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Aristocrat of Mystery Writers

Ian Fleming, Creator of James Bond, Is a Knowledgeable, Sophisticated Briton Who Counts President Kennedy Among His Five Million Fans

ELEVEN years ago, in a beach house in Jamaica, a 42 year old Englishman named Ian Fleming sat down at a portable typewriter and began tapping the keys.

"The scent and smoke and sweat of a casino are nauseating at three in the morning," he wrote. "Then the soul erosion produced by high gambling—a compost of greed and fear and nervous tension—becomes unbearable, and the senses awake and revolt from it.

"James Bond suddenly knew that he was tired. . . ."

Today, 10 mystery shockers later, Fleming's more than five million fans (who include President Kennedy) know that James Bond, alias British secret service agent 007, must be tired indeed. For seldom in the history of mystery writing has there been a busier, more violent, more luxuriously dissipated hero than Fleming's complex creation.

Not Much He Doesn't Know

In his first book, "Casino Royale," Fleming hurled Bond at Smersh, the "execution arm of the Soviet secret service." Since then Bond has defeated H-bomb piracy, frustrated a sneaky rocket attack on Buckingham palace, stopped a gold robbery at Fort Knox and made love everywhere from a compartment on the Orient Express to a double sleeping bag in Jamaica. He has thwarted such villains as the Nazis, Hugo Drax, gangland's Mr. Big, the sadistic Goldfinger (who plated his women in gold) and Dr. No, the arch scoundrel now starring with Bond in his first movie.

Such exploits are, of course, the grist of most mystery writers. The difference is that Fleming is a crisp, vivid writer who knows whereof he speaks (he was assistant to the head of British intelligence in

World War II) and usually stimulates the reader "all the way through, even to his taste buds."

Lean, handsome and scarred of face, Fleming's hero is both a first rate thug and an endlessly knowledgeable connoisseur. With his Beretta .25 (in a chamois shoulder holster), his throwing knives (they're in his shoe soles) and his karate, he slaughters enemies with rhythmic dispatch. At the same time he can compare the fine points of his vintage Bentley sports car (the Amherst-Villiers supercharger is well hidden) with those of a Lancia Flaminia Zagato Spyder with Dunlop rally studs.

He can select for his skis the Attenborough Fox forward release or the Market lateral release, and give reasons for his choice. He bathes in Floris Lime bath essence, and recognizes everything expensive about a girl, from her Balmain negligee to her diamond earrings from Tiffany's.

Fleming fans know there's no need to fret when Bond has to wade through mud to line his .38 caliber Smith & Wesson Centennial Airweight (for long range work) on a Smersh killer. That night he will shower up in some posh spa, put on a clean Sea Island shirt and treat himself to a jug of vodka martinis, served very cold with

slices of lemon peel. Then will come a great platter of hot buttered crabs, to be washed down with a quart of icy rose champagne. There will be a contemplative smoke on the twilit veranda (Bond smokes nothing but special, strong Macedonian cigarets, marked with three splintering humanity. I think it's an absolute miracle that an elderly person like me can go on turning out these books with such zest. It's really a terrible indictment of my own character—they're so adolescent. But they're fun. I think people like Fleming are rare. Tall and urbane, with a



Author Fleming: "I am not in the Shakespeare stakes"

gold rings). Then there will most assuredly be something going with that steamy Bardot type who tossed him a curve (white silk; Dior) in the bar. Bond is obviously cultivated. Still, Fleming never lets him get too uppity. Sports, gambling, eating, drinking—these are Bond's only recreations. If he ever thinks of art, music, politics or good reading, he keeps it under his Lock's of London bowler. One writer notes that Bond's pleasures are those which the common man at his commonest can imagine himself enjoying if suddenly provided with a vigorous physique and pots of