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People Profile: Cris Ferguson

Editor

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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.
The Encyclopedia of White-Collar and Corporate Crime provides an impressive amount of fascinating and relevant information on the subject. It enables the reader to get a solid overview, while at the same time, gives the opportunity to explore specifics in greater depth. Admittedly, there are fine business encyclopedias like Routledge’s International Encyclopedia of Business and Management (2001, 186152618, OP) that discuss aspects of business ethics and quality work like Sage’s Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment (2002, 076192258X, $500) that touch on corporate crime. However, this work puts its total focus on white collar and corporate crime. Editor Lawrence M. Salinger and his team of contributors have done a commendable job in pulling it all together in two volumes.

The Tennessee Williams Encyclopedia, recently published by Greenwood (2004, 0313321019, $89.95) makes plain the great influence that the troubled playwright had, and continues to have, on American theater. Editor Philip C. Kolin and his contributors offer 150 articles in this handy one volume work, many of which summarize and interpret Williams’ plays, their themes and plots, and the characters that inhabit them. There are articles on the famous and successful plays like A Street Car Named Desire, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and The Glass Menagerie, as well as on his important, but less popular efforts like Camino Real and Orpheus Descending. In addition, there are discussions of his short stories, poems and other literary output.

It is also no surprise that there are entries on the many people in Williams’ life. Given his central place in the popular culture of the time, Williams knew a number of talented and influential people in the film, theater and the literary worlds. Biographical sketches run throughout the Encyclopedia, ranging from his first agent Audrey Wood to fellow playwright Clifford Odets, from actors like Karl Malden to close friend and companion Frank Merlo, and from director Elia Kazan to publisher Bennett Cerf. There are also entries on family members that help shed additional light on Williams and his work. In addition, there are entries on issues and influences like politics, race and religion, as well as important places in Williams’ life like Key West and Clarksdale, Mississippi.

Value added features like a guide to related topics, a chronology, a bibliography of primary and secondary sources increase the usefulness of the book. However, the indexing could be better. While there is an interesting article on Gender and Sexuality as it relates to Williams and his work, there is no mention of sexuality or homosexuality in the index. The phrase “gender and sexuality” is indexed and leads you to the article, but there are not more direct approaches.

While information about Williams and his work is available in a myriad of other sources, the Tennessee Williams Encyclopedia gathers the essentials together in a single concise volume. Appropriate for some reference collections, this Encyclopedia is another one of those well crafted works that may be even more useful in circulation, or on private shelves. In any case, academic and public libraries should find it a worthwhile choice.