February 1995

Book Review

Barry Fast
Academic Book Center

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

Recommended Citation

Fast, Barry (1995) "Book Review," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 7: Iss. 1, Article 19.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1690>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Book Review

Column Editor: **Barry Fast** (Academic Book Center)
*If you have a title to review or one to submit for review,
please send it to — Book Review Editor, Against the Grain,
11 Orlando Avenue, Ardsley, NY 10502. Thanks. — BF.*

Final Edit, by **Robert A. Carter**.
The Mysterious Press
(an imprint of Warner Books).
304 pp. ISBN: 0892965495. \$18.95.

Review by **Nat Bodian**
(Publisher's Marketing Consultant)

This newly-published mystery novel, written by a book publishing authority and long-time contributing editor to **Publishers Weekly**, provides an intimate glimpse into the New York book publishing world as seen through the eyes of a Big Apple book publisher. Numerous intimate details of the world of book publishing make **Final Edit** especially appealing to librarians, publishers, and vendors who like a first-rate murder mystery closely linked to their professional interests. For many, it will also provide a detailed education into book publisher operations and publisher/author relations.

Author Carter has long experience on the New York publishing scene and was responsible for developing the publishing master's program at Pace University. Carter was editor-in-chief of the useful publishing manual **Trade Book Marketing** (published in the 1980s and to which I contributed a chapter). More recently, he was Associate Editor of the not-yet-published **Encyclopedia of Publishing and the Book Arts**, for which he wrote the section on book marketing.

Final Edit is detailed through the eyes of the president and publisher of a modest-sized but successful New York City publishing establishment — a family-owned business in its second generation. It opens at the ABA Convention in Washington, where the publisher is having problems with a Maxwell Perkins-like editor — who is both famous and widely disliked — and who he is determined to fire when he returns to New York.

Immediately after the ABA Convention, the editor is found murdered in the publisher's offices, and the publisher — having been in the office after hours and at the time of the murder — is viewed by the police as the prime suspect.

The mystery is the story of how the

book publisher sets out to solve the murder and along the way clear

continued on page 86

EBSCO IS Information Services

Now there's a new name for integrated serial information management ... **EBSCO Information Services**. We've grouped several of our divisions and services together to signify our unique capability to offer convenient, cost-effective, single-source serial information management, including:

- global subscription management services
- abstract, full text and research databases on CD-ROM and magnetic tape
- full-service document delivery
- client/server, Z39.50 compliant, multi-database access (available online in 1995).

EBSCO Information Services is ...

EBSCO
SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

EBSCO E PUBLISHING

EBSCO/doc™

EBSCO
host

Members of the EBSCO Information Services group.

Call EBSCO for all your serial information management needs.
International Headquarters, Birmingham, Alabama
(205) 991-6600 • Fax (205) 995-1636

Book Pricing Update

continued from page 58

Performing Arts. Within the Performing Arts, though, there was yet another discrepancy: Theater, Cinema and Dance all saw prices rise more than 20%. Only Music showed a 0% price gain since 1990, but not because prices stayed flat for the intervening years — they dropped, they rose, and they ended nearly where they began.

The chart of price fluctuations is a particularly interesting one. Architecture started as the highest priced category, and

has remained there. The Fine and Performing Arts, on the other hand, started off with quite similar list prices, and then diverged sharply, with Fine Arts titles going up by \$10 over five years, and Performing Arts titles going up by less than \$3. Again, this reflected the steadying effect of prices in Music, and the fact that Music titles account for more than half of all titles in the Performing Arts.

Even more encouraging: prices in each of the "big" categories, and in all three combined, dropped between 1993 and 1994, allowing librarians to stretch their Arts dollars a little farther. ☺

Biz of Acq

continued from page 69

librarians will be happy to share their experiences and ideas for discarding. And again, bring it up for discussion at general staff meetings.

Deselection has far-ranging implications: on the institution's statistics, on scholarship, on the community served by

the library and on staff morale. The benefits gained by removing titles from the library (space, currency, ease of use) must be balanced by the uniqueness of individual titles and the effect on the long-range goals of the institution. Having a concrete basis for controversial decisions can deflect criticisms by taxpayers, faculty or administrators. How else to justify a smaller (in terms of statistics) but more dynamic and useful collection? ☺

On the Road

continued from page 83

ticket changes so I thought it was worth an attempt. It did work! I was able to get aboard that flight. While waiting for the delayed 9:00 a.m. flight from Helsinki, I talked to the soccer players and engineers from NASA, Goddard who were also ordered to return to our country.

Finally we boarded the flight and upon takeoff, there was tremendous applause and relief from everybody on the plane. We were headed for Frankfurt then and I would connect to New York and the NASA people were headed for Washington, D.C.

I finally arrived in New York later Tuesday afternoon, and called my family from Kennedy Airport. They were concerned because they hadn't heard from me, and asked where I was. I told them that I was back in New York. Needless to say, they were elated to hear the good news.

I hope to return to Moscow again during a less stressful time. However, this experience I will never forget. ☺

Book Review: Final Edit

continued from page 56

himself. In the course of trying to solve the murder while running his publishing business, he paints a vivid and informative picture of how many publishers in the world of New York City publishing function, live, love and deal with everyday publishing problems, not only on the publishing premises, but sometimes at the club and in the bedroom.

While **Final Edit** does an admirable job as a top-notch murder mystery for all lovers of this genre, it is loaded with enough factual and informative publishing insights that it might well be a primer on book publishing as practiced in New York, even down to the clubs favored by the publishing community and the types of drinks imbibed. It offers much about behind-the-scenes publisher activity, auctions, wheeling and dealing with agents, manuscript preparation and submission, working the ABA floor during a convention, and publisher financing problems.

If you love book publishing, or even have a modest interest in the subject, you'll find **Final Edit** loaded with an abundance of publisher know-how and wisdom about life on the Big Apple publishing scene. Don't miss it! ☺

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

69 ALPER	35 GREENWOOD
7 AMBASSADOR	27 INPUT CULTURE
87 AMERITECH	27 INTERNATIONAL BOOK DIST.
31 AMIGOS	2 JAEGER
5 ATG	41 MARY ANN LIEBERT
37 BAKER & TAYLOR	88 MIDWEST LIBRARY SERVICE
38 BLACKWELL	4 PUBLISHERS CONFERENCE
53 BLACKWELL NORTH AMERICA	73 PUVILL LIBROS
47 BLACKWELL NORTH AMERICA	49 READMORE
40 BOOK HOUSE	67 RITTENHOUSE
25 BRODART	45 SPRINGER-VERLAG
61 CHADWYCK-HEALEY	9 SWETS
39 COUTTS	22 UNCOVER
56 EBSCO	36 VCH
31 EASTERN BOOK	55 WILEY
13 ELSEVIER SCIENCE	3 YBP