Rex Stout, Creator of Nero Wolfe, Dead

By ALDEN WHITMAN

Rex Stout, creator of Nero Wolfe, died yesterday of natural causes at his home in Milltown Road, Danbury, Conn. He was 88 years old and had published last month his 46th Wolfe mystery, "A Family Affair."

In the gothic world of the mystery-murder-detective novel the doyen of American practitioners was Rex Todhunter Stout, a wiry, goat-bearded, argumentative, intense, immodest, highly talented artisan. His principal handiwork was Wolfe, a Falstaff in girth and wit, a serious eater, a devoted orchidologist, an agoraphobe who solved crimes by sheer brainpower, albeit with the help of a brash but efficient legman, Archie Goodwin. Venal forces that included the but I shave it down.

Nero Wolfe made his dazzling debut in 1934, when his first. He accomplished these feats between beers in a "I do put up in front of me a

And from then on the 286-pound brownstone on West 35th Street, near the Hudson River, Continued on Page 36, Column 2
Rex Stout, the Creator of Nero Wolfe, Is Dead at 88

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

handwritten list of characters, but I've never written out a single word of any plot.

"The plots come when I'm shaving, watering the plants, poiting around. Sometimes I think of them three weeks later." If you keep the main facts firmly in mind, you don't fret anything that can be put in your mind."

Concentrating on his typewriter, he did not even stop when his secretary, a chaste to his delegated to his wife. "I don't drink when I'm writing. It bifurcates my logical processes," he also confided, adding:

"But when I finish a book I go down to the kitchen and pour myself a big belt."

Mr. Stout was frequently asked about the origins of Nero Wolfe, a world-weary mystery writer and amateur detective. The character is probably a composite of several real-life writers and critics, including James Branch Cabell, a close friend of Mr. Stout's, and his second wife, Miss Rosemary Moynihan. Wolfe's distaste for exercise, Mr. Stout wrote, "is an amplified physical resemblance to Arnold Wolfe, the principal character in the distress novel, "The Critic and His Critics.""

Christopher Morley, a Sherwood Anderson, argued that Wolfe was patterned on Mycroft Holmes, the fat and gifted younger brother of Sherlock Holmes.

Likened to Robert

And Alva Johnston, in a profile of Mr. Stout in The New Yorker a number of years ago, called him "the prototype of Aajeed, a robot of the eighteenth century that appeared to be a gadamer at his desk." He was called "the colossus of Nero Wolfe" because Mr. Stout described him as a house mouse, and the audience of the book itself.

The novel, The Silent Speaker, was written in 1950, and "the book's success was due to the fact that it was a true-to-life depiction of the world of the 1950s," Mr. Stout wrote. "The book was a huge success, and the public clamored for more." In 1954, Mr. Stout published a sequel, The Golden Spiders, which was also a success.

Mr. Stout's other mystery novels were published in a series that began in 1955, and "the series was so successful that it was continued unabated until the author's death in 1975." The last novel, The Doorbell Rang, was published in 1975, and "the series was a huge success and the public clamored for more." In 1976, Mr. Stout published a sequel, The Golden Spiders, which was also a success.

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