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Modesty Blaise**

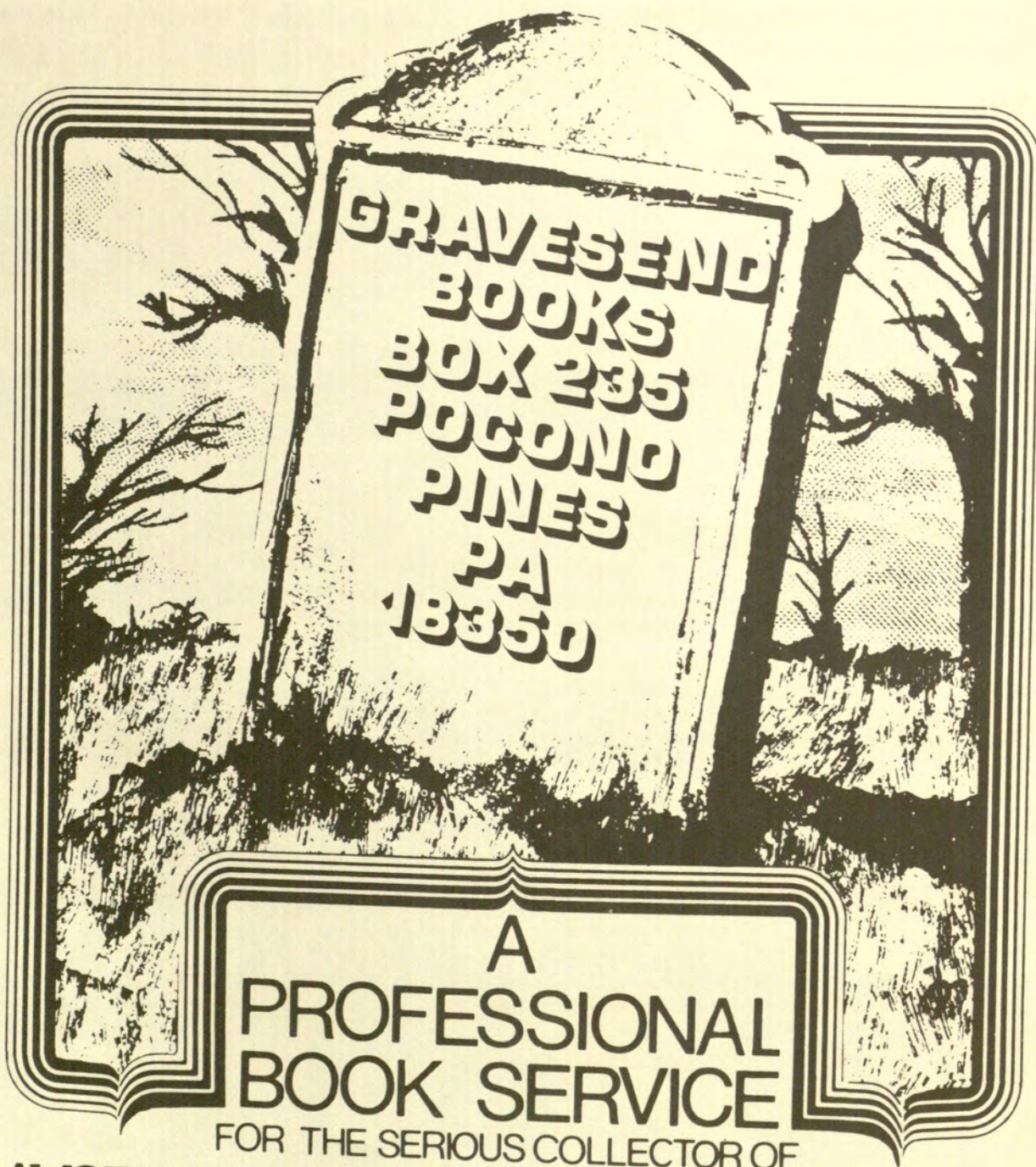
**Hammett and  
the Detective Story**

**Cornell Woolrich  
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**An Interview with Tony Hillerman  
With His Navajo Policemen, He Has Blazed a  
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# Hillerman Country

Shiprock

By Betty and Riley Parker

An Interview with Tony Hillerman, who, with his two Navajo policemen, has blazed a trail of mystery through the American Southwest

All photographs by Betty and Riley Parker, unless otherwise noted

**A**NTHONY GROVE HILLERMAN, known to most of his readers as Tony, is a friendly, unassuming Oklahoma boy who grew up to be a reporter, editor, and university professor before he began to create his Navajo Indian police procedurals in 1970. With six of these mysteries published and another out momentarily, he has firmly established literary claims on a vast area of the American Southwest. This Hillerman country primarily encompasses the highways, dirt roads, and sheep trails of the magnificent and forbidding Navajo-Hopi Reservations, with occasional trips to Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Zuni Pueblo.

The high desert of Tony Hillerman's novels contains a lot of space; in fact, the jurisdiction of his fictional Navajo policemen covers an area in which several New England states would fit comfortably. Although the action is usually compressed into a few days, it deals with ancient and timeless ritual, giving the scenes a historical ambience that is both particular to the Southwest and of universal significance. Hillerman's knowledge of and respect for Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee's world is so great that it transmits to the reader, making one wish the mystery would not be solved just yet so he can experience one more desert storm, travel another lonely road, and visit still another deserted hogan.

Although Tony's Navajo police procedurals are complete within themselves and require no previous knowledge to enjoy as mysteries, they can be more fully appreciated, first, by having some knowledge of the conflict an American Indian faces every day in his dual role of American and Indian; and, second, by possessing some understanding of the country in which the action takes place.

Tony tells the story of the movie producer who had an option on one of his books and had Tony take him on a tour of Navajo land. "But where are the pueblos?" the producer wanted to know. "Navajos don't live in pueblos," explained Tony. The producer thought awhile, then said, "You know that and now I know that, but the public doesn't have to know that." Needless to say, the movie was not made and the public was spared another Hollywood travesty.

Three of his mysteries (the first three) feature Joe Leaphorn, a traditional, somewhat cynical Navajo, who has long ago determined where he wants to fit in a complicated Indian-Anglo world. The other three introduce Jim Chee, a younger Navajo who can feel as much at home on the University of New Mexico campus as at an ancient ceremonial on the reservation but is still trying to decide which culture he values more. (The seventh in this series features both Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee, and we should see some more clearly delineated differences between the two as they are forced to use their separate methods and world-views to solve a mystery. This newest effort is due to be at your bookseller's by January 1987 and is titled *Skinwalkers*.)

Beginning at the top of the map of Hillerman country, where the corners of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah join at what is called the Four Corners Region, the land is high desert-mesa-plateau, averaging in altitude from five to seven thousand feet. Around these four state corners lie remains of ancient Indian civilizations, some excavated and preserved, countless others lying dormant under sage and juniper. The villages, towns, and cities which presently populate the area are subtly influenced by the spirit of a considerable population of hunters, basket-makers, and agrarian cultures which prevailed here hundreds of years ago. Anyone who ponders long this stark environment, overwhelmed by limitless sky, must surely feel that he is forever a guest, for this part of the world belongs to the ancients.

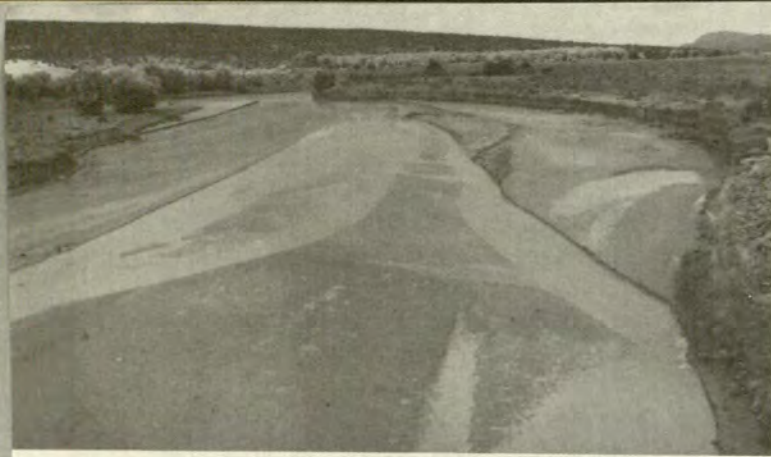
Shiprock is located ten miles east of a sheer volcanic plug which rises 1,700 feet above the desert floor. According to Navajo legend, this is the Rock with Wings and represents the ship which brought them from the North. To Anglos, the rock looks like a windjammer under full sail. It is here, around Shiprock, that *The Ghostway* begins.

*THE GHOSTWAY, a Jim Chee mystery, begins with a shooting outside a Shiprock, New Mexico laundry and for the first time goes outside the boundaries of Hillerman country as far away as Los Angeles. It may be fitting that the most graphic violence of any Hillerman novel (see the interview) takes place outside the reservation and in wicked Los Angeles.*

Teec (pronounced *teace*) Nos Pos, a small community on the main highway from Colorado or Farmington, New Mexico to the Grand Canyon, has a run design named for it. Mexican Hat, not far away in Utah, is on the San Juan River and is at the north end of Monument Valley, a fairyland of red rock formations familiar to anyone who grew up watching cowboy movies. Mexican Water, across the border into Arizona, is a wide spot where the highway goes south to Chinle, home of another large group of deserted ancient Indian dwellings. Passing through the winding hill and mesa country in a valley below and west of the Lukachukai Mountains, it is easy to imagine where Luis Horseman must have tried to hide in *The Blessing Way*.

---

*Betty and Riley Parker operate an antiquarian bookstore dealing in out-of-print and rare books and documents of the West. Parker Books of the West, Box 8390, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504, is a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America and also specializes in the literature of the Southwest, which includes the mysteries of Tony Hillerman. The Parkers are presently collecting bibliomysteries for their personal library.*



**"They drove northeastward, mostly in second gear, over a rutted road which now tilted downward . . . the beams lit the broad, sandy bottom of an arroyo below . . ." *People of Darkness*, p. 154**

THE BLESSING WAY, the first of the Navajo policeman mysteries, has both Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn and the villain using Navajo religion to solve and conceal the crime, respectively. The device works well in this and subsequent books because there is never too much esoteric religion to threaten the readers' interest in the plot or the characters. Archaeologists and anthropologists join the Indians in the caves and canyons of this thriller.

How very cold it can be when the clouds cover the sun and the biting wind drives the snow and ice across the mesas and into the canyons! All along here there are canyons. At Chinle (*chin-lee*), 93 miles from Shiprock, is Cañon de Chelley (pronounced *shay*), where the Navajos plant their corn, tend their sheep, and endure the tourists. When you get to the Tuba City-Gallup highway south of Chinle, you can turn east through Window Rock, the Navajo National Capital, named for a rock the Navajos call Perforated Rock. (A portion of *Skinwalkers* is set at Window Rock.) Proceed on to Gallup, New Mexico (6,600 feet), where a huge intertribal ceremonial is held every August. Gallup was a railroad town for a long time. Now it is a marketplace for Navajos and ranchers. There are trading posts up and down every street. Navajo rugs and jewelry can be bought everywhere. Farther on east is Grants (6,440 feet), and between Gallup and Grants and a little north is Crownpoint, known to the Anglos for the fine rug auctions held there. *People of Darkness* takes place primarily in this area. Albuquerque lies 78 miles east of Grants.

PEOPLE OF DARKNESS mixes ancient Navajo customs with that twentieth-century curse, radioactivity—a nice modern touch, as the setting is very close to Los Alamos, and not a few Navajos, as well as others, found work in the uranium mines around Grants after World War II, unaware of the peril they were in. Jim Chee solves this one, picking up an Anglo girlfriend along the way which exacerbates his problem of deciding which world, White or Indian, to choose.

From Gallup, south and west forty miles, is Zuni Pueblo (6,200 feet), which is a part of the Zuni Indian Reservation extending as far as the Arizona border and encompassing 500 square miles, the setting for most of the action of *Dance Hall of the Dead*.

DANCE HALL OF THE DEAD, although it may not be Hillerman's favorite book, is undoubtedly his most popular among readers who live in the Southwest. The reason is the *Shalako* (accent on "shah") ceremony of the Zunis, during which Joe Leaphorn solves the mystery. This ceremony, which lasts all night in early December, is the coldest, most unusual, most uncomfortable, puzzling (to outsiders), and still the most unforgettable of any Indian rites. Hillerman's depiction is familiar to anyone who has spent a sleepless, cold, and wet night stumbling around in the dark of Zuni Pueblo from one *Shalako* house to another.

Turning west from Ganado and heading toward Tuba City takes us out of Navajo country and into Hopi-land. There are several very large mesas to the north of the highway, and the Hopis, or someone else, has named them First Mesa, Second Mesa, and Third Mesa. Some very old Hopi villages are almost embedded on top of these mesas. Most of them can be visited, and one can keep from falling off by being very careful. People still inhabit the dwellings that must have been used by their ancestors. They go about their daily chores, participate in dances and ceremonials, make pottery, and suffer the many tourists who are just as curious as you and I are. It is here and in the surrounding area that *Dark Wind* occurs.

DARK WIND involves Jim Chee with dope smugglers, the FBI, and the Drug Enforcement Agency as well as the Hopis. For the first time, Hillerman introduces a compatible partner for Jim Chee—Deputy Sheriff Cowboy Albert Dashee, a Hopi stationed in Flagstaff at the Coconino County Sheriff's Department. It takes both of them, with their knowledge of Navajo and Hopi witchcraft, to crack this one. Trying to tell the good guys from the bad guys as the plot thickens is great fun.

Going on to Tuba City, where there are more Hopi settlements and where Jim Chee was assigned for two years before being transferred to the Shiprock subagency, then turning northeast toward Cow Springs and Kayenta completes a large triangle which takes up a big chunk of Northern Arizona. *Listening Woman* is set northwest of Cow Springs. North and a little east of Kayenta is another well-preserved Indian ruin called Betatakin, which the National Park Service postulates could be the ancient home of the Hopis.

LISTENING WOMAN is the third and last Joe Leaphorn book until the one just being published. In it, Leaphorn has to solve the murder of an old Navajo man and teenaged girl. Along the way there is a remote trading post the owner of which has had it for sale for forty years, a Navajo man who has been studying for the Catholic priesthood, and a beautiful Anglo girl. And, as always, along with these interesting characters, is the landscape which is so important to the Hillerman plots.

Off to the east of the map in North Central New Mexico is the setting of the southwestern portion of *The Fly on the Wall*. Because both the environment and the story are different from Hillerman's other mysteries, *Fly* can be considered at this point an anomaly among his seven published works in the genre.

THE FLY ON THE WALL incorporates no Indian policemen in its tale of political corruption and investigative reporting, with a background somewhere in Middle America. John Cotton, the reporter-sleuth, unwittingly moves the action to an area near Santa Fe when he flees the increasing pressure at the Capitol, but the major portion of the work occurs in State House, U.S.A. Contrary to any potential disappointment that this is not another Joe Leaphorn or Jim Chee mystery, the reader may perhaps wish that Hillerman would write more episodes for John Cotton to investigate. Read the book to ascertain the derivation of the title.

Tony Hillerman is the recipient of several professional awards in the field of journalism, including the E. H. Shaffer Award and the Dan Burrows Award. The Mystery Writers of America recognized him with the Edgar Allan Poe Award for Best Mystery of 1973, and he was Guest of Honor at Bouchercon X in Los Angeles in 1979. He is now a resident of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

**TAD:** *The Armchair Detective* is primarily interested in your mystery fiction, but your bibliography also includes regional nonfiction. Were these works written before, after, or concurrently with your popular mysteries?

**Hillerman:** The first book I wrote was *The Great Taos Bank Robbery*, which was my master's thesis when I was a student at UNM [University of New Mexico]. Then I wrote *The Blessing Way*.

**TAD:** How did you become interested in the mystery genre?

**Hillerman:** I was going to write *The Great American Novel*, but I had been writing all my life for wire services. I had only written short stuff, and *The Great American Novel* is about 300,000 words long, right?

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And I thought, before I try to write that, I had better write something that is much shorter and has a form, a shape, a skeleton. I'd been reading a lot of Eric Ambler and Graham Greene and Raymond Chandler, and I was very much impressed with what guys like these could do with a mystery. So I decided, I will first see if I can write a mystery. And I went down and checked one out of the library and for several hours counted words on lines and lines on pages and things like that, and it averaged out to about 80,000 words, which is a lot more reasonable than *War and Peace*. So that's the reason I decided I was going to write a mystery first. Then, if I could do that, I figured I would try the big book.

**TAD:** So...

**Hillerman:** So I wrote *The Blessing Way*. Then I decided to write the big book, which was *The Fly on the Wall*. But as I began writing it, getting into it, the more it became not what I had intended it to be but a mystery-suspense novel. I found I liked to write it better that way. Very early in it, I could see that was what it was going to be.

**TAS:** Your work for newspapers gave you a lot of background for that.

**Hillerman:** It sure did. The State Capitol could be about half the State Capitols in the United States. Probably half of them use the same floor plan. I run into reporters all over who say, "I know what State Capitol you're using. You use Jefferson City, Missouri or..." You know, they tend to be alike. It [*The Fly on the Wall*] actually was based on the Capitol at Oklahoma City, where I had worked.

**TAD:** Do you have the same Jeffersonian philosophy that Cotton had in *The Fly on the Wall*?

**Hillerman:** I'm afraid so. I'm a Jeffersonian to the bottom of my soul.

**TAD:** Then you feel that the public can, given the facts, sort them out and make constructive decisions.

**Hillerman:** I think historically the public tends to be much more intelligent than either the government or the press.

**TAD:** Why did you leave the political scene and immediately return to writing Indian mysteries?

**Hillerman:** Well, I grew up among Indians—Pottawatomies, Seminoles, etc., in Oklahoma, and they were my playmates and my friends. When I got to New Mexico permanently, and quickly began to see that the cultures here were still alive and well, I was very much interested in them. The first native Americans I ran into were Navajos, and the more I learn the more interested I get, and I just feel that other people should be interested. The mystery form seems to me to be a really good way to interest people



Ernesto Cata "remembered the year when he was nine, and Hu-tu-tu had stumbled on the causeway over Zuni Wash..." *Dance Hall of the Dead*, p. 1



"The orgy of baking which caught up the women of Zuni each Shalako season had reached its climax during the morning. Now most of the outdoor ovens were cooling..." *Dance Hall of the Dead*, p. 147

who would never read an anthropology book or a nonfiction book about native Americans.

**TAD:** Hearsay among your fans is that teachers on the reservation use your books to teach the youth their own native mythology.

**Hillerman:** They're used in a lot of Indian schools. They're used in a lot of schools on the Zuni Reservation and on the Navajo Indian Reservation. I have had several Navajo women tell me that their own children became interested in the Navajo culture after they read one of my mysteries. They came back and started asking questions.

**TAD:** Does the knowledge that your books are being used as teaching aids influence your writing?

**Hillerman:** Well, not really, because from the very beginning I wanted very badly to be extremely accurate. I was already influenced that way.

**TAD:** Can you describe how you determine whether or not your information is accurate?

**Hillerman:** Oh, take *The Ghostway*, for example. I was going to use a subplot based on the traditional Navajo teaching that you should stay out of buildings in which people have died so you're not infected by the ghost. Now the subplot involved, in the end of the book, having the bad guy killed in a bar notorious for selling liquor to drunk Navajos. My idea was that the Navajos would then be afraid to go into the bar and the bar would have to close, thereby effectively solving the problem [of Navajo alcoholism in



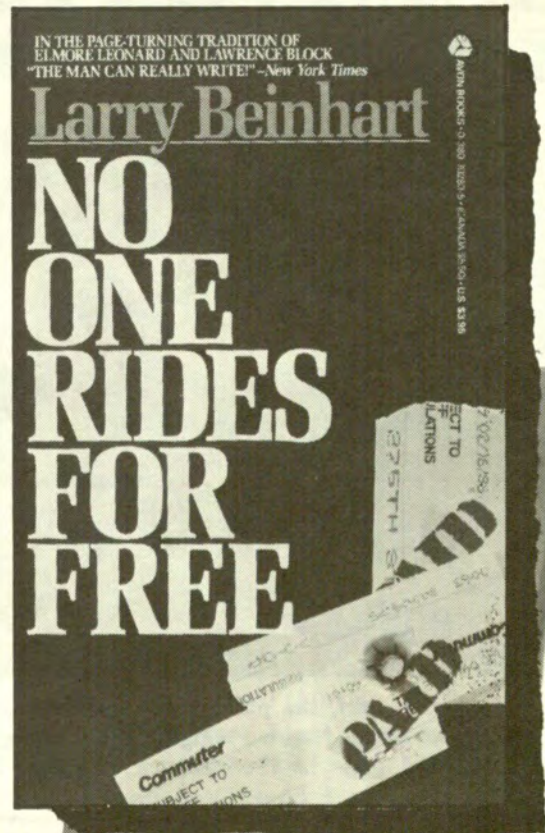
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"Along the ruin, the plateau's granite cap . . . had fractured under its own weight . . . leaving behind room-sized gaps in the rimrock..." *The Blessing Way*, p. 4

that area]. But my own experience and Navajos I know suggested to me that, while it was the way [the teaching] was taught, it wouldn't really work with this kind of Navajo. I talked to a guy who teaches out there. We discussed it. He wasn't sure, either, and we agreed that he would submit the subplot to his class, have them discuss it, and have each one write a paper on it. They unanimously, without a single exception, agreed that theoretically "yes, that's the way we're taught, but actually drunks don't follow the rules." So it wouldn't work. I threw out the subplot. I do things like that.

I have Navajos whom I know read my stuff, and I ask them about it. When I sign books around places like Farmington, Flagstaff, Phoenix, and Gallup, I tend to see a lot of Navajos, and I say, "Have you read any of my books? Find anything wrong with them?" I'm always looking for feedback. I had one Navajo tell me that in *The Dance Hall of the Dead* the little boy was not bashful enough. I had a Navajo policeman I know tell me that I romanticize the Navajo police. You know, I make them better than they are. And I do, of course. I realize that. All people who write police procedurals tend to make their policemen Sherlock Holmes. And, of course, I go to the reservation when I can, and I look into details. I work off a very good map of the reservation.

**TAD:** Then you know where all the places are that you describe in your mysteries.

**Hillerman:** The story I'm working on now takes place along the San Juan River. It runs out of New Mexico into Utah and Arizona, along that border. Marie [his wife] and I were up there to look it over again—Montezuma Creek and Bluff and the little towns and Aneth Oil Field—just to make sure it hadn't changed since last time we saw it.

**TAD:** Do you also use reference works? Do you read the BAE Ethnology Reports, for instance?

**Hillerman:** I read the proceedings of the Smithsonian Institute, minutes of tribal council meetings, *The Navajo Times*, *The Hopi Weekly*.

**TAD:** You read more current material than history...

**Hillerman:** I think I could teach a course in Navajo history. I think I've read everything that's been written about Navajo history... but there hasn't been much written about it. It's not a subject of broad interest. I just read whatever I can get hold of.

As you read, you see a lot of contradiction. You see a lot of "if A is right, B's gotta be wrong," and when I talk to Navajos it's easy to understand why. There are about sixty clans, and their tradition is oral, so there's a lot of variation in very basic stuff. One Navajo will tell you about a taboo and another Navajo will have never heard of it.

Another thing. There's a great tendency, the same kind of tendency or practice I grew up with as a child in rural Oklahoma, of having fun with strangers. When I was a little boy I used to watch the people at the country store which my Dad ran tell tall tales to people who drove up to buy gasoline at the gas pumps. I've seen the same thing happen among Navajos. So, the first time I hear something, I think, "That's interesting," but I don't pay too much attention to it; the second time I hear it, I think, "Well, maybe there might be something to it." If I hear it three times about the same way, I think that it must be true. A lot of anthropologists didn't grow up in the country, and they're not familiar with the country man's sense of humor the Navajos are richly endowed with, and they write things down the first time they hear them, apparently.

**TAD:** The pueblo Indians do that...

**Hillerman:** I think all rural people do that to city slickers. I bet they do it in Afghanistan.

**TAD:** Probably. Tony, why don't you bring your Navajo policemen to the pueblos? [There are many pueblos situated along the Rio Grande in New Mexico from Albuquerque to Taos.]

**Hillerman:** That's a good question. The Navajos are very open. They have a very open and public religion. Part of the pueblo basic philosophy about the Kachina religion requires that a minimum number of



**“At dawn, Chee parked the pickup at the windmill. He slammed the door behind him and stood facing the glow on the eastern horizon.” *The Dark Wind*, p. 39**

people are party to the esoteric parts of it. You dilute the power if everybody knows about it. A lot of pueblo Indians do not want their photographs taken based on the same philosophy. Therefore, in the Hopis, for example, if you're a member of a Kiva society, you are supposed to know perfectly your own part of the business, but you are not supposed to know anything about what the other Kiva societies do, and they put a very strongly negative value on curiosity. I do not feel comfortable butting into that. I mean, I think it's an invasion of their privacy. I think it's disrespectful of their religion, and I just don't want to do it.

In both *The Dance Hall of the Dead* and *Dark Wind*, you're involved with Zuni and Hopi [pueblo Indians]. You may have noticed it's all seen through the eyes of a Navajo policeman who knows just about what an interested outsider would know—just what he would pick up from reading and asking questions. He makes no pretense of understanding or having any inside information. I don't ask them any questions. If they want me to know something, they'll tell me.

**TAD:** You mentioned *The Dance Hall of the Dead*. Many who have read your mysteries say it is the best. Do you feel that way?

**Hillerman:** I hear that quite a bit. In my own opinion, it's not the best. Each one of those books, in my opinion, has serious things wrong with it and spots

where I really think it came off well. You know, good parts and bad parts. The plot in *Dance Hall* worked pretty well, I thought. The one that has way the best plot, where I was really proud of the plot, is *Dark Wind*. The one now that people tell me [is the best] is *Ghostway*. I heard that from a lot of people, and several reviewers have said it. To me, I don't really see *The Ghostway* that way yet. I might later on, when I go back and reread it. It has sold far better than any of the others.

**TAD:** *Ghostway* includes descriptive violence that has not appeared before in your mysteries.

**Hillerman:** Because of the scene with the animals? Yeah. That's almost certainly true. In *People of Darkness*, where I had a professional killer, I thought I had that guy motivated properly and made a very believable character. People would say, "This guy's a sociopath," and they understood why. I needed a different kind of fellow here, and I had to, I felt, go to some lengths to [make him believable]. I have trouble believing in these kinds of guys. You read newspapers, and they're out there, but it's hard for me to believe in them, really. I think the reader has the same problem. Therefore, I lean over backwards to develop them so they're believable, and that seemed to me the only way I could. I wanted the man to seem frightening, dreadful. I wanted the reader looking at him doing that with absolutely no emotion about it. Actually, all he did, of course, was kill two guard dogs, and he wanted to make the front page of *The Los Angeles Times* and the ten o'clock news because he got more money. He wanted to do something bizarre and ghastly for the media. It wasn't because I've drifted off into enjoying it, describing that sort of stuff, or doing it gratuitously.

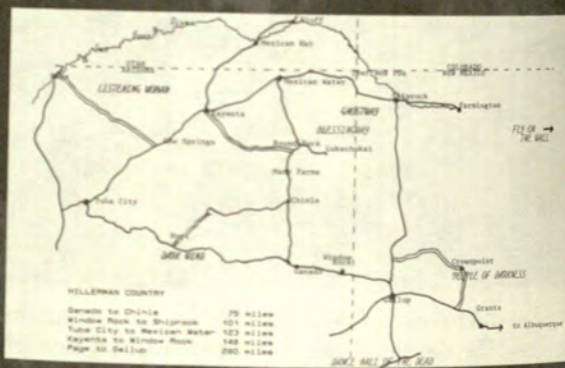
**TAD:** It was developing a character.

**Hillerman:** I've had a couple of complaints about it. Three. One was from my editor, who owns cats. Two were from readers who raise dogs. One was from a woman who raises Dobermans. Well, she was complaining about it, and I said, "You know, my editor didn't like it either. He wanted me to take out the part about the cats." She said, "To hell with the cats!"

**TAD:** Are you still planning to write *The Great American Novel*, or do you feel that what you have done is becoming *The Great American Novel*, all of it combined?

**Hillerman:** No, I don't feel that. I feel that I am going to continue writing mysteries. But, seven years ago, I started a novel. I wrote one chapter of it. It's set in the Depression. But when I finished the chapter, I finished it with the realization that I'm not ready to write it yet. It's in my files. The thought of that book is very much alive, and it's developed in those years.

Window Rock



Two years ago, I started another more or less mainstream novel which concerns two thirtyish, fortyish men, one of whom has just been killed... and that book is in its fifth chapter, sitting in my filing cabinet, because I am not quite ready to write it. Both of those books will eventually be written. I am on about page 60 of a mystery novel which involves both Jim Chee and Leaphorn.

**TAD:** That is the one which will be set around the San Juan River?

**Hillerman:** Most of it will take place [there]. Some of it in Window Rock, some of it around Shiprock, and a lot of it up in that Gooseneck country, that eroded stone country. That's the one I'll finish first.

**TAD:** Are you happy writing mysteries?

**Hillerman:** Oh, yes, I like to. When they're going well, I like to write them. I like to write. I like to write a lot when things are going smoothly and the paragraphs are coming off well...

**TAD:** Do you have a daily schedule for writing?

**Hillerman:** No. Until July 1 [1985], I've always had another job. I've tended to write for years, in effect, by [imagination] when I'm driving to work in the morning, driving home from work, in committee meetings, when I'm waiting for telephone calls, when I'm going to sleep at night. Before I get to the

keyboard [he uses a word processor], the scene is all fully imagined, so when I actually get to the keyboard, it tends to go rapidly. I write on airplanes—I just write whenever I've got a moment.

Right now, the chapter I'm writing involves Chee visiting a little sub-post office where he's going to talk to this woman. In my mind, I'm building this woman in the conversation that's going to go on between her and Chee. I've pretty well got it now. When I get back to them and pull out that disk and put it in there, I'll know the woman. I know what she looks like, what she's wearing, what the inside of that store looks like, what she's going to say, so it'll go relatively rapidly. But I don't have any time to get up in the morning and write. I may, now that I've retired from the university. I intend to, in fact. It seems to be a good idea. Nearly everybody I know that writes does it.

**TAD:** You've been doing pretty well without the schedule. Of the mysteries you've already written, which is your favorite?

**Hillerman:** *Dark Wind* for craftsmanship. *Listening Woman* for best first chapter. *People of Darkness* for one of the best characters—the killer.

Here's something for the readers of *The Armchair Detective*. I work from the presumption that people buy mysteries for entertainment, and obviously, if your characters are a Shaman and a Shaman's patient, and the information that helps solve the



**Bessie Nez, detention officer stationed at Window Rock, agreed to let us take her picture posed behind the Navajo Police carryall similar to the one Joe Leaphorn drives.**

crime concerns taboo violations, then you're going to have a reader who legitimately needs to know and is willing to learn something about taboos and taboo violations.

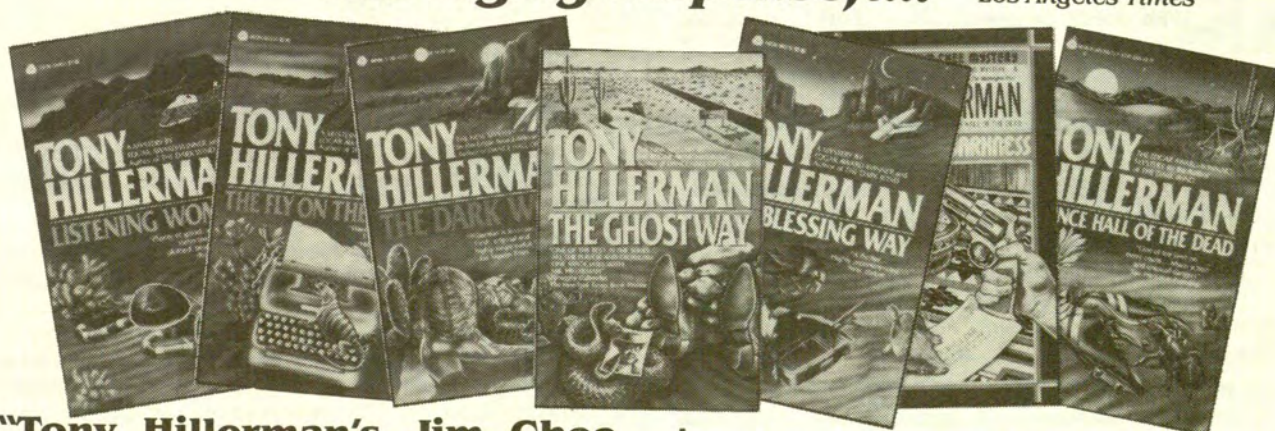
**TAD:** The ethno-cultural information you include, then, is on a "need-to-know" basis. You try not to sound "teachy."

**Hillerman:** I refuse to sound "teachy." A Navajo librarian told me—we were talking about Silko and James Welch and some of the really great Indian writers—and I was saying, "It looks like to me you'd be reading more of them," and she said, "We do read them, and then we say, 'This is us, and it's beautiful,' but books like *Ceremony* and *Winter in the Blood* make you feel defeated, with a lot of hopelessness and despair." Then she said, "We read your books and we say, 'That's us,' again, 'That's us,' but we win!"

**TAD:** You have a reverence for any people's history and tradition, don't you?

**Hillerman:** I like people who believe in things. I am really turned off by those whose only interest is the pursuit of pleasure, whose only conversation is about snowmobiling and what they shot on the golf course last Tuesday and what kind of car they have. You couldn't possibly discuss anything religious or metaphysical with them because they never have thought about it. It's not that they don't believe particularly... I've always been interested in cultures that are based on metaphysical positions.

**"Tony Hillerman is first rate... Fresh, original and highly suspenseful."** *Los Angeles Times*



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"Lieutenant Joseph Leaphorn spent the afternoon on the ridge that overlooks the village of Zuni from the south . . . the Shalako emerged . . . these immense birds would cross Zuni Wash at sundown . . ." *Dance Hall of the Dead*, pp. 146-51 (Thanks to Zuni Pueblo for permission to photograph)

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