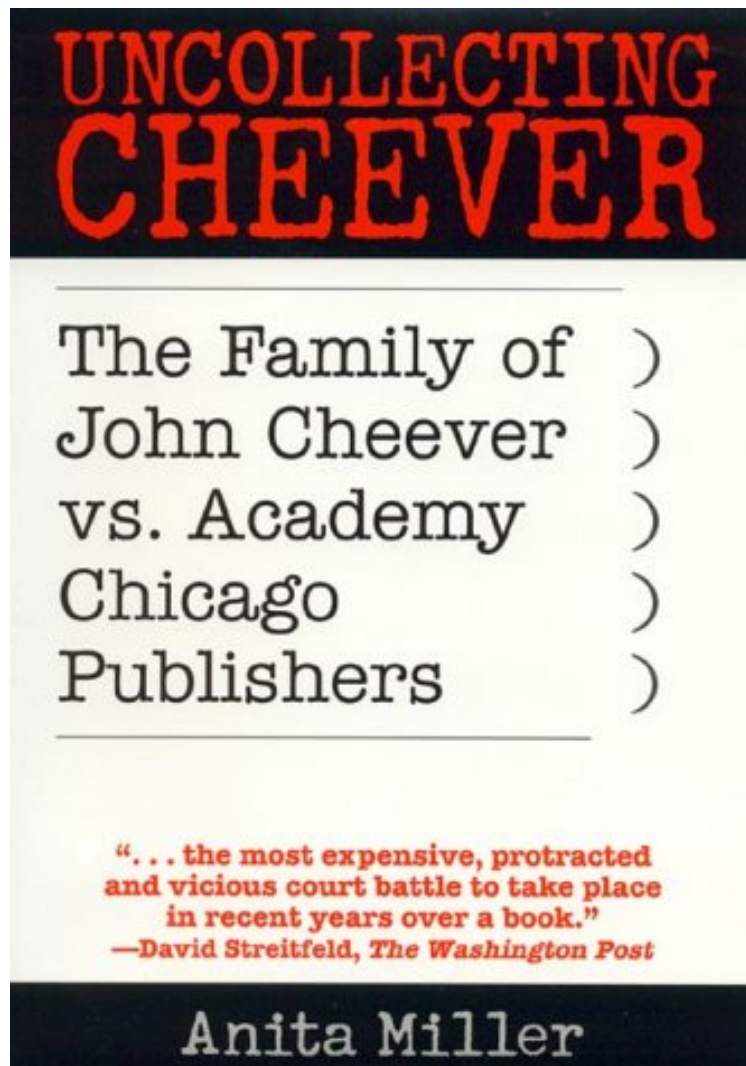


## Uncollecting Cheever: The Family of John Cheever vs. Academy Chicago Publishers

Anita Miller

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**Anita Miller : Uncollecting Cheever: The Family of John Cheever vs. Academy Chicago Publishers** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Uncollecting Cheever: The Family of John Cheever vs. Academy Chicago Publishers:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Maybe Shakespeare was right, first you kill . . .By Dave PfeifferAs a lawyer I would recommend this book be required reading in law school. It dramatically illustrates how inadequate our court system is in dealing with the issues presented. This matter should have been handled in mediation without all the

hoops and hurdles required in a civil action. While the author does no favors for her side or that of the Cheever family, her narrative makes clear who the real culprits are - the lawyers with their posturing, their subpoenas, their gotcha questions, their general duplicity making sure that the real facts are not brought out and that a real equitable finding is not reached. It ought to make the critical reader angry.<sup>3</sup> of 3 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating behind the scenes publishing legal battleBy blueotterIn 1987 an agent for Academy Chicago Publishers suggested it publish the Uncollected Stories of John Cheever. When his widow signed the agreement, it looked like a coup for this small publisher. But when the number of stories greatly exceeded what Mrs. Cheever expected, she and her children tried to call off the deal. A legal battle quickly began in Chicago and New York courts. Anita Miller does a superb job of recounting the behind the scenes legal wrangling and disastrous courtroom scenes, at the same time providing many insights into the publishing industry. A must read for fans of lawsuit accounts like Civil Action, and for those interested in publishing and publishing law.<sup>3</sup> of 3 people found the following review helpful. No good deed shall go unpunishedBy Greg JonesWhat started out as a worthy effort by a small press to collect hard-to-find stories by one of the great American writers of this century results in bitter lawsuits, huge costs, a lesser book, and an unfortunate lesson in the realities of publishing today. Hooray for those intrepid souls like the Millers who toil in literary vineyards for the love of the art more than financial gain.

Ten years ago, publishers, authors, scholars, and the reading public watched anxiously the results of two lawsuits involving the family of John Cheever, famed short story writer, and Academy Chicago Publishers, a small publishing house. At stake was not only a collection of Cheever's lesser-known short stories, valued for their literary merit and historical value, but also the definition of intellectual property. In a dramatic re-telling, Anita Miller draws us into the case, creating vivid portraits of the participants and the tensions between them while also shedding light on key issues of our time.

From Publishers WeeklyThe story of how little Academy Chicago Publishing (co-owned by the author and her husband, Jordan Miller) tried to publish the late John Cheever's uncollected short stories, and was blocked from doing so by Cheever's family, is now a familiar part of publishing lore (and law). But it has never been told with the exhaustive yet endlessly fascinating detail to be found here. Miller is partial, of course, but her account has the ring of truth, and there seems no doubt that Academy started out with a valid contract to do what they wanted to do, whether or not the Cheevers had intended it. As editor Franklin Dennis unearthed more and more Cheever material from the New Yorker and elsewhere and the collection became much bigger than had been anticipated, an agent was brought in, lawyers were summoned and the first of a series of costly and exhausting court cases began. This is all described in the liveliest manner by Miller, and anyone who enjoys courtroom repartee will rejoice in it. In the end, the Millers were allowed only a small, token publication, and some judgments were handed down that called much of publishing contract law into question, drawing the angry fire of publishers everywhere. Even worse, Miller points out, were the aspersions cast on the validity and viability of the small presses that make up such an essential part of today's publishing world. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalSome might suppose that reading a book about a legal battle over publishing rights to a collection of stories by a deceased author might be like watching paint dry. Not so with Miller's account of the struggle of Academy Chicago, the press she runs with her husband, with the heirs of John Cheever over what was conceived as a nearly 70-story work, The Uncollected Stories of John Cheever. After six and a half years and \$400,000 in legal bills (just the Millers'), the book appeared as Thirteen Uncollected Stories by John Cheever. Miller's viewpoint is obviously biased, and her occasional low blows (she mentions that the Illinois Supreme Court justice who wrote the decision against her company held a life membership in the National Rifle Association) can make one less sympathetic. Still, she offers important insights into the vagaries of both the publishing industry and the legal system and reminds us that the real David's victory over Goliath was truly a major upset that isn't re-created every day. Recommended for all larger libraries.?Jim G. Burns, Ottumwa P.L., IA Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.From BooklistIn 1987, Anita and Jordan Miller's publishing house, Academy Chicago, decided to try to publish a volume of uncollected John Cheever stories, and they began by contacting Cheever's wife, Mary, and his son, Ben. What followed was a very long, tortuous path that resulted in litigation, judicial judgments in Chicago and in Westchester County, New York, and a small volume of Cheever stories that Academy Chicago published in 1994 that still leaves many "uncollected." Miller, of course, has a huge ax to grind, and she does it in mind-numbing detail--much of the text is taken from the actual court transcripts. Miller does try to humanize the proceedings by occasionally describing a fine meal or what someone wore, and she has an eagle eye for pointing out the prevarication and misinterpretation she finds in the Cheever family, their counsel, and their editorial advisors. Unfortunately, although it is clear that Miller is trying to state her own case, and supports it well, her book reads more like assembled notes than a story that coheres. GraceAnne A. DeCandido