

Letters

Ford, Amis and a dance to the music of time

The Guardian, Thursday 25 February 2010
Article history

To [Martin Amis](#) and [Christopher Hitchens](#) (Letters, 22 and 24 February). Dear Chaps, Sitting at the kitchen table a fortnight ago looking at a half-page of complaint from Martin about his treatment by the press, I simply thought, for heavens sake stop whining. You had, Martin, after all, received weeks of the most valuable and often highly complimentary coverage of [your latest book](#) that any writer could hope for. It reminded me of other events and a possible insight into your take on life.

I now marvel at the narrow confines of your professed love for your "beloved Mark", for whom you were both "overcome with grief" at his early death. You, his most "cherished and devoted friends". Of course you both loved him, but odd that his other dear friends allowed their profound love to overflow towards helping his widow and very small children in the immediate aftermath. Your accusations of "implausible callousness" tempt me sorely to retaliate, but I shan't, and I certainly don't bear a grudge against either of you, who are what you are.

But I do apologise to Martin for suggesting it was he who smoked at a dying man's deathbed, when it was you, Christopher, who "fugged up" the room so densely with your "one cigarette!" that I had to open the window when you left. (But then, being 1988, you say, it couldn't have been without permission – presumably from the dying friend himself!) And on that occasion you did stay too long and he was exhausted.

As for what Mark would have thought about all this, I assure you he'd have loved the general "splat", enjoyed the occasionally impulsive behaviour of his cherished wife, and laughed that unmistakable cackle of his which we all remember with such affection.

Here's to you both, Anna.

Anna Ford

London

• Dear [Martin Amis](#), Back in 1997 you bestowed on me the dubious distinction of giving my name to the chief murder suspect in your novel [Night Train](#). At the time I thought you might have asked my permission. Now at 82 and not yet losing my marbles, I hear you are getting flak from Anna Ford and others for your complaints about being a target for criticism.

You were one of the children in the 1964 film [A High Wind In Jamaica](#). The director [Alexander Mackendrick](#) asked me to devise a simple flamenco dance with the star [Anthony Quinn](#) and the rest of the kidnapped children. Quinn and the kids all joined in but you stood apart with a mug of tea and absolutely refused to be any part of it. I still have a snap of you defiantly holding that mug of tea.

You are a good writer, but get rid of the chip and learn to laugh at

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Trader Faulkner

London

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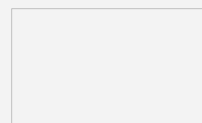
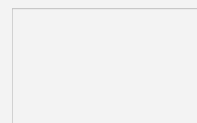
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