

Hal Ellson

Harold "Hal" Ellson (1910 – October 31, 1994 in Brooklyn)^[1] was an American author of pulp fiction whose work primarily focused on juvenile delinquency, a field in which he has been described as "one of the most popular" writers^{[2][3]} and as "legendary".^[4]

Ellson was a social worker,^[5] recreational therapist, and nurse's aide at Bellevue Hospital,^[1] where he encountered the adolescent psychiatric patients on whom he based much of his fiction; he subsequently stated that many of the patients viewed him as a "father confessor", and eagerly told him their stories while trusting that he would not report them to law enforcement.^[6] As a result, Nelson Algren described Ellson's work as "just straight case studies."^[7]

Frederic Wertham was an aficionado of Ellson's work, favorably reviewing Ellson's 1949 novel "Duke" in the *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, and providing an introduction to Ellson's 1950 novel *Tomboy*;^[8] as well, Wertham subsequently cited *Tomboy* in the first chapter of his own 1954 *Seduction of the Innocent*.^[9]

Mike Shayne's Mystery Magazine published reprints of Ellson's short stories such as *Walk Away Fast* copyright 1956 by Renown Publications, Inc. in its October 1970 issue as well as publishing several of Ellson's original short stories from 1963 to 1981.^[10] Ellson's short fiction appeared in Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine from 1963 to 1983.^[11]

Harlan Ellison cited Ellson's work as having inspired his own interest in juvenile delinquency — an interest which led directly to the writing of Ellison's first novel, *Web of the City*.^{[12][13]} Ellison also stated that in the earliest days of his career as a writer, he was often mistaken for Ellson writing under a pseudonym — and that decades later, when Ellison had become much more known and Ellson's career had waned, *Ellson* was often mistaken for *Ellison* writing under a pseudonym.^[12]

Bibliography

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- Tomboy* (1950) – adapted by Marcel Carné in Wasteland
- The Golden Spike* (1952)
- Rock* (1953)
- I'll Fix You* (1956)
- Tell Them Nothing* (1956)
- This Is It* (1956)
- Jailbait Street* (1959)
- A Killer's Kiss* (1959)
- Stairway to Nowhere* (1959)
- The Knife* (1961)
- Nest of Fear* (1961)
- Nightmare Street* (1965)
- Games* (1967)
- That Glover Woman* (1967)
- Blood on the Ivy* (1971)
- "hundreds of short stories"^[1]

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