

# MILESTONES

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**Died.** Rex Todhunter Stout, 88, premier American whodunit writer, whose corpulent orchidologist-detective, Nero Wolfe, with the help of his faithful legman Archie Goodwin, solved crimes in 46 books that were translated into 22 languages and sold more than 45 million copies; at his home in Danbury, Conn. As sinewy and energetic as his protagonist was fat and lethargic, Stout would work out the story line for such mystery novels as *The Doorbell Rang* and *Too Many Cooks* while puttering about his daily cooking or gardening chores, then sit down and type out a complete mystery in 38 days of writing. Stout's agoraphobic master sleuth, who made his first appearance in *Fer-de-Lance* (1934), was an intuitive armchair detective in the manner of Sherlock Holmes. Wolfean devotees have contended that their hero's infinite array of adroit solutions stemmed from his creator's multifaceted life. A youthful mathematical prodigy, Stout was a prolific freelancer, an ardent champion of political causes and a jack-of-most-trades who at various times trained jumping pigs and sold cigars. Nero Wolfe's last case, *A Family Affair* (TIME, Nov. 3), was published only weeks before Stout's death.