Harm Done* (UK)
Dibdin, *Blood Rain* (UK)
Dexter, *The Remorseful Day* (UK)
Jake Arnott, *The Long Firm* (UK)

CONTENTS

	<i>Notes on contributors</i>	page vii
	<i>Crime fiction: a chronology</i>	x
	Introduction: crime fiction and detective fiction	1
	MARTIN PRIESTMAN	
1	Eighteenth-century crime writing	7
	IAN A. BELL	
2	The Newgate novel and sensation fiction, 1830–1868	19
	LYN PYKETT	
3	The short story from Poe to Chesterton	41
	MARTIN A. KAYMAN	
4	French crime fiction	59
	SITA A. SCHÜTT	
5	The golden age	77
	STEPHEN KNIGHT	
6	The private eye	95
	DENNIS PORTER	
7	Spy fiction	115
	DAVID SEED	
8	The thriller	135
	DAVID GLOVER	

CONTENTS

9	Post-war American police fiction	155
	LEROY L. PANEK	
10	Post-war British crime fiction	173
	MARTIN PRIESTMAN	
11	Women detectives	191
	MAUREEN T. REDDY	
12	Black crime fiction	209
	ANDREW PEPPER	
13	Crime in film and on TV	227
	NICKIANNE MOODY	
14	Detection and literary fiction	245
	LAURA MARCUS	
	<i>Guide to reading</i>	269
	<i>Index</i>	277

MARTIN PRIESTMAN

Introduction: crime fiction and detective fiction

Until quite recently, the words ‘Cambridge Companion’ and ‘Crime Fiction’ would have seemed mutually exclusive. Crime fiction was certainly written about, but on the assumption that readers and author were already dedicated fans, happy to ponder together the exact chronology of Sherlock Holmes’s life-story or the mystery of Dr Watson’s Christian name. Where the authors claimed some academic credentials, their love for the genre was owned up to as a guilty pleasure – W. H. Auden called it ‘an addiction like tobacco or alcohol’ – or juxtaposed to the world of ‘proper’ culture with tongue a fair way into cheek, as in Dorothy L. Sayers’s demonstration that when writing the *Poetics*, what Aristotle desired ‘in his heart of hearts . . . was a good detective story’.¹

Since the 1960s, however, the presumed barriers between ‘high’ and ‘low’ literature have been progressively dismantled. If only – at first – as indicators of a great many readers’ needs and anxieties, crime texts were increasingly seen as worthy of close analysis, and by now there are thousands of carefully argued, well-researched, elegantly written studies of the crime genre available and awaiting further comment. Like any new development this emergence has a specific history, any given intersection of which is likely to reveal different terminologies as well as different critical preoccupations. Up to the early 1980s, study of the form was still focused mainly on ‘detective’ or ‘mystery’ fiction, and nodded back to the half-serious ‘rules’ which had been drawn up for the genre in the inter-war period and stressed the figure of the detective and the author’s fair handling of clues. This tradition is well discussed in Stephen Knight’s chapter on ‘the Golden Age’ in the present book.

It was with Julian Symons’s groundbreaking *Bloody Murder* (1972; US title *Mortal Consequences*) that the need for this fence against the barbarian hordes began to be queried, as its subtitle, *From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel*, suggests. Once the continuity with such adjacent forms as the thriller, spy novel and police procedural was established, the peculiar historical specificity of the mystery detective whodunnit stood out in sharper