In his autobiography, the James Bond producer Albert “Cubby” Broccoli recalls that the original treatment of Dr No, the first James Bond book to be filmed, dispensed with Ian Fleming’s character of Julius No altogether because the screenwriters reckoned that the old-style melodramatic villains of clubland days would no longer work in the 1960s. He quotes the screenwriter Richard Maibaum in support of this:

“When Wolf [Mankowitz] and I began working on the script, we decided that Fleming’s Dr No was the most ludicrous character in the world. He was just Fu Manchu with two steel hooks. It was 1961, and we felt that audiences wouldn’t stand for that kind of stuff any more. So, bright boys that we were, we decided that there would be no Dr No. There would be a villain who always had a marmoset monkey sitting on his shoulder, and the monkey would be Dr No . . .”

Cubby was outraged, in his usual good-natured way . . . “No monkey, d’you hear? It’s got to be the way the book is.”

In reality, the original treatment, dated 7 September 1961, didn’t exactly turn Dr No into a monkey – someone’s memory was playing tricks – but it did feature a capuchin monkey called Li Ying, a creature that belongs to a Cuban-backed bad guy who disguises himself as the late Dr No while trying to destroy the locks on the Panama Canal. At the fade-out, after the obligatory chase and explosion, the monkey jumps on to Bond’s shoulder, “gibbering ironically”. Maibaum and Mankowitz were trying hard – too hard, as it turned out – to ring the changes on the overcooked clichés inherited from such pre-war writers as Sapper, John Buchan and Sax Rohmer. But Cubby Broccoli knew better. The second draft of the treatment, dated 28 September 1961, dropped the monkey and reinstated the devil doctor in all his faded glory. “I didn’t remember a monkey chittering around in Fleming’s book,” concluded Broccoli, “and I’m a great believer in not tampering with an original winner.”

The “original winner” in book form, yes – but Dr No represented risky film territory. As the novelist Len Deighton has noted, “One must remember that spy stories were neither fashionable nor particularly popular in those early days of the 1960s.” Alfred Hitchcock had made Secret Agent and The Lady Vanishes in the 1930s; some of Eric Ambler’s stories had been adapted by Hollywood in the 1940s; there had been a few “red menace” thrillers in the 1950s and a CBS adaptation of the James Bond novel Casino Royale, as well as, in the early 1960s, The Avengers and Danger Man on television. But in 1961, spy films were in danger of looking out of date and a bit European, despite the rising temperature of the cold war. Ken Adam, who was the designer of seven of the best James Bond films, recalls that “the original treatment read like a small whodunnit with a chaotic secret agent plot attached”. Joseph Wiseman, who played Dr No, called it “just another grade-B Charlie Chan mystery”.

Eight years earlier, Richard Usborne had published his classic book on thrillers of the interwar period, Clubland Heroes (1953) – what he called a “nostalgic study” of “romantic fiction” – in which he concluded:

I suppose no one reads them now. We are not as cavalier about race, nor so certain about the greatness of Britain as we once were; and the moral code of [Richard] Hannay and Bulldog Drummond is singularly unfashionable . . . The Englishman’s traditional mistrust and dislike of the foreigner, the dago and the lesser breeds, is . . . less and less proudly displayed.

This was the year when Ian Fleming’s Casino Royale appeared, the first of the 14 James Bond books published between 1953 and 1966, all of which were to prove Usborne wrong on almost every count. Fleming, by his own admission, specialised in updating the king-and-country clubland stories of his youth – which he had first devoured at his hated prep school, Durnford, near Swanage in Dorset, and at Eton – for a consumer age, with the addition of an active sex life for his hero, memories and fantasies of intelligence work in the Second World War, a smattering of “the style of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett” to pep up his journalistic craft, and exotic tourist brochure locations. In short, as Fleming confessed, it was reading matter customised
Ian Fleming certainly had his finger on a common pulse in the 1950s: a mix of kiss kiss with bang bang, nostalgia for the empire on which the sun never sets and an increasingly shrill reassurance that whatever the Americans might be saying about Britannia losing her role in the modern world and although “the liberation of our colonies may have gone too fast . . . we still climb Everest and beat plenty of the world at plenty of sports and win plenty of Nobel Prizes”.

And we don’t just win Nobel Prizes but protect the world (with a little help, not much, from the CIA) from Soviet agents and international criminals. Fleming’s villains are larger than life. They have cartoonish facial features and they are, above all, foreign – or, in Sapper’s words, “odious, scheming foreigners”. We encounter, in order of appearance, a French character “with Prussian or Polish strains”, “a Negro gangster” (now known in commentaries as “a Harlem gangster”), Germans, Italian Americans, Russians, German Chinese, Koreans, Polish Greeks, and so on.

Several of them try to assimilate into the British establishment but can’t hide their origins. A few years after Goldfinger was published in 1959, two Harvard undergraduates satirised Fleming’s novels in a slim parody called Alligator, in which the 4ft 11in villain Lacertus Alligator has a head the size of a football (like Mr Big and Auric Goldfinger), steel teeth, bad table manners and a network of purple veins covering his face (in the Bond villain Hugo Drax’s case, this ailment was the result of botched plastic surgery); he sprays everyone he meets with the colour purple from an aerosol can to get his revenge on the whole pack of them. Alligator resembles most of Fleming’s villains from the 1953-59 period and neatly captures what Alan Bennett called (in his play Forty Years On) “that school of snobbery with violence that runs like a thread of first-class tweed through 20th-century literature”.

Sydney Horler, the prolific purveyor of interwar clubland thrillers, put it a little differently: “Give me a pretty girl, a likeable
young man, a Bentley sports car and a spot of trouble round the corner – then I’m working at my trade.” Fleming had also learned from Arthur Conan Doyle, whose “Napoleon of Crime” (“extremely tall and thin”, this time), Professor James Moriarty, had entered popular culture as a suitably charismatic adversary for Sherlock Holmes, albeit a character studied painted in just a few deft strokes. Moriarty is prominent in only two stories and Doyle appears not to have been interested in him. But in countless plays, films and radio dramas, he became Holmes’s great nemesis. It was as if the public needed to invent a foe worthy of Holmes.

In popular mythology – started by William Gillette’s play Sherlock Holmes (1895), the silent film version of which was recently rediscovered – Moriarty has moved centre stage. In the story “The Final Problem” Holmes tells Dr Watson that the narrative of how to find evidence against Moriarty and his organised network of criminals could prove to be the greatest Holmes story of all – but Watson never writes it. Ian Fleming better understood his public when it came to both the villain (Ernst Stavro Blofeld, introduced in the 1961 novel Thunderball) and Fleming’s villains. In the 1964 novel From Russia with Love, Fleming says Connelly’s Bond in You Only Live Twice, quoting Charles Laughton from The Private Life of Henry VIII, not long before he saves the world yet again.

But in the books, up until roughly 1960, it was also James Bond and the Bond film made by Eon Productions is in Twice like Nazis. “The things I do for England,” Fleming had also learned from Arthur Sapper and Buchan. Agents of SMERSH is a kind of synonym for “the Cold War veterans and cold war spies. Although SPECTRE represents a criminal organisation which owed its allegiance to no country or creed, Broccoli and [Harry] Saltzman essentially decided that the Bond films should be apolitical. Throughout the cold war Bond would fight criminal masterminds with private armies who were above international politics. However, those objectives would often involve the manipulation of the two sides, relying on their mutual distrust. Apothecary is not quite right. The politics is more subtle than “the US vs the Red”, or “the Brits vs the Nazis” – SPECTRE is about private enterprise, an armed version of global casino capitalism – but there are still many political implications and a lot of encoded information about public attitudes. The only time SMERSH features in a Bond film made by Eon Productions is in From Russia with Love, in which SPECTRE uses SMERSH to destabilise the British secret service as a way of getting to Bond. In that film and in Thunderball, Blofeld’s face is never seen – he is just a seated figure, stroking a white cat and addressed by his minions as “Number One”, like in the television series The Prisoner. In Or Her Majesty’s Secret Service (after his full-body debrief in You Only Live Twice) he is at best becomes a fully fledged character, based in his mountaintop headquarters in Switzerland, having diversified into germ warfare and “Virus Omega”. Because nine Bond novels had already been published – Casino Royale to Thunderball – by the time Eon filmed Dr No the scriptwriters were able to reconfigure the early novels with SPECTRE rather than SMERSH as the big adversary. The “manipulation of the two sides” by agents of SPECTRE, in the films, has often taken the form of big technology getting into the wrong hands and a British secret agent returning to its right hands. The films celebrated big technology even when it ceased to be fashionable to do so in the
1980s, while playing to audience anxieties about where that technology might be leading and who was in control of it. What if a wealthy fanatic or a rogue state got hold of a weapon of mass destruction? Dr No uses his nuclear-powered fortress at Crab Key in Jamaica as a base from which to sabotage the US space programme; Goldfinger wants to isolate Fort Knox with an atomic bomb (he seems to be working for commu-
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Since Golden Gun, the big threats have included stolen nuclear submarines, deadly poison gas, a top-secret military targeting device, a nuclear bomb on a US military base, an attempt to dominate the micro-
chip market by pulverising Silicon Valley; a process for dissolving heroin in gasoline, a media tycoon who provokes war in order to secure broadcast rights, an undersea bomb that threatens an environmental holocaust and a plot to manipulate climate change.

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The Critics

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The recent Daniel Craig films seem to have made a special effort to keep up with the latest anxieties while continuing to personalise them. In the 2006 film Casino Royale, Le Chiffre specialises in playing the financial markets by shorting airline stocks; in Skyfall, the cyberterrorist Raoul Silva hacks government computers WikiLeaks-style and launches a virus against Bond that was probably inspired by the Stuxnet virus, deployed in 2010 to stymie Iran’s nuclear ambitions. In the same film, Q finally graduates from Second World War boffin to 21st-century computer geek.

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But Bond is discovered and strapped to a slab with a deadly laser-cutter inching up toward his groin (eek!). 007 is sweating bullets. A frantic Bond will give the evildoer any information he wants, "Do you want me to talk?" But this time, it's Goldfinger who gets the last word: "No, Mr. Bond. (laughs) I expect you to die!" Touche, Mr. G. Touche. Now we expect you to check out the clip. Where you've heard it. Where have you heard this Goldfinger gem? Post with 1473 votes and 80279 views. Tagged with cat; Shared by jilesc. You expect me to talk? No Mr. Bond I expect you to DIE! Ears folded back, lips twitching and eyes that say "Hooman, I will fuckin end you"...yeah. Kind of saw the bite coming. Reply. But the immortal words â€œNo, Mr Bond, I expect you to dieâ€ were not actually Fröbeâ€™s, however, as the German actorâ€™s lines were dubbed into English by Michael Collins. Nevertheless the film, in which Auric threatens to destroy 007 with a giant laser, has become so iconic its stars cannot escape the association. Current Bond actor Daniel Craig, whose latest film Skyfall has become the highest-grossing Bond film so far taking more than Â£100m at the UK box office and Â£1bn globally, responded to the poll by saying: â€œYes, that [quote] would take some beatingâ€. Craig makes an appearance in the list of top Bond moments in fourth place for his chase across a building site in Casino Royale; while Roger Mooreâ€™s daring car jump in The Man With The Golden Gun came fifth.