



# Blockbuster!: Fergus Hume & the Mystery of a Hansom Cab

*Lucy Sussex*

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'For anyone fond of detective stories or fascinated by publishing history, *Blockbuster!* makes for highly enjoyable and informative reading.'—*Washington Post*

“Fergus whom?” One might well ask before meeting this prolific author in Sussex’s capacious account, set at the birth of a genre that still entertains and engages readers today: the crime novel....Provides a rich picture of Victorian life and a revealing account of late 19th-century publishing practices. She also captures a snapshot of the mystery genre as it existed before Hume’s contemporary competitor, Arthur Conan Doyle, completely eclipsed him and inspired legions of imitators. Who now cares about Fergus Hume? Sussex’s fascinating book reveals why all crime fiction readers should.’—*Publishers Weekly*

'What *Blockbuster!* actually does best is intrigue us about everyone in the vast, tangled web around *Mystery of a Hansom Cab*. Frederick Trischler (the get-rich-quick man who would stumble onto success selling Hume's novel), actress Amy Horton (a champion of Hume's thanks to the daring roles he wrote for women), and Alice Cornwell (who left her husband to become a gold miner and got rich enough to buy London's *Sunday Times*) were such strong influences on Hume that he later fictionalized them.'—*NPR*

'An exemplar of cogent scholarship, engagingly presented.'—*Fine Books Magazine*

'Fascinating.'—*Sydney Morning Herald*

'Told with wit and lightly worn scholarship....Sussex has written a fine, thoroughly engaging and multifaceted history.'—*The Australian*

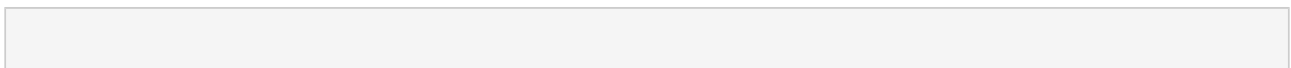
'Sussex skillfully assembles the know information about a very private man and his times, and reveals a Victorian world whose machinations and mysteries are equal to those of his most famous fiction.'—*Stuff NZ*

'Part literary criticism, part biography, part history...it succeeds admirably. It is well researched and well written, and evokes the literary scene in 1880s Melbourne in an informative yet entertaining way.'—*Books + Publishing*

Before Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, there was Fergus Hume's *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*—the biggest and fastest-selling detective novel of the 1800s, and Australia's first literary blockbuster. The novel sold out its first run almost instantly and became a bestseller—but Hume sold the copyright for a mere £50, missing out on a potential fortune.

*Blockbuster!* is the engrossing story of a book that would help define the genre of crime fiction. A must-read for fans of true crime, history, and crime fiction alike.

**Lucy Sussex's** award-winning fiction includes books for younger readers and the novel *The Scarlet Rider*.



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