From the execution sermons of the Colonial era to television programs like *The Wire* and *The Sopranos*, crime writing has played an important role in American culture. Its ability to register fear, desire and anxiety has made it a popular genre with a wide audience. These new essays, written for students as well as readers of crime fiction, demonstrate the very best in contemporary scholarship and challenge long-established notions of the development of the detective novel. Each chapter covers a sub-genre, from “true crime” to hard-boiled novels, illustrating the ways in which “popular” and “high” literary genres influence and shape each other. With a chronology and guide to further reading, the Companion is a helpful guide for students of American literature and readers of crime fiction.

A complete list of books in the series is at the back of this book.
CONTENTS

Notes on contributors page vii
American crime fiction: a chronology x

1 Introduction: The satisfactions of murder
   CATHERINE ROSS NICKERSON 1

2 Early American crime writing
   SARA CROSBY 5

3 Poe and the origins of detective fiction
   STEPHEN RACHMAN 17

4 Women writers before 1960
   CATHERINE ROSS NICKERSON 29

5 The hard-boiled novel
   SEAN MCCANN 42

6 The American roman noir
   ANDREW PEPPER 58

7 Teenage detectives and teenage delinquents
   ILANA NASH 72

8 American spy fiction
   DAVID SEED 86

9 The police procedural in literature and on television
   EDDY VON MUELLER 96
CONTENTS

10 Mafia stories and the American gangster
   Fred L. Gardaphe 110

11 True crime
   Laura Browder 121

12 Race and American crime fiction
   Maureen T. Reddy 135

13 Feminist crime fiction
   Margaret Kinsman 148

14 Crime in postmodernist fiction
   Susan Elizabeth Sweeney 163

   Guide to reading 178
   Index 183

SARA CROSBY is Assistant Professor of American Literature at Ohio State University at Marion, and is a past NEH Fellow at the American Antiquarian Society. She writes and teaches in the areas of early American literature, crime writing, feminist theory and popular culture studies. She is currently at work on a book about female poisoners and popular authorship in nineteenth-century American print culture.

FRED L. GARDAPE is Professor of English and Director of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute at Queens College of the City University of New York. He is the author of several books on Italian American culture, including *From Wiseguys to Wise Men: The Gangster and Italian American Masculinities* (2006) and *Leaving Little Italy: Essaying Italian American Culture* (2004).

MARGARET KINSMAN is Senior Lecturer in English Studies at London South Bank University. Her research and teaching interests include women writers and crime and mystery fiction. She is Executive Editor of *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, published by McFarland. She has contributed essays on crime and mystery to publications such as the *St. James Guide to Crime and Mystery Writers*, the *Oxford Companion to Crime and Mystery Writing*, the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, the *Scribner Mystery and Suspense Writers*, *Diversity and Detective Fiction* (ed. Kathleen Gregory Klein) and *Women Times Three: Writers, Detectives, Readers* (ed. Kathleen Gregory Klein). She is a member of the UK Crime Writers Association, and is currently a member of the judges’ panel for the CWA Gold Dagger Award.
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS


EDDY VON MUELLER is a lecturer in Film Studies at Emory University. He is extensively published in the popular press as a media critic and commentator, and has authored scholarly articles on the American film industry in the first decades of the twentieth century, and the work of Akira Kurosawa. He is currently completing a book on the impact of animation aesthetics and technology on contemporary cinema.

ILANA NASH is an assistant professor of English and Gender and Women’s Studies at Western Michigan University, where she teaches in the areas of youth literature and popular culture. She is the author of *American Sweethearts: Teenage Girls in Twentieth Century Popular Culture* (2006). She is founder and manager of the Girls’ Studies Internet Discussion List.

CATHERINE ROSS NICKERSON is Associate Professor in the Institute of the Liberal Arts at Emory University. She is the author of *The Web of Iniquity: Early Detective Fiction by American Women* (1998) and the editor of a volume of reprinted novels by Anna Katharine Green, *Lost Man’s Lane and that Affair Next Door*, and another by Metta Victor, *The Dead Letter and the Figure Eight* (2003).


STEPHEN RACHMAN is Associate Professor of English at Michigan State University. He is the editor of *The Hasheesh Eater* by Fitz-Hugh Ludlow (2006), a co-author of *Cholera, Chloroform, and the Science of Medicine: A Life of John Snow* (2003), and co-editor of *The American Face of Edgar Allan Poe* (1995). He is at work on a book project titled “Memento Morbi: Lam Qua’s Paintings, Peter Parker’s Patients.” He is president of the Poe Studies Association.

MAUREEN T. REDDY is Professor and Chair of English at Rhode Island College. Her books include *Traces, Codes and Clues: Reading Race in Crime Fiction* (2002), *Crossing the Color Line: Race, Parenting, and Culture* (1994), and *Sisters in Crime: Feminism and the Crime Novel* (1988). Her current research focuses on race in Irish popular culture, including crime fiction.

DAVID SEED is a professor in American Literature at the University of Liverpool and has been elected Fellow of the English Association. He is author of *American
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS


Susan Elizabeth Sweeney is Associate Professor of English at the College of the Holy Cross. She co-edited the collection Detecting Texts: The Metaphysical Detective Story from Poe to Postmodernism (1998) and has written many articles on the detective genre, most recently “The Magnifying Glass: Spectacular Distance in Poe’s ‘The Man of the Crowd’ and Beyond” (Poe Studies, 2003). She is vice president of the Poe Studies Association, past president of the Vladimir Nabokov Society, and co-editor of the Vladimir Nabokov Electronic Forum.
This chronology is not offered as an exhaustive documentation of the history of this large and varied genre. Texts and events listed here correspond to the content of the chapters in this volume.

1674  Samuel Danforth, *The Cry of Sodom Enquired Into*
1789  William Hill Brown, *The Power of Sympathy*
1821  James Fenimore Cooper, *The Spy*
1833  Benjamin Day founds the *New York Sun*
1841  Edgar Allan Poe, “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”
1866  Metta Fuller Victor, *The Dead Letter*
1878  Anna Katharine Green, *The Leavenworth Case*
1908  Mary Roberts Rinehart, *The Circular Staircase*
1910  Thomas Duke, *Celebrated Criminal Cases of America*
1914–18  First World War
1919–33  Prohibition Era
1919  The “Red Summer” of race riots throughout the USA
        Baseball’s World Series “Black Sox” scandal
1923  Carroll John Daly, “Three Gun Terry”
1925  Earl Derr Biggers, *The House Without A Key*
1926  Joseph T. Shaw begins editorship of *Black Mask*
1927  S. S. Van Dine, *The Benson Murder Case*
        Franklin Dixon, *The Tower Treasure* (Hardy Boys)
1929    Wall Street Crash, beginning of the Great Depression
        Dashiell Hammett, *Red Harvest*
        Mignon Eberhart, *The Patient in Room 18*

1930    Carolyn Keene, *The Secret of the Old Clock* (Nancy Drew)
        *Little Caesar* (film)

1934    James M. Cain, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*
        Leslie Ford, *The Strangled Witness*

1938    Mabel Seeley, *The Listening House*

1939    Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep*

1941–45 US involvement in the Second World War

1945–c.1990 The Cold War

1945    Lawrence Treat, *V as in Victim*

1949    Patricia Highsmith, *Strangers on a Train*

1950–51 Kefauver Congressional Hearings on organized crime

1952    Jim Thompson, *The Killer Inside Me*

1954    Evan Hunter, *Blackboard Jungle*

1955–68 *Dragnet* (television series)

1956    Ed McBain, *Cop Hater*

1959    Richard Condon, *The Manchurian Candidate*

1961    Construction of the Berlin Wall

1962    US publication of Jorge Luis Borges, *Ficciones*

1964    Amanda Cross, *In the Last Analysis*

1965    Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood*

1969    Mario Puzo, *The Godfather*

1970    Tony Hillerman, *The Blessing Way*

1971–78 *Columbo* (television series)

1972    Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo*
### American Crime Fiction: A Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Titles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Mary Higgins Clark</td>
<td><em>Where Are the Children?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Marcia Muller</td>
<td><em>Edwin of the Iron Shoes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Robert Ludlum</td>
<td><em>The Bourne Identity</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ann Rule</td>
<td><em>The Stranger Beside Me</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981–87</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Hill Street Blues</em> (television series)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Sara Paretsky</td>
<td><em>Indemnity Only</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Sue Grafton</td>
<td><em>A is for Alibi</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Joe McGinniss</td>
<td><em>Fatal Vision</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Paul Auster</td>
<td><em>City of Glass</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Destruction of the Berlin Wall</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Walter Mosley</td>
<td><em>Devil in a Blue Dress</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patricia Cornwell</td>
<td><em>Postmortem</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Goodfellas</em> (film)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Barbara Neely</td>
<td><em>Blanche on the Lam</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993–2005</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>NYPD Blue</em> (television series)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>S. J. Rozan</td>
<td><em>China Trade</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Don DeLillo</td>
<td><em>Underworld</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999–2007</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Sopranos</em> (television series)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Memento</em> (film)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Attacks of September 11</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002–08</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Wire</em> (television series)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Shield</em> (television series)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Alex Berenson</td>
<td><em>The Faithful Spy</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>