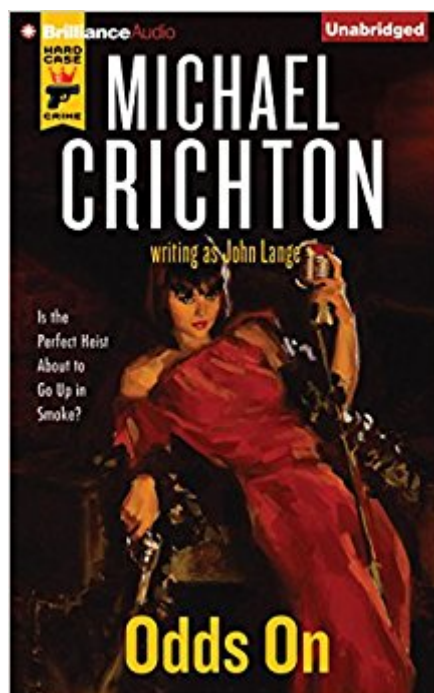


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Odds On



Synopsis

The plan: to rob the Reina, a super-luxury hotel off the coast of Spain. The crew: three seasoned criminals with the skills to pull off the heist of the century. The edge: every aspect of the scheme has been simulated in a computer, down to the last variable. The complication: three beautiful women with agendas of their own "and the sort of variables no computer can fathom."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Crichton/Lange's ability to pull you into his books is nearly unmatched. Though it applies to all the Lange pulps, you really can't put this book away." - Trash Mutant
"Great delight to Crichton fans who are still mourning his 2008 passing." - Geek Girl Project --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Michael Crichton was a writer and filmmaker, best known as the author of Jurassic Park and the creator of ER. One of the most popular entertainers in the world, Crichton sold more than 200 million copies of his books which have been translated into 40 languages and adapted into 15 films. Long before the carefully researched techno-thrillers that ultimately brought him to fame, Crichton wrote high-octane suspense novels to support himself while studying at Harvard Medical School. He published eight of these books under the pseudonym John Lange between the years of 1966 and 1972. They provided him with the means to complete his education. He graduated at the top of his class.

As a fan of Michael Crichton's later books, I picked up a few of his earlier works, such as this one,

written under his "John Lange" pseudonym. This was Crichton's first published book, released when he was only 24 years old. The book tells the story of three Americans who attempt to rob an exclusive and isolated hotel on Spain's Costa Brava. The group assembles at the hotel, plans and carries out a highly elaborate robbery, based on advice from a Critical Path Analysis computer program, and gets side-tracked along the way by several of the beautiful female guests and staff. Unlike Crichton's later meticulously researched techno-thrillers, "Odds On" focuses more on action and less on detail, although Crichton does an excellent job of giving the individual characters a good amount of dimension and personality. In many ways, this book serves as a warm-up to Crichton's fantastic "Great Train Robbery"... There are many similarities in plot as well as tone and structure. Nevertheless, "The Great Train Robbery" is drastically more refined and well organized in its execution. It is interesting to note that, even in 1966, Crichton's writing foreshadows the importance that computers would hold in the future, and explains computation with a clarity that any layman could understand. "Odds On" is, in general, an easy, enjoyable, and thrilling read. The downsides include a proliferation of extremely cheesy sex scenes scattered throughout the book, loose ends that never get tied up, and an ending that feels rushed and lacking in depth. Still, the book's faults do not detract much from its general readability. While "Odds On" definitely doesn't live up to classic Crichton works, it will be an interesting read for anyone who wants to see how Crichton has progressed since his early years. I have read most of the other John Lange books, and this is one of the better ones (along with "A Case Of Need", and "Easy Go"). 4/5 - Recommended.

The Reina is an super-luxury hotel on the Spanish Riviera, making up for its isolated location with an array of five-star services: not just swimming pools and a bar but restaurants, salons, stores. As one character points out, it's like an opulent cruise liner on land; it caters to the wealthiest tourists, and is slated to be the blueprint for numerous competitors. It's located in the heart of Franco's authoritarian Spain, an oppressive police-state. And three men plan on robbing it blind. Miguel is a Latino-American smuggler, street-smart and able to acquire any object for a price. Bryan is a Brit working the gray side of the underworld, undertaking contract hits, thefts, and snatches for the government. And Jencks is the mastermind gambler; logical and precise, he's come up with a daring plan to nab not just the payroll of the Reina, but the jewels and cash of its guests as well. What they weren't expecting was a bevy of beautiful women; Allan Brady, a notorious con-man with his own agenda; the mysterious Miss Shaw, the French-Algerian heavy fronting as her chauffeur, and the cargo of Moroccan drugs in her Lincoln Continental; or the dysfunctional couple Peter and Jenny, a college boy slaving after a girl who'll sleep with

anyone but him. Odds On is a fascinating look at the start of Michael Crichton's career; I see a bit more of the author he would become in this novel than I did in others he wrote using the "John Lange" name -- for example, Jancks' checking the validity of the heist via computer, then seeing this technological failsafe utterly foiled by random chance. The bottom line is that this is a very rough, very fast early novel by Crichton, with a few gaping plot holes and enough sex scenes to qualify as softcore porn. Odds On is a good beach read, great entertainment that's just a bit air-headed and more than a little sex-starved. Readers shouldn't go into it expecting some lost Crichton masterpiece, but a decent 1960s heist thriller. While I enjoyed it, Odds On felt thin and padded at times; take away some of the pointless meandering and the sex bits and you'd have a very short book indeed.

Michael Crichton's earliest book. Published at while in College under the name John Lange. Not as well-rounded or polished as his famous later works like Jurassic Park, but all-in-all a good read. His signature themes of cutting-edge technology mixed in so everyone can understand is apparent, but not as developed as his later books. Pick it up for a quick heist novel about 3 career-criminals trying to steal millions from a Hotel, but keep in mind the time period in which it was written, and the age (24) and experience of the author at the time.

I really enjoyed this one! I definitely expected the outcome of this caper, BUT the execution was very entertaining. The sexual nature of this story was a bit heavy handed for my taste. I enjoyed the plot tremendously. The writing was fantastic. The performance by Lane was absolutely incredible! All in all, I would recommend this to a friend.

A shallow story of a hotel robbery that went wrong, laced with an overload of gratuitous sex. By my book, not Crichton's usual high standard, I'm afraid. Perhaps he should have finished his studies first!

A fun story, and sunnier than you might expect. Some elements strain credulity, but the characters are generally engaging.

Michael Crichton (the author who gave us "Jurassic Park") wrote under the nom de plume of John Lange when he was in med school, cranking out paperback adventures to pay for his schooling. Here is a chance to read the early (nearly unknown) works of Crichton -- pulp writing at its finest.

Enjoyed it. Plan on reading the other books in the series. This was book one. The next is maybe, Easy Up

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