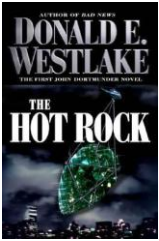


The Dortmund series

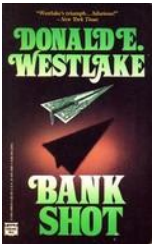
By Donald F. Westlake



The Hot Rock [1970]

John Dortmund and company are hired by an U.N. African Ambassador to steal the famed Balabomo Emerald from the hands of a rival African country. But their daring and clever burglary goes awry, and the emerald slips through their fingers. Undaunted, Dortmund chases the gem by plane, train and automobile in hot pursuit of the hot rock.

Made into a 1972 movie [The Hot Rock](#), starring Robert Redford, George Segal and Moses Gunn, directed by Peter Yates.



Bank Shot [1972]

Temporarily housed in a mobile trailer unit, the bank was a tantalizing shot. Stealing it was a snap. Cracking the safe was another matter entirely. The perfect crime, flawlessly executed - by the unforgettable team whose supreme self-confidence and monumental incompetence have to be read to be believed!

Made into a 1974 movie [Bank Shot](#), starring George C. Scott, Joanna Cassidy, Sorrell Booke and G. Wood, directed by Gower Champion.



Jimmy the Kid [1974]

Hungry for money, a gang of losers led by bumbling burglar John Dortmund attempts to carry out a caper that involves the kidnapping of a twelve-year-old prodigy.

Made into a 1976 Italian movie [Comi ti Rapisco il Pupo](#). Made into a 1982 movie [Jimmy the Kid](#), starring Gary Coleman and Pal Le Mat. Made into a 1999 German movie [Jimmy the Kid](#), starring Herbert Knaup.



Nobody's Perfect [1977]

Comic crime hero Dortmund and his gang of bungling thieves are back in a hilarious caper--out of print since 1979. Mishaps and misunderstandings force the gang to

steal a painting not once but twice in this hilarious misadventure starring the inimitable Dortmund.



Why Me? [1983]

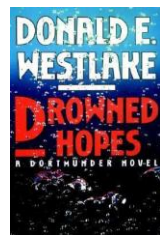
Having unsuspectingly lifted the hottest gem in town, John Dortmund becomes the prey of the FBI, the New York City police, terrorist groups from three nations, and all of New York's petty and not-so-petty crooks.

Made into a 1990 movie [Why Me?](#), starring Christopher Lambert, Christopher Lloyd and Kim Greist, directed by Gene Quintano.



Good Behavior [1985]

While escaping from a robbery attempt, Dortmund falls through the roof of a convent. The cloistered nuns take this as a sign from heaven and tell Dortmund (by writing notes) that they will not turn him in if he helps to return Sister Mary Grace to their convent. Sister Mary Grace is a young nun who is being kept in a tower apartment by her millionaire father, who is trying to deprogram her, but she is firm in her commitment to remain a nun. She is able to smuggle out the details of the high-rise's security system to Dortmund, and the big escape begins.



Drowned Hopes [1990]

Learning about a disagreeable old man's plot to dynamite a dam in order to reclaim a buried fortune beneath the reservoir, John Dortmund fears for the hundreds of potential drowning victims and plans another way to get the treasure.



Don't Ask [1993]

Eight hundred years after a sixteen-year-old girl is killed and eaten by her family, and subsequently made a saint by the Church, her femur becomes the object of a European

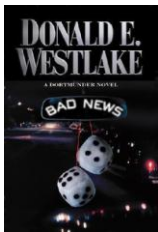
tug-of-war in a new caper for Dortmund.



What's the Worst That Could Happen? [1996]

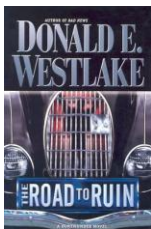
Dortmunder is in the midst of a routine burglary of a Long Island mansion when who shows up toting a gun but the owner, nasty billionaire Max Fairbanks. Worse, Fairbanks takes Dortmund's supposedly lucky ring. Highly insulted, Dortmund and his gang execute their own peculiar reign of terror, and although they acquire quite a bit of Fairbanks' swag, they never quite get the ring back. Which leads Dortmund to wonder precisely what sort of luck the ring carries.

Made into a 2001 movie [What's the Worst That Could Happen?](#), starring Martin Lawrence, Danny DeVito, John Leguizamo, Bernie Mac, Larry Miller and Nora Dunn, directed by Sam Weisman.



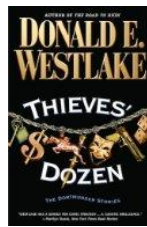
Bad News [2001]

Dortmunder doesn't like manual labor. So when Andy Kelp relays the offer of a grand to help dig up a grave in a far-flung cemetery, he balks...until he begins to wonder just why Fitzroy Guildenpost, criminal mastermind, wants to pull a switcheroo of two 70-years-dead Indians. Central to the plan is Little Feather Redcorn, the ex-Vegas showgirl and great-granddaughter of the newly-switched stiff. She will pose as the last remaining member of the Pottaknobbee tribe, one-third owners of the largest casino in the east. When the remains of the last known Pottaknobbee are dug up, down there in Queens, the DNA will prove that it's her ancestor. But when the scam goes into play, it's Dortmund and his band who must step in to make sure everything runs smoothly.



The Road to Ruin [2004]

Ever-lovable but hapless crook John Dortmund and his merry band of misfits attempt to drive off with a fleet of vintage automobiles in a con against a corrupt CEO who has lavished more of his company's money on himself than the boys at Enron and WorldCom combined.



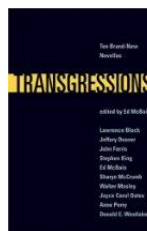
Thieves Dozen [2004]

Featuring Westlake's hapless hero John Dortmund, this original compilation of short stories ties in to the author's latest Dortmund hardcover, "The Road to Ruin."



Watch Your Back! [2005]

Hapless criminal John Dortmund returns in another rollicking tale of disorganized crime from Grand Master of Mystery Donald E. Westlake. It's the score of a lifetime: easy access to a lavish New York City apartment, hordes of valuables, and an absentee owner avoiding the lawyers of his unhappy ex-wives. But before they pull the job, Dortmund's crew is startled to find their beloved gin joint, the OJ, in the clutches of the Mafia—who consider it perfect for a little fraud, courtesy of a nice big fire. For tactical and highly superstitious reasons, the fate of the OJ is even more important to the crew than the enormous score. Now, Dortmund and his gang are determined to split their time, fighting the mob and robbing the rich simultaneously.



"Walking Around Money" in anthology **Transgressions** [2005]

The master of the comic mystery is back with an all-new novella featuring hapless crook John Dortmund, who gets involved in a crime that supposedly no one will ever know happened. Naturally, when something is too good to be true, it usually is, and Dortmund is going to get to the bottom of this caper before he's left holding the bag.

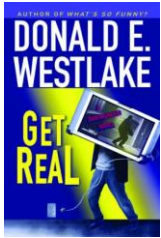


What's So Funny? [2007]

All it takes is a few underhanded moves by a tough ex-cop named Eppick to pull Dortmund into a game he never wanted to play. With no choice, he musters his always-game gang and they set out on a perilous treasure hunt for a long-lost gold and jewel-studded chess set once intended as a birthday gift for the last Romanov czar, which unfortunately reached Russia

after that party was over.

From the moment Dortmund reaches for his first pawn, he faces insurmountable odds. The purloined past of this precious set is destined to confound any strategy he finds on the board. Success is not inevitable with John Dortmund leading the attack, but he's nothing if not persistent, and some gambit or other might just stumble into a winning move.



Get Real [2009]

In Donald E. Westlake's classic caper novels, the bad get better, the good slide a bit, and Lord help anyone caught between a thief named John Dortmund and the current object of

his attention.

However, being caught red-handed is inevitable in Dortmund's next production, when a TV producer convinces this thief and his merry gang to do a reality show that captures their next score. The producer guarantees to find a way to keep the show from being used in evidence against them. They're dubious, but the pay is good, so they take him up on his offer.

A mock-up of the OJ bar is built in a warehouse down on Varick Street. The ground floor of that building is a big open space jumbled with vehicles used in TV world, everything from a news truck and a fire engine to a hansom cab (without the horse).

As the gang plans their next move with the cameras rolling, Dortmund and Kelp sneak onto the roof of their new studio to organize a private enterprise. It will take an ingenious plan to outwit viewers glued to their television sets, but Dortmund is nothing if not persistent, and he's determined to end this shoot with money in his pockets.

The "Dortmunder" Movies



This handout prepared for the *Just Desserts Mystery Fiction Discussion Group*.

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