



# ALL ABOUT BOOKS

September/October 2005

Largo Public Library Readers' Advisory Group

“Life itself is a mystery which defies solution.” John Clifford Mortimer

## Prolific and Popular

### Evan Hunter / Ed McBain

(1926-2005)

Often better known by his pen name “Ed McBain,” author Evan Hunter has been a perennial favorite at Largo Public Library. One of the most prolific authors of the last 50 years, Mr. Hunter, writing as Ed McBain, is particularly well-known for his “87<sup>th</sup> Precinct” series of mysteries.

Mr. Hunter, who died July 6, 2005, at the age of 78, first gained widespread acclaim in 1954 with the publication of his novel The Blackboard Jungle. The story of an idealistic young teacher in a rough, urban high school, The Blackboard Jungle was made into a successful film starring Glenn Ford and Sidney Poitier the following year.

During his long career, Mr. Hunter authored numerous short stories, plays, and film scripts, including the screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock’s classic horror film, The Birds.

Mr. Hunter began writing the 87<sup>th</sup> Precinct series in the 1950s, when publisher Pocket Books was looking for an author to replace the popular, but aging, mystery author Erle Stanley Gardner. Between 1956 and 2005, Mr. Hunter wrote more than 50 books in the series.

Mr. Hunter is often credited with inventing the American police procedural mystery. His original idea to create multiple story lines involving an entire police squad, instead of a single lead character, is now ubiquitous in films and television programs.

Between 1978 and 1998, Mr. Hunter, writing as Ed McBain, wrote a second mystery series, featuring Matthew Hope, a Florida divorce lawyer, as the lead character.

In addition to the 87<sup>th</sup> Precinct and Matthew Hope series, Mr. Hunter continued to write other novels under the names Ed McBain and Evan Hunter. In 2001, the novel Candyland was published under the names of Mr. Hunter and his alter ego, Mr. McBain, as co-authors.

Fiddlers, the 55<sup>th</sup> and last book in the 87<sup>th</sup> Precinct series, will be published in September 2005. Learning to Kill, a collection of five decades of stories, will be published in Spring 2006.

Stop by the first floor Information Desk in the fiction area to pick up our booklist **The Works of Evan Hunter aka Ed McBain** which lists the 87<sup>th</sup> Precinct and Matthew Hope titles available in Largo Public Library, as well as other works written by this popular author.

**Sources:**

Contemporary Authors, New Revision Series, vol. 62. Detroit: Gale Research (1998).

Mystery and Suspense Writers: The Literature of Crime, Detection, and Espionage, vol. 1. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons (1998).

"Evan Hunter, Writer Who Created Police Procedural Dies at 78," The New York Times (July 7, 2005).

## **Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month: Read a Mystery**

Each year since 1989, a Presidential Proclamation has declared September 15-October 15 to be National Hispanic Heritage Month. Hispanics were some of the first immigrants to North America--the earliest Spanish settlement was established at Saint Augustine, Florida, in 1563.

Celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month and the diversity of Hispanic-Americans with some mystery/suspense reading! Stop by the first floor Information Desk near the fiction collection to pick up our booklist **Hispanic Heritage Month 2005 Mystery/Suspense Reading**. Reflecting the diversity of the Hispanic-American community, these mysteries feature Hispanic detectives and amateur sleuths of various background nationalities in different cities across the U.S.

### **Mysteries with a Sense of Humor**

Fans of comic mystery writer Janet Evanovich eagerly await the next book in her Stephanie Plum series and often ask for suggestions of similarly funny mystery authors. Although humor, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder, the Largo Public Library Readers' Advisory Group has bravely compiled some suggestions for your consideration.

To see a list of other authors often suggested for Evanovich fans as well as a list of the Evanovich books, large print books, and audiobooks available at Largo Public Library, pick up our booklist **Fatal but Funny: Mysteries with a Sense of Humor**.

Do you have a favorite humorous mystery author not included on the list? Let us know, so we can include him or her on a future list of suggestions for other readers. See our contact information on the last page of this newsletter.

## **The Second Story**

### **Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month: Make a Meal**

Did you know that Largo Public Library has an extensive collection of cookbooks in the nonfiction collection on the second floor? From basic cooking technique to haute cuisine, we have something for cooks of all interests and skill levels.

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, explore the vibrant cooking of Spain, Mexico, Latin America, and the American Southwest. Pick up our booklist **Hispanic Heritage Month 2005 Old World/New World Cooking & Cuisines** at the first floor Information Desk or on the second floor in the nonfiction display area for a guide to call numbers and suggested titles.

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