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SYNDICATE BOOKS

GET CARTER

By

Ted Lewis

With a special Foreword by Mike Hodges, director of *Get Carter* (1971)

Syndicate Books • Trade Paper /eBook • **PUB DATE:** September 9th, 2014 • **PRICE:** \$14.95 •
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"Aristotle, when he defined tragedy, mandated that a tragic hero must fall from a great height, but Aristotle never imagined the kind of roadside motels James M. Cain could conjure up or saw the smokestacks rise in the Northern English industrial hell of Ted Lewis's *Get Carter*."

—**Dennis Lehane, author of *Live by Night***

"The finest British crime novel I've ever read."

—**David Peace, author of *Red or Dead***

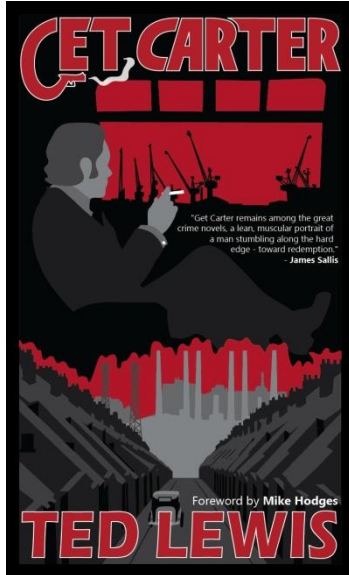
Famously adapted into the iconic film starring Michael Caine, *Get Carter*—originally published as *Jack's Return Home*—ranks among the most canonical of crime novels.

It's a rainy night in a northern English mill town, and a London fixer named Jack Carter is home for a funeral—his brother Frank's. Frank was very drunk when he drove his car off a cliff and that doesn't sit well with Jack. Mild-mannered Frank never touched the stuff.

Jack and Frank didn't exactly like each other. They hadn't spoken in years and Jack is far from the sentimental type. So it takes more than a few people by surprise when Jack starts plying his trade to get to the bottom of his brother's death. Then again, Frank's last name was Carter, and that's Jack's name too. Sometimes that's enough.

Set in the late 1960s amidst the smokestacks and hardcases of the industrial north of England, *Get Carter* redefined British crime fiction and cinema alike. Along with the other two novels in the Jack Carter Trilogy, it is one of the most important crime novels of all time.

***Get Carter* (Syndicate Book | September, 2014)** is here restored to availability in North America for the first time in 40 years. **Syndicate Books is distributed to the trade by Soho Crime via Penguin Random House Publisher Services.**



PRAISE FOR *GET CARTER*

"Lewis was one of the first British writers in the sixties to take Chandler literally—'The crime story tips violence out of its vase on the shelf and pours it back into the street where it belongs'—and [*Get Carter*] is a book that I and plenty of other people at the time considered to be a classic on these grounds."

—**Derek Raymond, author of the *Factory Novels***

"*Get Carter* remains among the great crime novels, a lean, muscular portrait of a man stumbling along the hard edge — toward redemption. Ted Lewis cuts to the bone."

—**James Sallis, author of *Drive***

"Ted Lewis is one of the most influential crime novelists Britain has ever produced, and his shadow falls on all noir fiction, whether on page or screen, created on these isles since his passing. I wouldn't be the writer I am without Ted Lewis. It's time the world rediscovered him."

—**Stuart Neville, author of *The Ghosts of Belfast***

"The finest British crime novel ever written."

—**John Williams, author of *The Cardiff Trilogy***

"Lewis is major."

—**Max Alan Collins, author of *Road to Perdition***

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in Manchester, England, Ted Lewis (1940-1982) spent most of his youth in Barton-upon-Humber in the north of England. After graduating from Hull Art School, Lewis moved to London and first worked in advertising before becoming an animation specialist, working on the Beatles' *Yellow Submarine*. His novels are the product of his lifelong fascination with the criminal lifestyle of London's Soho district and the down-and-out lifestyle of the English factory town. Lewis' novels pioneered the British noir school. He is the author of nine novels, all of which Syndicate Books will be publishing.



ABOUT SYNDICATE BOOKS



Syndicate Books is a new publishing venture founded by Paul Oliver, a former bookseller who now works for Soho Press as Director of Marketing and Publicity. Syndicate plans on publishing 5 to 10 novels a year, focusing on out-of-print or neglected mystery and crime fiction of cultural relevance. Syndicate Books is distributed to the trade by Soho Crime via Penguin Random House

Publisher Services.



THE LEGACY OF **TED LEWIS**

"It arrived in the post, out of the blue, along with an offer to write and direct it as my first cinema film. Its literary style was as enigmatic as the manner of its arrival. Whilst set in England and written by an Englishman it was (aside from the rain) atypically English. More importantly it ripped off the rose-tinted glasses through which most people saw our mutual homeland. I suspect Ted never shared that Panglossian take on England."

—**Mike Hodges, director of the original 1971 film adaptation of Ted Lewis's *Get Carter*, writing in the Foreword to the new edition of the novel**

From the films of Guy Ritchie and Martin McDonagh, which acknowledge their blueprints, to Alan Moore's *League of Extraordinary Gentleman* series, in which Jack Carter is a character, the legacy of Ted Lewis's novels has lived on in myriad ways, not the least of which through several generations of crime writers

from either side of the pond.

Lewis's most famous novel, *Jack's Return Home*—later retitled *Get Carter*—is set in 1970 and tells the story of a London gangster named Jack Carter who has returned to his hometown in the industrial north of England to bury his brother, Frank. Everything about the way Frank died bothers Jack, but the brothers weren't exactly friends. Jack, a ruthless business manager for London's #1 crime syndicate, detested Frank's weakness and hadn't given his mild-mannered brother a second thought since he left home. That is, until he was murdered. It is there that Lewis put Jack Carter on a hard road to redemption, one where he will decide that it's worth sacrificing a life's work for a chance to "make things right."

Since its initial publication *Get Carter* has been adapted into a motion picture no fewer than three times: Mike Hodges's seminal gangster film starring Michael Caine, from 1971; the 1972 "Blaxploitation" film *Hit Man*, starring Pam Grier and Bernie Casey; and Warner Brothers's 2000 Seattle-based remake starring Sylvester Stallone, Alan Cumming, and Mickey Rourke.

Of his other novels, the twisted and brilliantly plotted blackmail story *Plender* (1971) has also been adapted to the big screen, in this case a very well-received French film, *Le Serpent*, released in 2006.

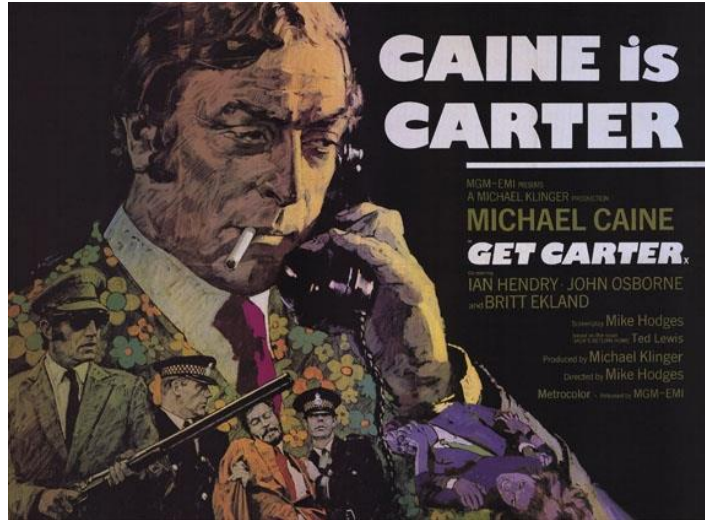
In the celebrated 1970s British detective TV series *The Sweeney*, the two featured detectives are not accidentally named Jack Reagan and George Carter. Lewis never saw a penny from that very successful show and according to the British author and Lewis biographer Nick Triplow, it bothered the writer immensely.

Then there is his impact on writing. The late noir pioneer Derek Raymond openly declared Lewis's influence on his own work, as has modern master David Peace. There is something of *Get Carter* to be seen in the work of Northern Irish writer Stuart Neville, especially in his award-winning novel, *The Ghosts of Belfast*. Not to forget, there are also the wonderful novels of Jake Arnott, with their openly gay

underworld operators, whose originals were represented by Lewis in many of his novels. This last detail is one that clearly separates Lewis from many of his peers, especially from the United States.

So why, despite all of the people and media his work influenced, is the author yet unknown in North America? The answer is not all that surprising.

The Mike Hodges adaptation of *Get Carter* is now undisputed as a classic of modern British cinema, but the truth is, it never did well in its limited U.S. theatrical release. The film had extremely limited distribution and never had enough market share to catch on, despite several positive notices. There was little to no mention of Ted Lewis's novel in any of the later adaptations. Nor was the novel well received in the U.S. In fact, it wasn't really received at all. At the time of writing this, I have yet to find a review of the novel from its original publication by Doubleday in 1970.



Certainly Lewis's early death had a lot to do with his obscurity. Ted Lewis died in 1982 of alcohol-related illness. He was only 42. His last book, *GBH*, had just been published as a paperback original in the UK. It was adorned with minimal (and inaccurate) copy and the book went unnoticed, the author's death marginally noted. Most of his books drifted out of print in the U.K.

In the 1990s the U.K. saw a wave of interest in Mod fashion, film, music, and the bygone Soho district of late 1960s London. *Get Carter*, first the film and then the novel, reemerged as iconic. The likes of Quentin Tarantino named it his all-time favorite British film. Writers and critics who had been influenced by the book and film quickly jumped at the opportunity to reestablish Lewis and his works. Both the film and the book started cropping up on "Best of" and Top 10/25/100 style lists of the century's formative literary and cinematic works.

It was in this time that the likes of the aforementioned Derek Raymond, who himself had a substantial resurgence in the 1990s, cited Lewis as among the first and most influential British crime novelists. David Peace described *Get Carter* as "the finest British crime novel I've ever read." Beyond the page, *Get Carter* and one of its two prequels, *Jack Carter's Law*, have both been adapted into radio plays by the BBC. The enigmatic author has received numerous posthumous profiles on TV and radio, and is even the subject of a biography currently being written by crime writer Nick Triplow. Triplow has written a short sketch of the enigmatic Lewis's life as an afterword to the Syndicate Books edition of *Jack Carter and the Mafia Pigeon*.

All this is to say that Ted Lewis will come as something of a revelation to U.S. readers. There is nothing cliché or cartoonish about his characters. The violence perpetrated isn't easily brushed off. It is legitimate—palpable and consequential, just like the real stuff. There are no clean hands in a Lewis novel. No paladin cops with deadly aim. Justice and honor are warped, twisted things, and they and everyone involved is bent to the will of the powerful and wealthy, disposable at a whim. These are people at the fringes, willing to do anything for the perception of respect, self or otherwise. The tragic pursuit of every Lewis character is dignity, and perhaps nowhere is that paradigm more evident than in a tough lad from

the north counties, who for years placed his trust in tailored mohair suits and gold cuff links. Ted Lewis was very good at writing bad people.

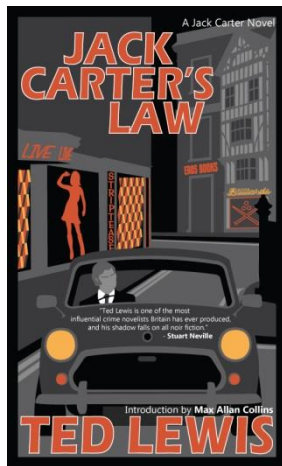
You could argue that his legacy and influence on popular culture is to the second half of the 20th century what Hammett and Chandler's was to the first half. Perhaps James M. Cain is more apropos. It's time Lewis was recognized for the work that so many have built upon.

An online version of this can be found at www.syndicatebooks.com.



SYNDICATE BOOKS

THE JACK CARTER TRILOGY



Jack Carter's Law

Syndicate Books • Trade Paper /eBook • **PUB DATE:** October 7th, 2014 • **PRICE:** \$14.95 • **Page Count:** 208 **ISBN:** 9781616955038 • **eISBN:** 9781616955045

With an Introduction by Max Allan Collins

The author of *Get Carter* returns to his greatest invention, a smooth-operating hardcase named Jack Carter, who is about to burn a city down in order to silence an informant

It's the late 1960s in London and Jack Carter is the top man in a crime syndicate headed by two brothers—Gerald and Les Fletcher. He's also a worried man. The fact that he's sleeping with Gerald's wife, Audrey, and that they plan on someday running away together with a lot of the brothers' money, doesn't have Jack concerned. Instead it's an informant—one of his own men—that has him losing sleep. The grass has enough knowledge about the firm to not only bring down Gerald and Les but Jack as well. Jack doesn't like his name in the mouth of that sort.

In *Jack Carter's Law* Ted Lewis returned to the character that launched his career and once again delivers a hardboiled masterpiece. Jack Carter is the ideal tour guide to a bygone London underworld. In his quest to dismantle the opposition, he peels back the veneer of English society and gives us a hard look at a gritty world of pool halls, strip clubs and the red lights of Soho nightlife.

Jack Carter and the Mafia Pigeon

Syndicate Books • Trade Paper /eBook • **PUB DATE:** November 4th, 2014
PRICE: \$14.95 • **Page Count:** 224 **ISBN:** 9781616955038 • **eISBN:** 9781616955045

Afterword by Nick Triplow

Published in North America for the first time—the final Jack Carter novel has London's slickest operator journeying to a Spanish villa to protect a wise-cracking Italian-American mobster.

Jack Carter is not thrilled when his frustratingly unprofessional employers—London mob kingpins Gerald and Les Fletcher—force him to take a vacation. Jack doesn't like leaving the business in other people's hands, but the company villa in Spain promises sunshine and some time to plot his next move.

Jack is surprised to find the villa inhabited by a cowardly house steward and a knuckle-dragging American gangster Jack has apparently been sent to protect the American, who has turned informant. There are few things that Jack Carter hates more than surprises. Informants being one of them.

