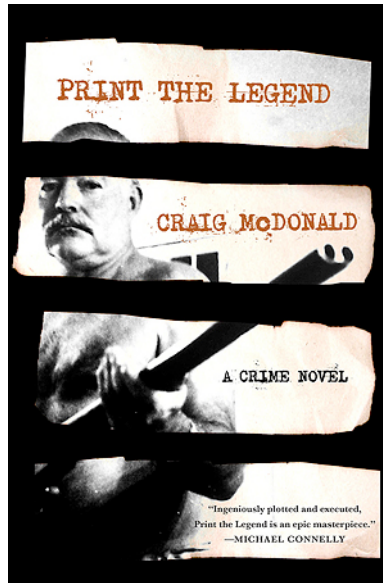


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**CREEDY:**  
**WASHINGTON, D.C., 1956**

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*“We are a fact-gathering organization. We don’t clear anybody. We don’t condemn anybody.”*

— J. Edgar Hoover

“Well, you certainly made a hash of the African affair, didn’t you Agent?”

Creedy struggled to maintain his composure. “That’s why I’m proposing this new gambit, sir. One I’ve initiated and planned to the closest detail. One I want to run, top-to-bottom. I mean to redeem myself in the fullest sense.”

The Director leaned back in his chair...an ugly bullfrog in a Brooks Brothers suit.

Hoover said, “What do you propose?”

Creedy met the homely man’s gaze: “When your man recruited me in the 1920s, he dispatched me to steal a suitcase full of Mr. Hemingway’s early writings. I propose a gambit that runs in the opposite direction. I suggest taking select documents from those stolen writings and augmenting them with holographs of my composition. Mr. Hemingway is reportedly becoming increasingly mentally unstable. It’s a hereditary thing, it seems. His father killed himself. Other family members have displayed signs of dementia. I think now is an optimum moment to exploit Hemingway’s burgeoning nervous condition.”

The Director narrowed his eyes. “I remember your initial mission. Those liberated manuscripts of Hemingway’s were ordered *destroyed*.”

“I confess that I’ve kept them safely secured with an eye toward an eventual gambit such as the one I’m proposing now,” Creedy said.

“The Hemingways are bound for Paris,” Creedy rushed ahead. “Foggy as Hemingway’s mind is now, particularly after the plane crashes and his head injuries, I propose planting some of the less incendiary or corrupting holographs with some meticulous forgeries of my own devising. I’ll place them in trunks in the basement of the Ritz Hotel, then have a concierge in my pocket direct the Hemingways’ attention to them. They always stop at the Ritz when in Paris, so this will be easy. If these altered or invented documents pass muster with Hemingway, then I propose a more bold proposition — breaking into Hemingway’s home in Cuba and planting something more incendiary. Something anti-Batista and anti-American interests, perhaps. Some materials that will forever destroy Hemingway’s reputation here at home.”

Hoover pursed those thick lips. After a long silence, the Director said, “Gambit approved, Agent Creedy.”

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