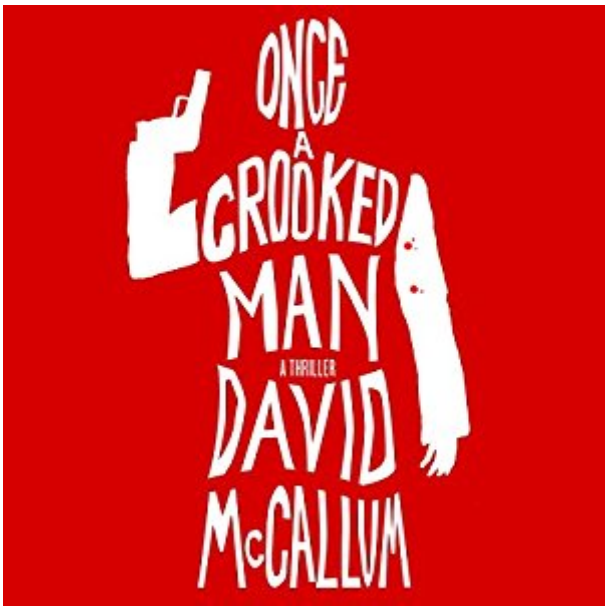
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# Once A Crooked Man




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## Synopsis

A deliciously quirky crime novel from David McCallum, the beloved actor known for his portrayal of Illya Kuryakin on The Man From U.N.C.L.E. and Dr. Donald "Ducky" Mallard on NCIS. Crime pays. And pays well. Sal, Max, and Enzo Bruschetti have proven this over a lifetime of nefarious activity that they have kept hidden from law enforcement. Nowhere in any file on any computer is there a record of anything illegal from which they have profited. But Max has a problem. His body is getting old, and his doctor has told him to take it easy. Max has decided that the time has come for the family to retire. But when young actor Harry Murphy overhears the Bruschetti brothers planning changes to their organization, including the murder of a man in London who knows too much, the Bruschettis' plans begin to unravel. After Harry makes the well-intentioned if egregious mistake of trying to warn the Bruchettis' intended victim, he finds himself alone in a foreign country, on the wrong side of the law, with a suitcase full of cash and a dangerous man on his trail. And while his good looks, charm, and cheerful persistence may prove assets in the turbulent events that follow, none of Harry's past roles has prepared him for what happens next. By turns tense and funny, Once a Crooked Man is infused with the infectious charm that has made David McCallum one of television's longest-running, most-beloved stars.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

** spoiler alert ** While I love Mr. McCallum, and have since his days playing Ilya Kuriakin, I would advise him not to quit his day job. This story is a combo of mistakes - too many characters who I

care nothing about, a family of Mafia who are stereotypically nonentities, a plot that neither makes sense nor leads ANYWHERE, mismatched POV, and paragraphs and paragraphs of telling. Telling, telling, telling some more... Pacing problems. Back and forth flashbacks. Oy.Harry is likeable. An actor caught up in something bigger than himself. Cool concept that could have been done so much better. As the writer is an actor himself, I'm not surprised that Harry is so good at EVERYTHING - apparently, playing a killer/bomber/spy/etc makes you able to act like one. It's okay. Harry is the only positive aspect of this book, so I'm willing to overlook it.If this wasn't bad enough, we have a completely useless (to the plot) sex scene where the main female, taken hostage, tied up, trying to figure out how to get away from the casually violent and homicidal mafia don is strapped to a bondage table and raped. During this she figures out, wow, how about that? I'm actually totally turned on by angry, nasty, rapists who tie me up! Not since Luke and Laura have I been as disgusted by the notion that a woman falls for her rapist.I made myself finish this book out of respect for Mr. McCallum. But... no. Nope. Not good.

This is a book I wished I had never read. It sullies the warm feeling of nostalgia I have for David McCullum who played in The Man from U.N.C.L.E. all those years ago. This debut novel might have been better kept in his bottom drawer. I found it to be badly in need of an editor -- not just for some disconcerting typos I didn't expect in a high-profile novel such as this -- but also to cut out the frequent flabbiness of the writing and to point out where characters and storylines stretched credibility. McCullum is no great shakes as a wordsmith, he is a decent storyteller (albeit stuck in the 1970s), I liked the cover on the download site, the blurb hooked me, the opening was promising but it went downhill for me. Three stars. Just.

Picked this up last night and could not put it down--a classic page turner. It's easy to root for main character Harry Murphy as he unwittingly finds himself at the center of an international crime web. Full of fun characters and familiar locales in New York and London.

Sparkly writing. Fizzy with a bit of a bite. Any story that begins with a visit to Starbucks in the first two lines has my attention. (No I don't work for Starbucks, but I am addicted to vanilla lattes and I do live in Seattle!)I loved that the protagonist was an actor...and all the details that I'm assuming come from David McCallum's experience (I had such a crush on him in The Man From UNCLE).I always cast novels...and I could just see that funny guy from Wings and Sideways as Harry. And Danny DeVito as one of the Bruschettis anyway. Right?I loved his details...and how all the characters..well,

most of them anyway...were appealing. I really cared what was going to happen to them...it's just that after 3/4 of the book...I begin to say (as I so often do nowadays)..GET ON WITH IT!!So I skimmed on through to the very satisfying conclusion.If McCallum puts down his scapel (after he carves a grin onto Mark Harmon's stone face in NCIS)and picks up his pen (well...stylus, maybe) again...I'll buy it!

A good old-style Cold War story, fun to read, with some surprising twists and turns. That said, in my opinion, it would have been much, much better without a few sex scenes that were odd, and very oddly placed. It's as if an editor somewhere said, "Add a sex scene here, here, and here," and so he did. If you can ignore those silly bits--easily done since they add nothing to the story--it was fun to read. EXCEPT, and this is a big one for me, I particularly objected to one very un-silly bit clearly indicating that women like to be raped, are sexually satisfied by it, and that it's the basis for a happy relationship. Ummm . . . NO. Now, I like David McCallum, I really do. Growing up, he was my personal Man from U.N.C.L.E. heart throb. His role as "Duckie" in NCIS shows humor, sensitivity, and kindness, not to mention intellectual brilliance, and I hope at least some of that genuinely is inspired by his own personality. But I have a really tough time with antiquated rape mentality, and it IS an important part of the plot.

Harry Murphy is not a detective but he might have played one on TV. Having a slightly known, working actor as the hero of this novel lends an originality and even an oddness. As the reviews have said it's quirky. Different. Also compelling. Harry's skills have been honed by his experience as an actor, though he soon gets in over his head. There is much subtle humor and nods to Mr. McCallum's own life and career, even an impressive knowledge of the human body no doubt gained from his years of playing the coroner Ducky on "NCIS." I do not usually read crime fiction but found this delightful, fast-paced and engrossing with wonderful and unusual characters.

This is a freaking barn-burner, and is, like Robert Heinlein said, guaranteed to contain 100% words.I love David McCallum, his acting and his intellect and his willingness to do in-depth research for his roles. I admire his use of the language and I am very pleased that he took the step of becoming an American citizen.However, this book is what he says it is, which is a collection of scenes (loosely pulled together around a plot by his editor, who also seems to have written about half the scenes). Now, I have a similar problem, in that I tend to write scenes and have no particular ability to write a plot, so it's a bit rude of me to point this out.The problem is that I have read this once, enjoyed the

heck out of it, and will never read it again.I very much appreciate that Mr. McCallum shared his "scenes" with us. Thank you, sir.

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