

Richard Goyne's Padre, Margaret Ann Hubbard's Sister Simon, Leonard Holton's Father Bredder, Dorothy Gilman's Sisters John and Hyacinthe, Ralph McInerney's Father Dowling and Sister Mary Teresa, Andrew Greeley's Msgr. Blackie Ryan, Carol Anne O'Marie's Sister Mary Helen, and William X. Kienzle's Father Koesler. Ellis Peters, E. M. A. Allison, and Paul Harding feature detecting monks in the Middle Ages. Umberto Eco's Brother William of *The Name of the Rose* (1983) is a crime-solver. And when scandals rocked Catholicism in the 1980s, William F. Love's Bishop Regan and Veronica Black's Sister Joan focused on cleansing the Church of crime.

Among Protestants, the first entry was also British, Canon Victor Whitechurch's Vicar Westerham, followed by C. A. Alington's archdeacons and Stephen Chance's Father Septimus. On the American side, Margaret Scherf created Father Buell and Isabelle Holland the Rev. Dr. Claire Aldington. Barbara Ninde Byfield straddled both continents with Father Bede. Other Protestants include Matthew Head's missionaries Mary Finney and Emily Collins, James L. Johnson's Rev. Sebastian, and Charles Merrill Smith's Rev. Randolph Barry Estabrook's Miles Farnsworth is a TV evangelist who develops a conscience, and D. Keith Mano's *Topless* (1991) puts an Episcopal priest in a topless bar.

Religious mysteries are not limited to Christian denominations. Jewish roots blossomed with Harry Kemelman's Rabbi Small, Joseph Telushkin's Rabbi Winter, and in non-clerical mysteries featuring Jewish protagonists, such as those written by Faye and Jonathan Kellerman. Religious pluralism introduced Hindu concerns in H. R. Keating's Inspector Ghote novels; Confucianism in Robert Van Gulik's Judge Dee stories; American Indian religions (as in Tony Hillerman's *Talking God*, 1989); and others involving voodoo, wicca, neo-paganism, and Satanism. William Hjortberg's *Falling Angel* (1978) and Jane Stanton Hitchcock's *The Witches' Hammer* (1995) are two recent examples. Cults have also provided fertile ground from Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), through Dashiell Hammett's *The Dain Curse* (1928), to Ronald Levitsky's *The Wisdom of Serpents* (1992).

In all religious mysteries, the moral common denominator is a conviction that crime is a violation of God's law, and that through human agents, who detect and expose crime, God will set wrong right.

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William David Spencer

Ren & Stimpy Show, The (1991-1994), was an animated show on Nickelodeon that energized parents to get worried over cartoons again. The adventures of Ren Höek, the asthma-hound chihuahua, and his dopey pal Stimpson J. Cat, indulged kids' anal and oral compulsions with gags about bodily functions and odors, gross-out jokes and plain fool-

ishness. It attracted a huge cult of adult fans, until battles with Nickelodeon censors resulted in John Kricfalusi's being forced off his own creation.

Canadian native Kricfalusi (1956-) apprenticed on Saturday morning shows through the 1970s before teaming with Ralph Bakshi to design the Rolling Stones' animated "Harlem Shuffle" video. "John K." became a director for Bakshi's 1987 series *Mighty Mouse: the New Adventures*, then helmed the ill-fated 1988 revival of *Beany & Cecil*. Nickelodeon purchased his Ren & Stimpy for the cable network's new Sunday morning animation bloc.

The Ren & Stimpy Show, like many cartoon teams, owed much to George and Lenny from Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Ren, voiced by Kricfalusi, was the little schemer, prone to histrionic outbursts combining Kirk Douglas with Peter Lorre ("You eediot! You bloated sack of protoplasm!"). Stimpy (Billy West), suggested the *Three Stooges*' Larry Fine, and liked nothing better than squatting in his litter box and "hwarfing" up hairballs.

The show immediately found devoted viewers, aided by occasional showings on Nickelodeon's parent, MTV. Its cultural contributions include Log from Blammo ("It's big! It's heavy! It's wood!"), Yak Shaving Day, and Powdered Toast Man. The "Happy Happy Joy Joy Song" got plenty of airplay on the Dr. Demento show and other pop radio stations. The pair even made cameos on *The Simpsons*.

The show was plagued by production delays. Nickelodeon, which had successfully marketed Slime from its game show *Double Dare*, found similar bodily emissions unsuitable in *Ren & Stimpy*. Censor-driven delays resulted in only half the planned first season episodes making it on the air. The Christmas special *Stimpy's First Fart* aired only on MTV, retitled *Son of Stimpy*. The episode "Man's Best Friend" was banned completely: Nickelodeon had fretted over its Archie Bunker-type protagonist George Liquor, thinking his name to be a double entendre. Finally, Nickelodeon fired John K. in September, 1992. Production was turned over to an in-house studio formed by some of Kricfalusi's staff, but the show only lasted three seasons.

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Mark McDermott

Rendell, Ruth (1930-), a Londoner, worked for a newspaper before publishing her first novel, *From Doon with Death* (1964), a detective story featuring Chief Inspector Wexford and his assistant, Michael Burden. Since then, Rendell has become one of the most widely read authors of crime fiction in America, producing short fiction and several