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Mike McGrady papers 4079066

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Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127
535 W. 114th St.
New York, NY 10027
Business Number: (212) 854-5153
Fax Number: (212) 854-1365
rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu
URL: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rbml/index.html>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	McGrady, Mike
Title:	Mike McGrady papers
ID:	4079066
ID:	MS#0823
Date [inclusive]:	1966-1970
Physical Description:	1 linear feet 2 document boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The Mike McGrady Papers contain the draft manuscripts, correspondence, memos, and newspaper clippings related to a publishing hoax in 1969, where 26 reporters for Newsday wrote a novel under the penname Penelope Ashe.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Mike McGrady Papers; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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Biographical / Historical

In 1966, three reporters, Mike McGrady, Harvey Aronson, and John Cummings were at a bar on Long Island discussing their opinions of recent best selling authors Harold Robbins and Jacqueline Susann. They agreed that in the literary climate of the 1960s, a book wouldn't sell without sex scenes, and decided that together they could write a bestselling "dirty book." On June 13, 1966, McGrady sent a memo to everyone at Newsday inviting them to write chapters, with details about the main character and a few guidelines for the writers. They were instructed to write chapters of at least 2,500 words, with an emphasis on sex and very bad writing. McGrady wrote the general storyline. The main character, Gillian Blake was part of a husband-and-wife talk radio team and found out her husband cheated. She retaliated by having an affair, and eventually escalated to breaking up all of the marriages in her community.

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Biographical / Historical

They intended to write the entire book in a week but it actually took a year. McGrady and Harvey Aronson divided the editing. Once the book was edited, they searched for a woman to play "Penelope Ashe" and settled on McGrady's sister-in-law, she was the right age and appearance, and conveniently looked like Jacqueline Susann. The group decided on Lyle Stuart as publisher, a controversial publisher who had a history of controversial texts, although he had never published a "dirty book." Stuart knew about the hoax from the outset, and was interested in buying the book even without reading it.

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Biographical / Historical

Naked Came the Stranger was published in July 1969, with a carefully chosen book jacket and photo and biography of "Penelope Ashe." The book was relatively successful when it first came out, and even though the ad campaign for the book showed photos of the actual authors, only one reviewer, William Trotter at the Charlotte Observer, suspected that the book wasn't written by Penelope Ashe. The reviews for the book were generally bad, but some reviewers thought that it was good for its genre. The book sold well enough that it was eventually issued as a paperback.

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Biographical / Historical

The story that it was actually written by twenty-six journalists eventually broke when various news organizations wanted to run the story, and McGrady and the others managed to turn it into front page news by playing them against each other. The book then shot to the top of the New York Times bestseller list, and the real authors promoted their work across the country. Reception to the hoax was mixed, but the response indicates that people thought it was a very clever ruse and still liked the book. A year later, McGrady wrote Stranger Than Naked or How to Write Dirty Books for Fun & Profit, detailing the story behind the book.

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Scope and Content

The Mike McGrady collection consists of the drafts and administrative materials surrounding the publishing of *Naked Came the Stranger*. The collection contains draft manuscripts of *Naked Came the Stranger* and *Stranger than Naked or How to Write Dirty Books for Fun & Profit*. The collection also contains correspondence, memos to all of the authors, and newsclippings from the ad campaign and the response to the hoax.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in two series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

XML document instance created by Alison Lotto EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2011-04-13 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

This collection is located off-site. You will need to request this material at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Reproductions may be made for research purposes. The RBML maintains ownership of the physical material only. Copyright remains with the creator and his/her heirs. The responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Source of acquisition--McGrady, Mike. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--1970. Accession number--M-70.

Processing Information

Cataloged Christina Hilton Fenn 08/--/89.

Processing Information

Papers processed Alison Lotto, New York University and the Palmer School, 2013 03/--/2011.

Processing Information

Finding aid written Alison Lotto, New York University and the Palmer School, 2013 03/--/2011.

Accrual

No additional material expected

Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Literary forgeries and mystifications
- Adultery -- Fiction
- Impostors and imposture
- Hoaxes
- Suburban life -- Fiction
- Revenge -- Fiction
- Journalists
- Long Island (N.Y.)
- Correspondence
- Photographs
- Newsday (Hempstead, N.Y.) -- History
- Ashe, Penelope
- McGrady, Mike

Collection Inventory

Series I: Manuscripts

Scope and Contents

Series I is comprised of the manuscripts of *Naked Came the Stranger* and *Stranger than Naked or How to Write Dirty Books for Fun & Profit*. The folders for *Naked Came the Stranger* contain the original drafts submitted by the various authors, as well as the final drafts as edited by McGrady and Aronson, and the publisher. The second manuscript is McGrady's personal copy that he edited and compiled.

Title/Description	Instances	
<i>Naked Came the Stranger</i>		
Published work, 1969		
Mike McGrady--Billy and Gilly, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 1
John Cummings--Ernie Miklos, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 2
George Vecsey--Morton Earbrow, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 3
Jack Schwartz--Joshua Turnbull, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 4
Jane Margold--Arthur Franhop, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 5
Bob Greene--Mario Vella, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 6
Bernie Bookbinder--Marvin Goodman, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 7
Carol Burton, Stan Green--Alan Hetterton, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 8
Bob Waters--Paddy Madigan, 1966-1968		

	box 1	folder 9
Bill McIlwain--Taylor Hawkes, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 10
Bob Wiemer--Ansel Varth, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 11
Harvey Aronson--Melvin Corby, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 12
Gene Goltz, Merle Goldberg--Willoughby Martin, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 13
Bob Mayer, Val Duncan, Ken Byerly, Mal Karman--Zoltan Caradoc, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 14
Emmett Brightwell, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 15
Martin Buskin--Reuben Dalrymple, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 16
Anthony Insolia--Charles Luckman, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 17
Barry Abisch--Sheldon Bernstein, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 18
Marilyn Berger--Esther, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 19
Station Breaks, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 20
<i>Stranger Than Naked or How to Write Dirty Books for Fun & Profit</i> , 1970	box 2	folder 1 to 2

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Series II: Administrative files

Scope and Contents

Series II contains all of the administrative files related to the hoax. McGrady organized them into different groups, correspondence from the co-authors, correspondence in response to the hoax, memos to the co-authors, the advertising campaign, and newspapers articles describing the hoax. The correspondence from the co-authors concentrates on keeping the hoax a secret after the book was published. They also write about how to manage dividing the profits among 26 people, and the publicity required of everyone once they were revealed. The correspondence in response to the hoax contains letters from friends as well as the general public. Many people wrote to McGrady after the hoax was revealed, most thought that it was very clever, but there are a few letters from people who believed that the project promoted this type of literature instead of criticizing it. The memos to the co-authors are comprised of the original memo proposing the project, as well as follow-up giving more details of the project and the expectations. This series also contains a number of news clippings of the advertising as well as the stories when the hoax broke, and responses to the story in various newspapers.

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence from co-authors, 1969	box 2	folder 3 to 4
Correspondence in response to hoax, 1969	box 2	folder 4 to 5
Memos to the co-authors, 1966-1969	box 2	folder 7
Advertising campaign, 1969	box 2	folder 8
Newspaper articles describing the hoax, 1969		

box 2

folder 9 to
10

Photograph of the co-authors, 1969

box 2

folder 11

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