



The Wittliff Collections

Guide to the James Crumley Papers 1957-1992

Collection SWWC-055

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Crumley, James, 1939-2008
Title:	Guide to the James Crumley Papers
Dates:	1957-1992
Abstract:	Nine boxes of manuscripts, galley proofs, notes, clippings, correspondence, legal papers, photographs, poetry, screenplays, short stories and artifacts, 1957-1992, document the writing career of James Crumley.
Identification:	SWWC-055
Extent:	5 Linear Feet, 9 boxes (Includes oversize and artifacts.)
Language:	English
Repository:	The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

Table Of Contents

Biographical Notes	4
Administrative Information	7
Physical Location	7
Conditions Governing Access	7
Immediate Source of Acquisition	7
Preferred Citation	7
Conditions Governing Use	7
Related Materials	7
Controlled Access Headings	7
Detailed Description of the Collection	8
Series I: Novels , 1965-1992	8
One to Count Cadence, 1965-1971	8
The Wrong Case, 1975	8
The Last Good Kiss, 1978-1984	8
Dancing Bear (Annotated typescript fragments with various titles), 1983, undated	8
Mexican Tree Duck (Annotated typescripts by various titles), circa 1992	9
Meat, unpublished (Annotated typescripts by various titles), undated	9
Series II: Short Stories, 1971-1981	9
Series III: Screenplays, 1978-1990	10
Series IV: Poetry, undated	11
Series V: Correspondence , 1957-1986	11
Series VI: Clippings, 1971-1992	11
Series VII: Personal, 1957-1979	11
Series VIII: Works by Others, undated	11
Screenplays, undated	11
Poetry , undated	11
Scope and Contents	6
Administrative Information	7
Physical Location	7
Conditions Governing Access	7
Immediate Source of Acquisition	7
Preferred Citation	7
Conditions Governing Use	7
Related Materials	7
Controlled Access Headings	7
Detailed Description of the Collection	8
Series I: Novels , 1965-1992	8
One to Count Cadence, 1965-1971	8
The Wrong Case, 1975	8
The Last Good Kiss, 1978-1984	8
Dancing Bear (Annotated typescript fragments with various titles), 1983, undated	8
Mexican Tree Duck (Annotated typescripts by various titles), circa 1992	9
Meat, unpublished (Annotated typescripts by various titles), undated	9
Series II: Short Stories, 1971-1981	9
Series III: Screenplays, 1978-1990	10
Series IV: Poetry, undated	11
Series V: Correspondence , 1957-1986	11
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Series VIII: Works by Others, undated	11
Screenplays, undated	11

Poetry , undated	11
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Biographical Notes

Novelist James Crumley was born in Three Rivers, Texas, on October 12, 1939 and spent most of his childhood in south Texas. He maintained a straight-A average in high school while also playing football. After graduation he attended the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta on a Navy ROTC scholarship, but soon left to enlist in the U.S. Army, where he served from 1958 to 1961. Crumley then returned to Texas and enrolled at Texas A&I (now Texas A&M University-Kingsville), where he had received a football scholarship. Crumley completed his BA in History in 1964, and was accepted into the University of Iowa's prestigious creative writing program, where he earned a MFA in 1966. Immediately after graduating he joined the English faculty at the University of Montana at Missoula. His masters thesis was eventually published as the novel, *"One to Count Cadence*, in 1969, a popular and critically acclaimed look at the Vietnam War. After his novel was published, Crumley left Montana to hold a series of visiting professorships: the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville (1969-70), Colorado State University (1971-74), Reed College in Portland, Oregon (1976-1977), Carnegie-Mellon University (1979-1980) and the University of Texas at El Paso (1981-1984.)

During a two-year stretch as a freelance writer (1974-1976) Crumley published the first in a series of crime novels for which he would become known. *The Wrong Case* (1975) featured a detective named Milo Milodragovitch, who would also appear in later novels. "I always introduce my work by explaining that I am a bastard child of Raymond Chandler – without his books, my books would be completely different. We cover some of the same ground, his dark streets in LA, my twisted highways in the mountain west. But because of the events surrounding the Vietnam War, my detectives are not as comfortable with traditional morality as Philip Marlowe seems to be," (Contemporary Authors, 2000).

In 1978 *The Last Good Kiss* (1978) was published, which introduced Crumley's other detective protagonist, C.W. Sughrue. His third crime novel, *Dancing Bear* (Milodragovitch series), was published in 1983. After leaving his last teaching job in 1984, Crumley has worked full-time as a writer. He's made his home base in Missoula, Montana since the mid-1980s. He has worked on film screenplays, which remain unproduced, and has continued to write and publish fiction. *The Muddy Fork and Other Things: Short Fiction and Nonfiction* was published in 1991, featuring many of Crumley's short stories. The detective series continued with *The Mexican*

Tree Duck (Sughrue series) in 1993, and *Bordersnakes* (1996), which brought together Milodragovitch and Sughrue for the first time.

According to Robert E. Burkholder in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography Yearbook* (1984), Crumley's crime novels stand "the genre on its head by creating an antiheroic protagonist plagued by the weakness and vice of the corrupt world in which he lives and works and endowing him, nevertheless, with the sort of noble instincts that motivate him to sift through the scum in order to identify right from wrong. Crumley's detectives are curiously amoral moralists."

Crumley's final published works include *The Putt at the End of the World* (2000); the Milodragovitch series novel, *The Final Country* (2001); and one in the Sughrue series, *The Right Madness* (2005). He passed away September 17, 2008 from complications from kidney and pulmonary disease.

Scope and Contents

Nine boxes of manuscripts, galley proofs, notes, clippings, correspondence, legal papers, photographs, poetry, screenplays, short stories and artifacts, 1957-1992, document the writing career of James Crumley. The collection has been arranged into five series: Works, 1965-1992; Correspondence, 1957-1986; Clippings 1971-1992; Personal Materials, 1957-1979; and Works by Others, undated.

The Works series comprises the largest part of the collection. It documents Crumley's writing process from drafts through proof copy or published work. The Novels subseries makes up the largest portion of the series, with the numerous *Dancing Bear* files documenting Crumley's changing ideas for titles and other aspects related to the novel. The Correspondence series contains mostly fan letters written to him, but also includes correspondence regarding the film rights for Crumley's novel, *One to Count Cadence*. The Personal series contains photographs, certificates and legal documents related to Crumley's education, military career, and marriages. Works by Others include screenplays based on Crumley's novel *The Last Good Kiss*, and poetry.

Administrative Information

Physical Location

Materials may be stored off-site. Advance notice is required for use: <https://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/makearesearchappointment.html>.

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Crumley, 1992.

Preferred Citation

James Crumley Papers, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University.

Conditions Governing Use

Materials from the Wittliff Collections are made available for use in research, teaching, and private study. The user assumes responsibility for determining copyright status, obtaining permission to publish, and abiding by U.S. copyright laws. <https://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/visit/policies/publication.html>

Related Materials

Also see James Crumley Additions (UPWC 14140).

Controlled Access Headings

- Authors, American -- Texas -- 20th century
- Detective and mystery stories
- Poems
- Screenplays

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Novels , 1965-1992

One to Count Cadence, 1965-1971

Box Folder

1	1-2	Second draft , October 1965 - April 1968
1	3-5	Typescript
1	6	Excerpts and Editor's note, March 15, 1968
2	1-2	Typesetting copy
2	3	Author's 1st proof galley, December 26, 1968
2	4	Author's 2nd proof galley
2	5	Clippings , 1969, 1971

The Wrong Case, 1975

2	6	Typescript photocopy
3	1	Typescript photocopy
3	2	Correspondence, February 1975
3	3	Reviews, 1975

The Last Good Kiss, 1978-1984

3	4-5	Annotated Typescript, circa 1978
3	6	Book jacket
3	7	Reviews, 1978-1981
3	8	Movie contract with Warner Brothers Inc., January 6, 1984

Dancing Bear (Annotated typescript fragments with various titles), 1983, undated

4	1	Typescript
4	2	Annotated typescript - "Walking Backwards"
4	3	Annotated typescript - "Milo version," Chapter 1
4	4	"Milo version," Chapter 1, second draft
4	5	"Milo version," Chapters 1-5, first draft
4	6	"The Muddy Fork," Milo version (original and photocopy)
4	7	"A Plague of Orphans," Chapter 1 fragments
4	8-9	"TRW"
4	10-11	"The Local Memory" Chapter 1
4	12	"Soledad City" Chapter 1

4	13	"Drunk on the Wind" Chapter 1, pages 1-2
4	14	"Drunk on the Wind" Chapter 1, pages 1-9
4	15	"Drunk on the Wind" Chapters 1-2
4	16	"The Dead Heart" Chapters 1-2
4	17	"Drawing Blood" Chapter 1, pages 4-5
4	18	"Drawing Blood" Chapter 1, pages 1-9
4	19	"Drawing Blood" Chapter 1, pages 1-22
4	20	"Drawing Blood" Chapter 1, pages 28-38
4	21	"Drawing Blood" Chapter 1
4	22	"Without Drawing Blood" Chapter 1, pages 4-12
4	23	"Without Drawing Blood" Chapter 1 fragments
4	24	"Without Drawing Blood/ Mahagen" Chapter 1, first draft
4	25	"Without Drawing Blood/ Mahagen" Chapter 1, second draft
4	26	"Snow" Chapter 1, pages 2-6
4	27	"It's Snowing in the Foothills of My Heart" Title page with no typescript
4	28	Reviews, 1983
5	1	Reviews, 1983
5	2	Title page of screenplay

Mexican Tree Duck (Annotated typescripts by various titles), circa 1992

5	3	"A Wild Justice" Chapter 1, pages 1-5, circa 1992
5	4	"MD" Chapter 1, pages 1-5, circa 1992
5	5	"Mexican Tree Duck" Chapter 1, pages 1-2, circa 1992
5	6	"Mexican Tree Duck" Chapter 1, pages 1-10, circa 1992

Meat, unpublished (Annotated typescripts by various titles), undated

5	7	"CT" Chapters 1-2
5	8	"UT" Chapter 1, pages 1-2
5	9	"UT" Chapters 1-2
5	10	"Meat" Chapter 1, pages 1-3
5	11	"Meat" Chapter 1, pages 1-14
5	12	"Meat" Chapter 1, pages 1-20
5	13	"Meat" Chapter 1
5	14	"Meat" carbon typescript, pages 1-98
5	15	"Meat" carbon typescript, pages 1-112

Series II: Short Stories, 1971-1981

5	16	"Another Poet in Montana" typescript, pages 1-10, undated
5	17-18	"Cairn" annotated typescript, circa 1978
5	19	"Cousin" first draft, undated
5	20	"Daddy's Gone a-Hunting" second draft, circa 1974

5	21	"Dirty Works" pages 1-7, undated
5	22	"Driving Around Houston" pages 1-27a, undated
5	23	"The Fastest Man in Nebraska" first draft, August 10, 1965
5	24	"Goodbye Cruel World" first draft, December 21-27, 1971
5	25	"Goodbye Cruel World" second draft, December 28, 1971
5	26	"Goodbye Cruel World" typescript, January 4, 1972
5	27	"Goodbye Cruel World" carbon typescript, undated
5	28	"The Heavy" typescript (original and photocopy), undated
5	29	"The Heavy" galley copy, 1981
5	30	"An Ideal Son for the Jenkins Family" annotated typescript, undated
5	31	"Labor Pains" annotated typescript, undated
5	32	"Moons," annotated typescript, page 2 only, undated
6	1	"The Philanderer" first draft, undated
6	2	"The Philanderer" annotated typescript, undated
6	3	"The Philanderer" annotated typescript, original and photocopy, undated
6	4	"Roadsigns, Roadcircles, and Detours" annotated typescript and published version, undated
6	5	"Story" page 1, undated
6	6	"Story" pages 1-2, undated
6	7	"Story" pages 1-5, undated
6	8	"Story" pages 1-7, undated
6	9	"The Sunbathers" , undated
6	10-13	"Things I Can't Write About and the Reasons Why", undated
6	14	"Three Cheers for Thomas J. Rabb" pages 1-20,, undated
6	15	"Three Cheers for Thomas J. Rabb" pages 1-32, undated
6	16-17	"Three Forks" pages 1-6, undated
6	18	"Three Forks" page 4, undated
6	19	Untitled (Military Air Transportation), undated
6	20	"Whores" , circa 1977

Series III: Screenplays, 1978-1990

6	21	"Ain't No God in Mexico" annotated typescript, undated
6	22	"The Big Nowhere" first draft, November 16, 1990
6	23	"Dancing Bear" Revised typescript (with Tim Hunter), undated
6	24	"Judge Dredd," revised first draft (with Tim Hunter), 1989
7	1	"The Last Good Kiss" first draft, January 21, 1979
7	2	"The Pigeon Shoot" movie synopsis (English July 20, 1983 and Spanish August 5, 1983), 1983
7	3	"The Pigeon Shoot" first draft , December 13, 1983
7	4	"The Pigeon Shoot" first draft (photocopy), December 13, 1983
7	5	"The Sheepeater Campaign" notes, 1978

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| 7 | 6 | "The Sheepeater Campaign" typescript, 1978 |
| 7 | 7 | "Tunnels of Cu Chi" second draft (with Tim Hunter), undated |
| 7 | 8 | "Untitled" first draft (with Gwenyth Mapes), August 1988 |

Series IV: Poetry, undated

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| 7 | 9 | Food for the Dogs, undated |
| 7 | 10 | How to Survive Your Life, undated |

Series V: Correspondence , 1957-1986

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| 8 | 1 | Correspondence , 1957-1975 |
| 8 | 2 | Correspondence , 1978-1986 |

Series VI: Clippings, 1971-1992

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| 8 | 3 | Clippings and articles on or about Crumley, 1971-1992 |
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Series VII: Personal, 1957-1979

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| 8 | 4 | US Army Football photographs and team roster, undated |
| 8 | 5 | US Navy certificates of accomplishment, 1957-1959 |
| 8 | 6 | College transcripts (University of Iowa, MFA English, 1970, Texas College of Arts and Sciences, BA, 1965), 1965, 1970 |
| 8 | 7 | Wedding photograph, bride Sandra L. McCollough, Refugio, TX , 1962 |
| 8 | 8 | Divorce decrees, Sandra L. Crumley (1968), Margaret L. Crumley (1975), Judith Ann Ramey (1979), 1968, 1975, 1979 |
| 8 | 9 | Vitae, undated |
| 9 | | Blue and white baseball cap from Montana Review of Books, and a steel hardhat with initials JAC scratched on inside brim |

Series VIII: Works by Others, undated

Screenplays, undated

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| 8 | 10 | "The Last Good Kiss" revised screenplay by Walter Hill, undated |
| 8 | 11 | "The Last Good Kiss," First Draft by Michael Jennings, undated |

Poetry , undated

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| 8 | 12 | Poems by Kathy Callaway, undated |
| 8 | 13 | Poems by various authors, undated |

8 14 No authors, undated