

PAL: Perspectives in American Literature - A Research and Reference Guide - An Ongoing Project

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Chapter 10: Terry Southern (1924-1995)

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Primary Works

Books:

1958 *Flash and Filigree*
1958 *Candy*
1959 *The Magic Christian*
1960 *Writers in Revolt*
1965 *Journal of The Loved One* (with William Claxton)
1967 *Red Dirt Marijuana and Other Tastes*
1970 *Blue Movie*
1992 *Texas Summer*

Screenplays:

1964 *Dr. Strangelove* (with Stanley Kubrick and Peter George)
1965 *The Loved One* (with Christopher Isherwood)
1965 *The Collector* (rewrite)
1966 *The Cincinatti Kid* (rewrite)
1967 *Barbarella*
1968 *Easy Rider*
1969 *End Of The Road*
1970 *The Magic Christian*
1975 *Stop Thief!*(teleplay; with William Claxton)
1986 *The Telephone* (with Harry Nilsson)

A Brief Biography

compiled by his son [Nile Southern](#) and included here at his request.

Terry Southern (1924-1995) began writing satiric, outrageous fiction at the age of 12, when he rewrote Edgar Allan Poe stories "because they didn't go far enough". After serving in the Army as a Lieutenant in World War II, he wrote short stories while studying at the Sorbonne. "The Accident," published in the premier issue of *The Paris Review*, was the first short story to appear in that magazine. He admired and befriended British novelist Henry Greene, who convinced Andre Deutch to publish his first novel, *Flash and Filigree* (1958).

Residing with his first wife Carol in Geneva, he conjured the surrealistic exploits for trillionaire trickster "Grand Guy Guy Grand" in *The Magic Christian* (1959) while at the same time writing *Candy* (1960) for Maurice Girodias' Olympia Press. He and Gregory Corso brought *Naked Lunch* to Girodias, convincing him to print it. He published numerous short stories in England, France and America, (anthologized in *Red Dirt Marijuana and Other Tastes*; 1967), and co-edited *Writers in Revolt* with Alex Trocci and Richard Seaver in 1962.

After settling in an old farmhouse in East Canaan, Connecticut, Stanley Kubrick, upon the recommendation of Peter Sellers, invited him to employ his satirical touch to *Dr. Strangelove* (1964). A rewarding period in Hollywood followed, writing dialog for: *The Loved One* (1965), *The Collector*, *Cincinnati Kid* (1966), *Casino Royale* and *Barbarella* (1967). Terry helped launch the Independent film movement by co-authoring *Easy Rider* (1968), and co-producing *The End Of The Road* (1969), filmed entirely on-location in the Berkshires.

After the quiet publication surrounding *Blue Movie* (1970), he turned to screenwriting full-time, working on original scripts, adaptations, and speculative assignments throughout the 70s and 80s. During this difficult period, when films and "quality-lit" (a phrase he coined) favored blockbusters, the IRS repeatedly attempted to reclaim over \$150,000 in unpaid taxes from the mid-sixties. He was hired in the early-eighties by Michael O'Donoghough to write for Saturday Night Live, and wrote *The Telephone* (1986) with singer-songwriter Harry Nilsson. As legitimate film work grew increasingly elusive, Terry taught Screenwriting at both NYU and Columbia University from the late 80s until his death. His last novel, *Texas Summer*, was released by Richard Seaver in 1992. Grove has recently reissued his first four novels.

Selected Bibliography 1980-Present

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