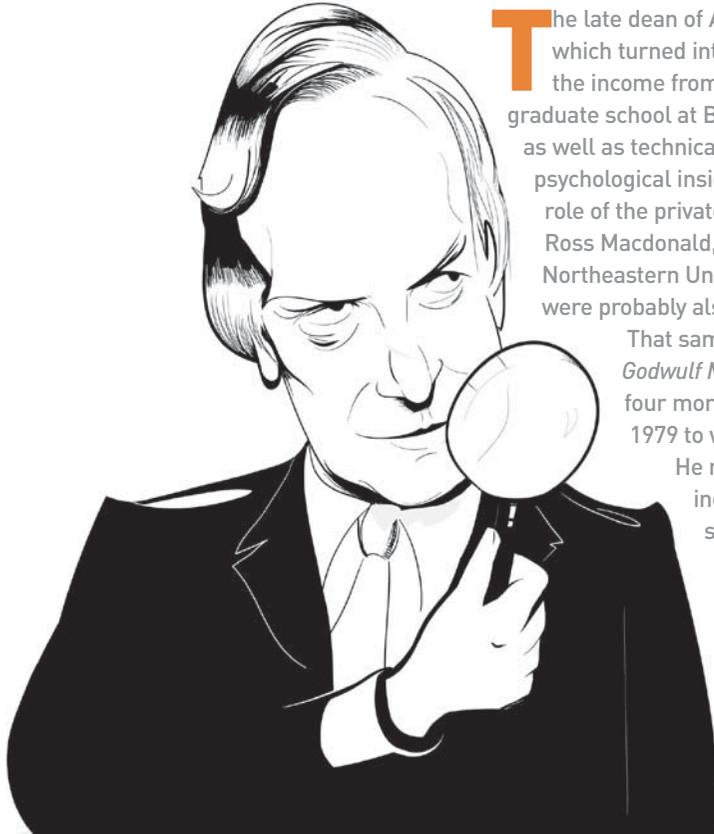


[THE FAMOUS WHO CLAIM US]

ROBERT B. PARKER**It started with Prudential, Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and Ross Macdonald.**

The late dean of American crime fiction, who wrote the Spenser private eye series, which turned into the ABC show “Spenser for Hire,” could not have done it without the income from his day job at Prudential Insurance. While working his way through graduate school at Boston University, Parker wrote advertising copy for Prudential, as well as technical manuals for Raytheon. No doubt his witty, literate prose and psychological insights were a bit wasted there. His doctoral dissertation about the role of the private eye in the novels of Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and Ross Macdonald, helped him earn his doctorate in 1971, plus a full professorship at Northeastern University, where his witty, literate prose and psychological insights were probably also a bit wasted.

That same year, he quit Prudential and wrote his first Spenser novel, *The Godwulf Manuscript*, which sold three weeks after he finished it. Parker wrote four more Spenser novels in the next five years, before quitting teaching in 1979 to write full-time.

He moved on to the Jesse Stone novels and also wrote four westerns, including *Appaloosa*, which became a New Line feature film in 2008, starring Ed Harris.

His M.O. was really quite simple, for a writer. Parker wrote five pages a day, every day but Sunday, 50 weeks a year, every day of his adult writing life.

“He was very clear about it. No more and no less than five pages,” his longtime agent, Helen Brann, told the *New York Times*. In this slow and steady way, he published more than 60 books during this career and was translated into 24 languages. He was at his desk in Cambridge, Mass., writing, when he died of a heart attack in January 2010 at the age of 77.