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# Bet You Missed It: Press Clippings -- In the News -- Carefully Selected by Your Crack Team of News Sleuths

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# Bet You Missed It

## Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

Column Editor: **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

*Editor's Note:* Hey, are y'all reading this? If you know of an article that should be called to *Against the Grain's* attention ... send an email to <kstrauch@comcast.net>. We're listening! — **KS**

### SCI-FI AND ROMANCE

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

**H.G. Wells** published more than 100 books, but his best writing was all before 1920: *The Time Machine*, *The Invisible Man*, *War of the Worlds* and on up through *The Outline of History*, which sold millions of copies throughout the world. Then by his own admission he began to squander his talents up until his death in 1946. **David Lodge's** *A Man of Parts* (Random House) is a lightly fictionalized account of an aged **Wells** looking back.

**Wells** was a Fabian socialist who, like so many, was suckered by the fantasy of an enlightened Soviet state and thought **Stalin** an honest and likeable chap. A frequent theme in his novels was a dictatorship of enlightened technocrats. Such as himself of course.

Seeing himself as a representative of a freer, more rational future, he was more than ready to indulge in free love. His life was virtually a sex comedy with over a hundred women including two wives, four or five long-term mistresses, and two teenage daughters of fellow Fabians. **Rebecca West**, **Elizabeth von Arnim**, **Margaret Sanger**, **Martha Gellhorn** and probable Soviet spy **Moura Budberg** are on the list.

He wrote in detail about his affairs and this was published in 1984 as *H.G. Wells in Love* (Faber & Faber). **Lodge** draws on this for material and his cover is decorated with cavorting naked women.

See — **Adam Kirsch**, "Utopian Pessimist," *The New Yorker*, Oct. 17, 2011, p.80.

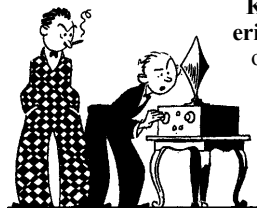
### WA-PO JOINS ELEPHANTS' GRAVEYARD

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

The *Washington Post* has never been a national newspaper, but while it had a lock on the metro-DC market it wallowed in cash. **Warren Buffett** bought a piece because he likes "moated businesses," where the moat is so wide no one can cross it. Then the Internet crossed every newspaper moat in the country. Craigslist began decimating classified section.

And then there were other mishaps. They had a chance to own a major stake in Facebook, but **Zuckerberg** got a better offer and the *Post* graciously bowed out. A chance to snag *Politico* was lost and now political junkies consider it superior to the *Post*. *Newsweek* lost the *Post* \$16 million in 2008 and was sold for \$1 and assumption of debt.

**Kaplan** was bought by accident and **Katherine Graham** confessed to a complete lack of interest in it. But it's all that's keeping the *Post* alive. It's a multi-billion dollar education business with over a million students on line. But they are all recipients of federal loans and that has come under fire from **Obama** because of bad loan-default rates.



Then **Katherine Weymouth**, CEO hired **Marcus Brauchli** who had been forced out as editor of *The Wall Street Journal*. **Weymouth** and **Brauchli** then proceeded to sell access to politicians and policy makers for \$25,000 to \$250,000 sponsorships of "salons." And who broke the story? Why *Politico*.

See — **Sarah Ellison**, "Ghosts in the Newsroom," *Vanity Fair*, April, 2012, p.190.

### LITERARY MASH-UP

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

**Little Brown** jerked *Assassin of Secrets* from the shelves when the author, pen-named **Q.R. Markham**, was found to have plagiarized the book nearly in its entirety from a slew of novels and nonfiction, a complete cut and paste job.

It started out as a spy spoof called *Spy Safari*, so he lifted from 1970s Bond knock-offs, the **Nick Carter** "Killmaster" series, **Warren Murphy** and **Richard Sapir's** the "Destroyer" series, and **Don Pendleton's** "The Executioner." Then he got an interested editor and of course they always want to change the book. They wanted a real thriller. So he spliced in **Robert Ludlum**, the Bond continuation authors. For meditative passages, he took from **O'Brien's** *Dreamtime* and **McCarthy's** *Second Sight*.

The lifting seemed far more arduous than just writing the book and many felt it was a hipster prank or some sort of art gesture. Literary theorist **Avital Ronell** said he "could have used a dream team of literary theorists to get him out of trouble."

As they say, "all art exists on a continuum of borrowing." And when the news broke, the **Amazon** ranking jumped from 62,924 to 174.

See — **Lizzie Widdicombe**, "The Plagiarist's Tale," *The New Yorker*, Feb. 13 & 20, 2012, p.52.

### MAGIC OF BOOKSELLING

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Insisting print is not dead, **Ann Patchett**, author of the best-seller *Bel Canto*, has opened a book store in the Green Hills neighborhood of Nashville. Folks are thrilled about **Parnassus Books** and scads of them are begging to work there, even for free. She plans for it to be a community gathering place where people want to go after dinner. It will also have a piano and a dachshund.

See — **Vanessa Gregory**, "Nashville's New Lit Stop," *Garden & Gun*, Dec./Jan., 2012, p.22.

### FOUND AMONG DUSTY PAPERS

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

In 1935, **C. S. Forester** went to Hollywood to write a film script. On the trip back to England he read some late-18th century volumes of *The Naval Chronicle* and the idea for *Hornblower* was born in its many volumes. In the middle, he wrote *The Pursued*, a classic 1930s London thriller of murder, sex and revenge. Not wanting to interrupt the *Hornblower* flow, he put it on the shelf. Then got distracted by reporting the Spanish Civil War.

In 1999, the **CS Forester Society** was founded at **Oxford** and members learned of the lost novel from **Forester's** autobiography *Long Before Forty*. An alert member spotted **Forester** papers at an auction in Knightsbridge and found the novel among them. They owned the paper copy, but copyright lay with some Swiss folks who held his estate.

Eventually the society got the right to publish and found that **Forester's** old publisher **Michael Joseph** is now owned by **Penguin Books** but they were excited about the possibilities.

Publication will be celebrated at a meeting of the society at **Oriel College**, Oxford on Sept. 29, 2012.

See — **Lawrence Brewer**, "The Pursued," *Oxford Today*, Hilary Term, 2012, p.36.