

Text of the 1958 edition's dust jacket interior:

THE OFFICE
A novel by
FREDRIC BROWN

On an afternoon in the long-ago summer of 1922, Fred Brown applied at Conger & Way in Cincinnati for the position of office boy. It looked like any other office, he thought disappointedly to himself—a colorless place filled with equally colorless people. But, in 1922, jobs were hard to find for boys fresh out of high school and Fred was happy to run errands during the day while he dreamed of being a famous writer on his own time.

When Conger & Way went out of business two years after Fred was hired, he sincerely mourned its death with other, older employees. For, by that time, he had learned that an office is never just a room enclosed by four walls, but a special world bounded by the lives of those who work in it. In two years there was a great deal to learn about the seven people who made up this office—some of it funny, some strange, some tragic—all of it etched permanently on the mind of the young writer.

There was Edward B. Conger himself, the harassed, hard-working President who took refuge from the present in memories of the golden days when he and his partner first went into business together. And Mary Horton, his secretary, passionately and hopelessly in love with a young man who would never marry her. Brian Danner and George Sperling, the two salesmen, were complete contrasts in personality: Danner— young, brash, successful, but underneath always lonely; Sperling, who would never quite make the grade but whose loving wife somehow didn't care. There was Stella Klosterman, the voluptuous file clerk, whose beauty played a part in the tragedy of repressed, mother-ridden Marty Raines, the bookkeeper. Finally, there was the office manager, Geoffrey Willoughby. More than anything else it was his humor, strength and understanding that held the office together until the end.

There are no thick carpets or gray flannel suits in *The Office*. It is a realistic, sometimes shocking, story of small business, vividly written and alive with the drama of day-to-day living. Through it all, the author evokes a warm feeling of nostalgia for the Twenties and for an office that vanished forever with them.

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FREDRIC BROWN is the popular author of more than twenty science fiction and mystery stories. This is his first serious novel.



Fredric Brown's ten-year pet project, *The Office*, was his most personal, and certainly one of his most moving, novels. Already established as a top-notch mystery and science fiction writer, his only "straight" novel quickly fell out of print.

The Office is now available for the first time in sixty years and includes an afterward by Brown biographer Jack Seabrook!