

*The secret library of Georges Armoulian*

Anthony Frewin

London: Ashgrove Publishing, 2012, £9.95, p/b

This is a very funny book. Anthony Frewin is a regular *Lobster* contributor, novelist and screenwriter, and the book's intentions are stated when Frewin's preface is headed by a quotation allegedly from FBI taps on the phone of Chicago mobster Sam Giancana, in which he is discussing the new novel by Joan Didion.

'Preface? What's with these fucking prefaces? They're all at it. You know I don't like the fucking things. I say what I'm gonna say and that's it. I don't tell you what I'm gonna say before I say it, you know? That's a fucking preface. Fuck them and fuck their prefaces.'

The idea of Giancana reading Didion made me laugh out loud. If it doesn't even make you smile, then this probably isn't for you.

On the rear cover is a quotation apparently from a review in the *New York Review of Books*, which begins:

'Exceptionally well researched and written, with all the unexpectedness of Joan Crawford having a heavy period.'

The book purports to be extracts from volumes in Armoulian's library. Opening it at random for this review I found entries which begin thus:

[3] Adibe, Supreme 'Big Guns' Commander Prince  
Virtuous.

GENOCIDE; A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR MIDDLE RANKS OF  
THE NIGERIAN ARMY

*Lagos, Nigeria: The University of Lagos Genocide Faculty for  
the Army Officers' Association, 1969. Duodecimo. 128pps.  
Publisher's waterproof nylon (matte green), with matt  
blocking.*

A fine copy of an exceedingly rare genocide title only slightly marred by flecked blood stains on the front and back covers. Among the contents:

FIRST STEPS IN GENOCIDE: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM  
WHITEY.....

[20] Bruce, Lenny

WATCH OUT, WHITEY! JEWBOY'S GONNA SLIP IT TO  
YOUR SISTER!

New York: Zit-Davis Books, 1961, Medium octavo.  
134pps. Printed card cover.

This is, I believe, the only volume of Bruce's monologues  
to be printed during his lifetime.....

[43] Erschatz, Maximillian

ALSO SPRACH JOSEPH GOEBBELS: LEADERSHIP SECRETS  
FROM THE THIRD REICH FOR THE MODERN MANAGER

New York: Simon and Syzergy, 1979. Oblong crown  
quarto. 272pps. 'Bound in \$500-a-suit material by Mr  
Tony of Trenton.' [Limited edition]

Erschatz was bitterly disappointed with the book's  
hostile reception and fled New York for Bavaria shortly  
after publication.....

[63] Ickleford, Lenny [pseudonym of Mickey Morrance]

STEPHEN WARD BUGGERS A RANK STARLET IN DORSET  
SQUARE; THE BOOK OF THE STAG FILM WITH STILLS!

London: Lenny's Books, no date [1955]. Duodecimo.  
48pps. Printed card covers.

Dr. Stephen Ward was the sinister osteopath at the  
centre of the British Profumo sex scandal in 1963.....

[82] Lovejoy, Bevis

WHAT WAS YOUR WIFE, GIRLFRIEND (OR, COME TO  
THAT, MOTHER) DOING IN THE 1960S? DID SHE APPEAR  
IN A SLEAZY PORNO FILM? AND HOW WOULD YOU KNOW  
IF SHE DID? A COMPLETE CASTING LIST OF THOSE WHO  
DID. (AND WHO MAY YET LIVE TO REGRET IT)

London: The Lovejoy Porno Database Research Agency,  
1981. Imperial octavo. 228pps. Printed card covers.

'The years 1961-1973 were the Golden Age of British  
porno films.....'

Which is say: Frewin has created a format – an imaginary  
library containing imaginary volumes – in which he has let  
loose his imagination, his detailed knowledge of politics and  
parapolitics and his opinions. It is those opinions that readers  
of a delicate PC disposition should be wary of. If you think  
Bea Campbell OBE is to be taken seriously, this isn't for you.  
But I think it is a hoot. Of course not all the entries work  
completely (or maybe I just don't know enough to get the  
jokes); but there are layers of jokes in the best of them.

*Robin Ramsay*