Profile of a Mystery Writer

Rex Stout Reflects

By BILL RYAN

Rex Stout was sitting in an upholstered chair in his billing house office, and he said he had just gotten over double pneumonia and he didn't expect to talk a hell of a lot any time soon.

"If I were to be asked to name the best known mystery writer of the moment, I'd call him Rex Stout," he said. "I'm not saying he's the best, but I'd call him the best known."

Stout is the author of the Nero Wolfe stories, which have been serialized in newspapers and magazines for the past 20 years. The stories have been translated into 20 languages and have sold over 10 million copies.

"I don't think there's any other mystery writer who's as well known as Rex Stout," said one of his publishers. "He's one of the few mystery writers who can make a living from writing alone."