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## Contemporary Reception of Erle Stanley Gardner's Perry Mason Novel Series and Their Film Adaptations by Polish- and English-Speaking Audiences\*

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Seria powieści Erla Stanleja Gardnera o Perrym Masonie i ich ekranizacje:  
repcja przez współczesnych odbiorców polsko- i anglojęzycznych

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**Abstract.** This paper offers an overview of the reception of Erle Stanley Gardner's series of novels about lawyer Perry Mason and the numerous film adaptations based on that series. It seeks to analyze their reception by contemporary Polish- and English-speaking readers and viewers. Accordingly, the statistics of readership and viewership of books, films and series based on the novels by Gardner are presented and discussed. The article is divided into five sections that deal with the following: Gardner as author; Gardner's contribution to the development of serialized novel; editions of Gardner's Perry Mason novels in the United States and in Poland; reception of Gardner's Perry Mason novel series by Polish- and English-speaking readers, and reception of TV and film adaptations of these novels.

**Keywords:** Erle Stanley Gardner, reception, crime novel, popularity

**Abstrakt.** Artykuł prezentuje przegląd informacji dotyczących dorobku Erla Stanleja Gardnera związanego z serią powieści o adwokacie Perrym Masonie oraz powstałych na jej podstawie licznych

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ekranizacji. Celem pracy jest analiza ich recepcji przez współczesnych polskich oraz anglojęzycznych czytelników, a także widzów. W tym celu zaprezentowano i omówiono statystyki poczytności książek i oglądalności powstałych na ich podstawie filmów oraz seriali. Artykuł podzielono na pięć części, które poruszają następujące zagadnienia: postać autora Erle Stanleya Gardnera; jego miejsce w historii powieści w odcinkach; wydania powieści o Perrym Masonie w Stanach Zjednoczonych i w Polsce; recepcja serii tychże powieści przez czytelników polskich i anglojęzycznych; recepcja ich ekranizacji.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Erle Stanley Gardner, recepcja, kryminał, popularność

## INTRODUCTION

The American writer Erle Stanley Gardner (1889–1970) is best known for his series of over eighty *noir* novels focused on the character of Perry Mason, an attorney at law. In 1947, Gardner was proclaimed “the most popular whodunit of his times” and later, in 1979, the world’s best-selling author (Fugate, Fugate, 2014, p. 8). His eighty-six books are still listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, having sold over 300 million copies and been translated into twenty-three languages, including Urdu and Tamil (Fugate, Fugate, 2014, p. 8). Gardner, a professional lawyer himself, abandoned his law practice after his third novel about Perry Mason, *The Case of the Lucky Legs*, was published in 1934. In the 1940s, he founded the Court of Last Resort, an organization dedicated to helping the unfairly imprisoned (Fair, 2021).

This paper offers an overview of contemporary reception of Gardner’s series of novels about the lawyer Perry Mason and the numerous film adaptations based on that series. It seeks to analyze their reception by contemporary Polish- and English-speaking readers and viewers.

For the purpose of this study, I focus on the post-2000 reception of Gardner’s Perry Mason novels and movies in terms of popular reader and viewership. With this in mind, the websites Lubimyczytac.pl and Goodreads (for novels) and Filmweb and IMDb (for film adaptations) have been selected due to the fact that they all became popular around the year 2000. The earliest popular reviews, still available online, of both novels and movie adaptations of Gardner’s writing appeared at that time. Moreover, to this day, those websites are amongst one of the most popular with Polish- and English-speaking audiences, respectively, having the highest number of subscribers. It must be noted that this article does not aim to discuss the reception by professional literary and film critics for the reason that this reception focuses mainly on recently made movies, an example of which is the new *Perry Mason* series presented by pay-cable HBO in 2020.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of the reviews can be found on the following websites: Variety, Daniel D’Addario, *Perry Mason’s: TV Review*: <https://variety.com/2020/tv/reviews/perry-mason-matthew-rhys->

ERLE STANLEY GARDNER: MAJOR FACTS ABOUT HIS LIFE  
AND WORK

Before his literary career began in the 1930s, Erle Stanley Gardner worked for over two decades (1911–1933) as an attorney in Ventura County, California. During that time he earned a reputation as a witty legal defender of immigrants to the US, who often found themselves wrongly accused (Davidson, 2014, p. 23).

As a writer, Gardner was modest and self-aware, more concerned with the quality of his literary output than the numbers defining his popularity. In his journal he wrote that he wished to have an agent who would be more intelligent than he was because, as he put it, “I know law pretty well, but I’m careless in English, and I forgot all of the grammar I ever knew” (Fugate, Fugate, 2014, p. 46). In his view, that ideal agent would keep his readers regularly supplied with new books (Gardner, 1965, p. 130). Gardner usually described himself as a businessman whose single aim was to provide readers with such captivating fiction that they would crave more and more (Davidson, 2014, p. 21). “I’m a salesman out to give the reader what he wants,” he explained, adding that “[i]n a mystery story, he wants action, a puzzle and justice triumphant... And if that’s not literature, it’s good enough for me” (Smith, 1957, p. 5).

It may be surprising that many critics never came to appreciate Gardner’s literary output, complaining about his novels’ lack of description or character development. Even Gardner’s *Newsweek* obituary remarked: “[he] never learned to write worth beans” (*Newsweek*, 1970, p. 114). It would seem that crime fiction reviewers generally preferred Gardner’s more recognized contemporaries such as Raymond Chandler (1888–1959) or Dashiell Hammett (1894–1961). Nevertheless, others appreciated Gardner’s literary work; for example, Merton Minter once stated: “It is my sincere opinion that he [Gardner] never fully realized that he was the greatest writer of mystery fiction who ever lived, as demonstrated by the fact that his books have sold more copies worldwide than any book except the Bible” (Fugate, Fugate, 2014, p. 101).

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1234641974/; The Guardian, Rebecca Nicholson, *Perry Mason review: sleuth reboot is intense, stunning – and gruesome*: <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2020/jun/22/perry-mason-review-sleuth-reboot-hbo-drama>; The New York Times, James Poniewozik, *Review: ‘Perry Mason’ Returns, Hard-Boiled and Warmed Over*: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/18/arts/television/review-perry-mason-hbo.html> (access: 30.04.2021).

## SERIALIZATION OF NOVELS: GARDNER'S TAKE ON A LONG-STANDING TRADITION

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, novels were commonly published in the form of installments and were hence known as *serialized*, their individual chapters printed in consecutive issues of journals or magazines. Charles Dickens's 1836 *Pickwick Papers* was the first novel to have been serialized (nineteen issues were published over a period of twenty months). Also in England, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of the Sherlock Holmes stories, originally published them in installments in *The Strand* magazine (1891–1927) (Law, 2009, p. 567). In Poland, *The Trilogy* by Henryk Sienkiewicz was serialized between 1883 and 1887. In America, serialization became a standard in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to such an extent that authors (e.g. Dashiell Hammett, *Red Harvest*, 1929; Raymond Chandler, *Blackmailers Don't Shoot*, 1933) frequently planned their books with the installment structure in mind (Lund, 1993, p. 314).<sup>2</sup>

Gardner consciously situated himself within this tradition. He wrote: “In my stories I try to figure myself as a prospective buyer of a magazine standing in front of a hotel newsstand” (Fugate, Fugate, 2014, p. 129). He often wondered whether his story titles would make a person pick up a magazine to look into it: “Would the first hasty glance through the story make me buy the magazine, and would a reading of the yarn make me a regular subscriber?” (Fugate, Fugate, 2014, p. 129).

In the 1920s and in early 1930s, Gardner wrote for popular pulp magazines. In 1926, “Captain” Joseph T. Shaw (1874–1952) took over the editorship of one of those, *Black Mask*, where Gardner published his first crime and *noir* novels in the form of installments. Shaw recognized the potential of the market for quality hard-boiled (Britannica)<sup>3</sup> and crime novels. Consequently, Shaw's editorship of *Black Mask* led to the magazine's sustained high standard of published crime fiction, with a steady influx of regular pulp/*noir* stories, amongst which Gardner's enjoyed high readability, comparable to that of Chandler's or Hammett's novels (Mayer, McDonnell, 2007, p. 22).

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<sup>2</sup> Broad audiences that serialization was capable of reaching ensured those authors' growth of popularity and interest in their other published works. Also, the readers of serialized novels appreciated the much cheaper magazine installments which could be purchased over a period of time, instead of paying more for the volume. When novels were being serialized, both authors and journals often responded to readers' requests, which allowed to shape the forthcoming parts of the novels accordingly.

<sup>3</sup> The term “hard-boiled fiction” refers to crime narratives which are devoid of sentimentalism and display conspicuous realism. Hard-boiled fiction often includes elements of graphic sex, violence and the urban setting.

In the early 1930s, Gardner's writing for the pulp magazines earned him the nickname of the "King of the Woodpulp" (Davidson, 2014, p. 26). However, his real popularity came with the three Perry Mason novels which were serialized in *Liberty Magazine*.<sup>4</sup> In total, twenty-three *Perry Mason* crime novels were offered to readers in installments: four in the 1930s, one in the 1940s, eleven in the 1950s and seven in the 1960s. The magazines that serialized these novels included *Liberty Magazine*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, *Chicago Tribune-New York News* and *Toronto Star Weekly* (Hughes, Moore, 1978, p. 310). Gardner's serialized publications spanned between one and three weeks, and most titles were published at the same time in the United States and in Canada.

After the success of Gardner's first three serials, in 1935, the editors of William Morrow read some of his novels and were so impressed with their intriguing plots as well as the effervescence of his style that they were wondering if Gardner would be interested in sending some of his work to them, hoping that they could use it as a serial of novels (Hughes, Moore, 1978, p. 163). This is how Gardner began his life-long co-operation with William Morrow, the publishing house which would have the sole right to publish Gardner's books for the following five decades.

#### EDITIONS OF GARDNER'S PERRY MASON BOOKS IN THE UNITED STATES AND IN POLAND

All in all, Gardner published eighty-six novels that describe the adventures of Perry Mason the lawyer, two of which were published posthumously. By 1962, his paperback sales were estimated at one hundred million copies (Davidson, 2014, p. 33). Gardner's popularity may be attested by the following citation: "During the mid-1960s his paperback publisher was selling 2,000 of his books an hour, eight hours a day, 365 days a year" (Fugate, Fugate, 2014, p. 88). Such demand for Gardner's novels may stem from the fact that he wrote with "reader appeal" in mind, effectively planning to catch and hold the interest of his audience (Fugate, Fugate, 2014, p. 87).

The order of the novels that eventually reached American readers was at first random due to agreements between publishing houses and magazines which provided their subscribers with serialized versions of Gardner's *Perry Mason* novels (Hughes, Moore, 1978, p. 157). However, the final paperback editions were

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<sup>4</sup> These were: *The Case of the Howling Dog* (1934), *The Case of the Curious Bride* (1934), and *The Case of the Caretaker's Cat* (1935).

published in the chronological sequence in which Gardner wrote them, now known as the canonic (Harker, 2017, p. 67).

The frequency with which the novels reached their readers was rather regular, and at least two a year, sometimes three, beginning with the year 1933, were available on the book market. There were periods when Gardner was able to publish only one book, which occurred in 1946, and again 20 years later, with the onset of his fatal illness, with only one book published between 1966 and 1969.

Polish readers first became familiar with Gardner's Perry Mason novels in 1957. However, they were not offered *The Case of Velvet Claws*, which is the very first book in the series (see Appendix 1), but *The Case of the Golddigger's Purse*, which is in fact the 26<sup>th</sup> novel in the series. The translation was provided by Tadeusz Jan Dehnel, known for his renditions into Polish of works by authors such as Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Mark Twain and Agatha Christie. The original order of Gardner's books has not been preserved by Polish publishers. And so ten years after the initial appearance of Perry Mason in Polish bookstores, *The Case of Velvet Claws* became available (1967), followed by *The Case of the Black-Eyed Blonde* (the 25<sup>th</sup> book in the Gardner canon) in 1971 and three novels in 1977, all of which came from various moments in the series: they were the 49<sup>th</sup>, 72<sup>nd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, respectively (Katalogi Biblioteki Narodowej).

The biggest influx of Gardner's novels into Poland began in 1991 and one might speculate that it was due to the fall of communism in Poland in 1989 under which the products of so-called bourgeois thinking were heavily censored and usually unavailable in regular bookstores. It is worth noting that the distribution of books under communism was centralized, carried out by the Dom Książki publishing house, so until the mid-1970s, the state had a monopoly on the book market and on what was made available to Polish readers (Zawistowski, 2017). Nevertheless, in the 1990s, as the Polish book market embraced Gardner's writing, the numbers of books published in the years 1991–2020 were as follows:

- 1991–1997: eight,
- 1998: four,
- 1999: five,
- 2000: six,
- 2001: five,
- 2002–2010: seventeen,
- 2020: one.

So far, as many as forty-four titles translated into Polish have been published in Poland (excluding reprints and titles duplicated over the years – see Appendix 1). The main publisher of Perry Mason novels in Poland was the Wrocław-based

Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie; however, the first Polish editions<sup>5</sup> were published by Czytelnik, Iskry and Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza publishing houses in Warsaw.

It is interesting to note that the titles of Polish translations and their English-language originals often tended to vary. One example is Gardner's very first novel, *Aksamitne pazurki* (1967; original title: *The Case of the Velvet Claws*, 1933) which, when introduced onto the Polish book market, started a new trend in Gardner's Polish titles. It was the omission of the segment "The Case of..." from the title, which became the standard for the next 20 years. Some Polish renditions of Gardner's titles seemed to serve no purpose and completely distorted Gardner's original messages enclosed in the titles. In all of Perry Mason novels, each title's aim is to provide a hint regarding the main character/client and/or the plot/complication. The most striking differences between English and Polish titles include (in the order of Polish publications):

- *Torebka szantażystki* (1957) [literally *The Blackmailer's Purse*]; the original title: *The Case of the Golddigger's Purse* (1945) (with "golddigger" was translated as "szantażystka");
- *Adorator panny West* (1977) [literally *Miss West's Admirer*]; *The Case of the Terrified Typist* (1956) (whose literal translation would be *Sprawa przerażonej maszynistki*);
- *Potrzebna atrakcyjna brunetka* (1977) [literally *Attractive Brunette Needed*]; *The Case of the Borrowed Brunette* (1946) (in this particular case, the idea behind this rendition was to mimic the language of an advertisement, which in fact was the motif in the novel);
- *Sprawa fałszywego obrazu* (1992) [literally *The Case of the Forged Painting*]; *The Case of the Reluctant Model* (1962) (literal translation: *Sprawa niechętej/opornej modelki*);
- *Sprawa przedziwnej mężatki* (1996) [literally *The Case of the Bizarre Married Woman*]; *The Case of the Curious Bride* (1934) (in that case it seems that the translator chose one possible translation of the word "curious" without considering the whole plot);
- *Sprawa znikającej staruszki* (1998) [literally *The Case of the Disappearing Old Woman*]; *The Case of the One-Eyed Witness* (1950) (literal translation: *Sprawa jednookiego świadka*);
- *Sprawa fałszywego biskupa* (1998) [literally *The Case of the False Bishop*]; *The Case of the Stuttering Bishop* (1963) (where "stuttering" which can be translated as "jąkającego się", was rendered as "fałszywego");

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<sup>5</sup> *Torebka szantażystki* (1957), *Aksamitne pazurki* (1967), *Blondynka z podbitym okiem* (1971), *Adorator panny West* (1977), *Zalotna rozwódka* (1977), *Potrzebna atrakcyjna brunetka* (1977).

- *Sprawa opanowanej złodziejki* (1998) [literally *The Case of the Composed Thief*]; *The Case of the Shoplifter's Shoe* (1938) (literal translation: *Sprawa buta złodziejki sklepowej*);
- *Sprawa szantażowanego męża* (1999) [literally *The Case of the Blackmailed Husband*]; *The Case of the Gilded Lily* (1956) (literal translation: *Sprawa złoconej lili*);
- *Sprawa podzielonego domu* (2000) [literally *The Case of the Divided House*]; *The Case of the Fenced-In Women* (1973) (literal translation: *Sprawa odgrodzonych kobiet*).

The year 2020 saw a new Polish edition of Gardner's novel *Perry Mason i sprawa podmienionego zdjęcia* (original title: *The Case of the Substitute Face*, 1938), in which the first element of the title was changed to the main character's name, followed by the element of "The Case of..." / "Sprawa...", which was the first time this happened. It would seem that the reason for this title's focus on the main character was that in 2020, a new TV series titled *Perry Mason* premiered on HBO. The cover of the book, both in Polish and in English, bears the HBO logo and informs the reader of being the source for the new TV series (Empik; Amazon).

#### RECEPTION OF ERLE STANLEY GARDNER'S PERRY MASON CRIME NOVELS BY CONTEMPORARY POST-2000 POLISH- AND ENGLISH-SPEAKING READERS

This section seeks to examine the reception of Gardner's Perry Mason novels by contemporary readers (post-2000) based on readers' ratings on the Polish *Lubimyczytac.pl* and the English-language *Goodreads* websites. These websites have been selected due to the fact that they are the most popular among the book readers: *Lubimyczytac.pl* with Polish and *Goodreads* with English speakers. *Lubimyczytac.pl* was established in March 2011. Due to active involvement of its users, *Lubimyczytac.pl* has become Poland's largest opinion-forming website for book lovers. It is an online community of readers who rate books, comment on news from the book industry, add selected items to their virtual shelves, write reviews and share information about their favorite authors (*Lubimyczytać.pl*). *Goodreads*, launched in January 2007, is one of the world's largest websites for readers where they can share their recommendations and review the books they read (*Goodreads*).

In Poland, the average rating for all Gardner books in the Perry Mason series is 6.7 points on a 10-point scale (10 stars). Those books (all editions available in Poland) have been rated by a total of 10,419 readers. The earliest review of Gardner was published on *Lubimyczytac.pl* website in 2011, and the most recent dates from

2017. It seems that the reason why there are no reviews after 2017 is the fact that there have been no new editions of novels in the series since 2017.

The following *Perry Mason* crime novels have been top-rated by Polish readers:

- *Sprawa uciekających zwłok* (1991) / *The Case of the Runaway Corpse* (1954), with an average rate of 7.2 and 72% likes;
- *Sprawa ostrożnej kokietki* (2000) / *The Case of the Cautious Coquette* (1949); *Sprawa zakochanej ciotki* (2001) / *The Case of the Amorous Aunt* (1963); *Sprawa odłożonego morderstwa* (2000) / *The Case of the Postponed Murder* (1973), each with an average rate of 7.1 and 71% likes;
- *Sprawa wynajętej brunetki* (1946 and 1999) / *The Case of the Borrowed Brunette* (1946); *Sprawa upolowanego wilka* (1997) / *The Case of the Waylaid Wolf* (1960), with an average rate of 7.0 and 70% likes.

The lowest rated book in the series is *Sprawa szkarlatnego pocałunku* (2002) / *The Case of the Crimson Kiss* (1948), with an average rate of 5.8 and 58% likes.

The total number of ratings regarding all Gardner's novels on Goodreads is not available, only statistics of readership of particular novels, including their rating, number of votes and written reviews. Unlike its Polish counterpart, this website uses a 5-point scale (5 stars). For the purpose of presenting a unified estimate for both websites, I have provided additional information on rating below, expressed in percentage of "likes" for a given text.

According to Goodreads reviewers, the most popular Perry Mason crime novels are the following:

- *The Case of the Howling Dog* (1934); *The Case of the Fugitive Nurse* (1954) with an average rate of 4.0 and 80% likes;
- *The Case of the Angry Mourner* (1951); *The Case of the Mythical Monkeys* (1959) with an average rate of 3.97 and 79.4% likes;
- *The Case of the Substitute Face* (1938); *The Case of the Grinning Gorilla* (1952); *The Case of the Amorous Aunt* (1963) with an average rate of 3.96 and 79.2% likes;
- *The Case of the Spurious Spinster* (1961) with an average rate of 3.95 and 79% likes.

The least popular book in the series is *The Case of the Glamorous Ghost* (1955) rated only 3.09 (61.8%) (see Appendix 2).

## RECEPTION OF BIG SCREEN AND SILVER SCREEN ADAPTATIONS OF GARDNER'S NOVELS

### The 1930s cinematic versions of Perry Mason books

By the time *The Case of the Velvet Claws* and *The Case of the Sulky Girl* came out (1933), Warner Bros. decided they needed a story about an unusual detective. Their search for the right character brought them to Gardner and his series of novels about Perry Mason (Davidson, 2014, p. 319). At first, Gardner was excited at the prospect of seeing his protagonist on the silver screen. In the 1930s, Warner Bros. released a series of six films focused on the character of Perry Mason (Davidson, 2014, p. 320). The films were received with mixed enthusiasm not only by critics and viewers, but also by some of the actors themselves.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it appeared that this was not the best way to advertise his books (Davidson, 2014, p. 318, 327).

The reception of Gardner's Perry Mason movies has been examined based on ratings available on two websites: Poland's Filmweb (using a 10-point scale) and the international IMDb (also a 10-point scale). Filmweb is a Polish website devoted to films and actors. Launched in 1998, it became famous two years later, when it was made available via the WAP (international standards for Wireless Application Protocol). It is actively co-created by Internet users (Filmweb). IMDb (Internet Movie Database), in turn, was created on October 17, 1990 with an online post of movie-listing software for the USENET film discussion group. In 1998, it was purchased by Amazon.com. Currently, it is not only a website which provides indexing credits for film and TV productions, but also one of the largest platforms for posting reviews about movie content (Britannica). Below are ratings by both Polish-and English-speaking viewers regarding the 1930s on Gardner's novels:

- *The Case of the Howling Dog* (1934) – Filmweb 7.0: 1 rating / IMDb 7.0/10: 671 ratings;
- *The Case of the Curious Bride* (1935). This movie is notable for the first screen appearance of Errol Flynn (1909–1959), a famous actor of Hollywood's so-called Golden Age, who played a corpse in this film. He was seen alive in a flashback but did not have speaking lines (Davidson, 2014, p. 322). Filmweb 6.0: 2 ratings / IMDb 6.7/10: 803 ratings;

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<sup>6</sup> It may be interesting to know that Bette Davis (1908–1989) who had a reputation for being a very difficult person to work with was selected to play Della Street, Mason's secretary, in the first film but she was not keen on the idea. After she failed to show up for the wardrobe rehearsal, she was suspended and replaced by another contracted actress, Helen Trenholme (1911–1962).

- *The Case of the Lucky Legs* (1935) – Filmweb 5.0: 2 ratings / IMDb 6.5/10: 632 ratings;
- *The Case of the Velvet Claws* (1936) – Filmweb 5.0: 1 rating / IMDb 6.5/10: 632 ratings;
- *The Case of the Black Cat* (1936) (based on *The Case of the Caretaker's Cat* [1935]), with the exotic-looking actor Ricardo Cortez (1900–1977) as Perry Mason. This movie has no rating on Filmweb; IMDb 6.5/10: 502 ratings;
- *The Case of the Stuttering Bishop* (1937). This movie also has no rating on Filmweb; IMDb 6.3/10: 373 ratings.

## TV SERIES

### **The *Perry Mason* (1957–1966) original TV series (271 episodes)**

Acclaimed by viewers as Perry Mason's most popular characterization was a TV series featured on CBS television simply titled *Perry Mason*, which was aired from 1957 to 1966, starring Raymond Burr (1917–1993) in the title role, Barbara Hale (1922–2017) as Mason's secretary Della Street, and William Hopper (1915–1970) as Paul Drake, Mason's assistant private detective (Davidson, 2014, p. 429).

Gardner was not very enthusiastic about television and was skeptical as to whether the screen writers working in the industry were capable of fitting his story into half an hour program slots (Davidson, 2014, p. 378). In a series of letters to Benton & Bowles CEO Walter Craig, he wrote: "I think anyone who tries to fine-tune the script for *Perry Mason* and keep the plot consistent with the character depicted in the books will face a huge problem plotting week after week. [...] If and when Mason is shown on television", Gardner explained, "I will necessarily have to work hard on checking the plots and perhaps, hopefully not, creating them from scratch" (Davidson, 2014, p. 379). Gardner's doubts were largely ungrounded because Americans loved the show, the elegant and exciting courtroom drama that it was, and so did the actors involved in the production (Davidson, 2014, pp. 383–412).

In the first year of running, the show reached the 43<sup>rd</sup> place in American TV ratings. In the following seasons, it kept gaining in popularity, moving up to the 19<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup>, and, finally, in the 1961–1962, it was the 5<sup>th</sup> most popular amongst 157 TV shows at the time. The lowest ranking was noted in the show's final season, i.e. 1965–1966, when it was placed 69<sup>th</sup> out of 119 shows (Davidson, 2014, p. 304). After that 9<sup>th</sup> season the show was cancelled in 1966 (Davidson, 2014, p. 479).

No information is available on whether this TV series was aired on Polish television; therefore, I have concluded that it was not broadcast in Poland in the 1950s or 1960s. It can be assumed that, similarly to Gardner's novels, it would not have been allowed by censorship because it presented content which did not comply with the political trends of the 1950s and 1960s in Poland. Moreover, there were only two TV channels available to Polish viewers at that time. In recent years, with the development of YouTube, that classic courtroom drama is available there as well as on streaming services such as Plex.

The rating of both Polish- and English-speaking contemporary viewers for the *Perry Mason* original series is high: 7.7/10 on the Filmweb website, with 49 votes, and 8.2/10 on IMDb with over 5,000 votes and 71 written reviews. Filmweb does not show any reviews, while IMDb user ratings praise the series for numerous production aspects. One 21<sup>st</sup>-century IMDb user's opinion shows what positive reactions it still evokes: "Established actors who were perfect for their roles; A galaxy of 1950s-60s guest stars, all old pros; Stunning B&W cinematography; Crisp direction, no matter who was at the helm; Literate, intelligent scripts that made the viewers think; A great sense of humor; Professional music scores; and above all A show that had respect for its audience!" [mrb 1980, 1 June 2005: *Will never be equaled*] (IMDb).

### ***The New Perry Mason series (1973–1974) (15 episodes)***

Only seven years after *Perry Mason* was cancelled, a new series, *The New Perry Mason*, was aired in 1973 with a stage actor, Monte Markham (1935–), as the lead character. Only 15 episodes aired before being cancelled halfway through its first season. It was speculated that the series was produced too early after the cancellation of the first popular show based on Gardner's books and also that it was too fast-paced for the viewers (Davidson, 2014, p. 580). Titles of the reviews from IMDb speak for themselves: "The Case of Terrible Timing" (6/10), "Markham can play lot of things; Mason was NOT one of them"; "miscast and stiff actors"; "Perry Mason revived, but without Raymond Burr" (2/10); "Abominably bad" (1/10). There was only one 10/10 rating in all 6 published reviews. Jim Davidson, the author of *The Perry Mason Book: A Comprehensive Guide to America's Favorite Defender of Justice* (2014), a voluminous book devoted to Gardner's Perry Mason both in literature and on screen, opens the chapter referring to that series with these words: "In retrospect, the idea of reviving *Perry Mason* with an all-new cast seems absurd" (p. 574). The series was rated by 68 users. In contrast, Polish viewers rated the *New Perry Mason* series as highly as 9.0/10 (however, with only five votes) on Filmweb. It has never reached Polish audience, the ratings are based on Polish viewers having seen it on English-speaking cable channels.

### **HBO's *Perry Mason* (2020) (8 episodes)**

In 2020, pay-cable HBO launched a series based loosely on Gardner's character. It was promoted as a prequel to the story of the eponymous lawyer and was comprised of eight one-hour-long episodes. The new version of Perry Mason's adventures presents the main character as a private detective who often abuses alcohol. Only in the final scene of the final episode does he pass his bar examination. The series strives to reflect the classic *noir* cinema; however, it has too many graphic sex scenes and gory details of death, the most glaring example being a murdered baby's mutilated body. Despite these elements and little to no similarity to America's original beloved courtroom drama, IMDb users rated it 7.6/10 with almost 15,000 votes and almost 500 reviews. The highest rating was given by 13.6% of viewers (1,908 votes) while the most votes 32.2% (4,503) are those of the rating of 8.0/10. The lowest arithmetic mean of 6.6/10 is found among viewers younger than 18 and the highest, 7.7/10, among those between the ages of 18 and 29. Both women and men rated the series highly; the most visible difference being in the demographic of 18–29-year-olds, where women rated the series at 7.1/10 and men at 7.8/10 (IMDb).

Filmweb users rated the newest series slightly lower: 6.9/10 in comparison with IMDb users, with 2,259 votes and 17 reviews. The rating 8/10 was provided by 42% of viewers, while the lowest rating of 2/10 was provided by 0.4% of viewers. It seems that both IMDb and Filmweb reviews can be described as rather radical: the viewers either loved the series or hated it (Filmweb).

### **Television films (1985–1995) (30 films)**

In 1985, American television producers Dean Hargrove and Fred Silverman brought back the Perry Mason character in a series of thirty television films. The two main stars of the original CBS-TV series, Raymond Burr and Barbara Hale, returned to their roles as Mason and Della. In the first television film, *Perry Mason Returns*, Mason defends his secretary Della who is charged with murder (Davidson, 2014, p. 621).

*The Perry Mason* series of TV movies was aired until Raymond Burr's death in 1993, and his final portrayal of Mason was *The Case of the Killer Kiss* which was dedicated to Burr's memory. Afterwards, the series was renamed to *A Perry Mason Mystery* (Davidson, 2014, p. 712)<sup>7</sup> and in the remaining five TV movies Mason's

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<sup>7</sup> William Katt (1951–), Barbara Hale's son, was playing Paul Drake, Jr. due to the fact that William Hopper, who was starring as Paul Drake in the original TV series, had died over a decade before. As a tribute to Hopper, the actor's photograph was placed on Paul Drake Jr.'s desk.

character was described as being away from town on unspecified business. Despite the fact that the ratings are based on the movies aired on Movies 24, a cable TV channel, most of the series were presented to Polish viewers on public TV in the second half of the 1990s.

According to IMDb users, only one of the TV films ranked below the score of 7/10: it was *Perry Mason: The Case of the Shooting Star* (1986): 6.9/10 (416 votes). The three highest rated movies were:

- *Perry Mason: The Case of the Lethal Lesson* (1989): 7.4/10, 338 votes;
- *Perry Mason: The Case of the Desperate Deception* (1990): 7.4/10, 361 votes;
- *Perry Mason: The Case of the Killer Kiss* (1993): 7.4/10, 347 votes.

Filmweb users' rated most of Perry Mason TV films above 7.0/10, the highest rated being (see Appendix 3):

- *Perry Mason: Utracona miłość* (2007; Movies 24 channel) / original title: *Perry Mason: The Case of the Lost Love* (1987): 7.5/10, 15 votes;
- *Perry Mason: Zabójczy pocałunek* (2010; Movies 24 channel) / original title: *Perry Mason: The Case of the Killer Kiss* (1993): 7.6/10, 13 votes;
- *Perry Mason: Powrót Perry Masona* (2002) / original title: *Perry Mason Returns* (1985) and *Perry Mason: Notoryczna zakonnica* (2008) / original title: *Perry Mason: The Case of the Notorious Nun* (1986) were the ones with the lowest rating on Filmweb – 5.7 (18 votes) and 5.9 (also 18 votes), respectively.

## CONCLUSION

This paper analyzed the post-2000 reception of Erle Stanley Gardner's Perry Mason novel series and the numerous film adaptations based on it. I have based my analysis on readers and viewers' ratings for all available published and filmed Perry Mason incarnations. The sources of the ratings for readership were websites: in Poland [Lubimyczytac.pl](http://Lubimyczytac.pl) and internationally: Goodreads. As far as viewership, two websites were chosen: Filmweb for Polish and IMDb for international audience. The choice of those particular platforms was dictated by their high popularity as reflected by the number of subscribers and active reviewers. Such method of analysis allowed me to collect statistic data for the chosen period (post-2000). There are obviously shortcomings of that method, due to the fact that some data are not available – especially when it comes to earliest TV series based on Gardner's books, that were not available in Poland.

I also addressed Gardner's position in the history of the so-called serialized novel. It is worth noting that twenty-three of Gardner's Perry Mason novels were initially introduced to American readers in the form of installments. This was justified by the fact that the author was writing in the period of literary history (the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) and in the genre (hard-boiled/*noir* crime novels) in which this was a common practice. It is, however, unknown whether Polish readers had access to this form of Gardner's Perry Mason novels (to date, no evidence of Gardner's serial publication in Polish magazines has been found). An analysis of Gardner's *Perry Mason* editions in Poland revealed that of all the eighty-six originally published novels, forty-four titles have been translated into Polish. Most of the translations of Gardner's books were published in Poland after the fall of communism, with only seven novels available to readers prior to that (1957–1977).

It is an interesting fact that some of the titles of Polish translations and their English-language originals tend to vary, the best example being *Adorator panny West* (1977) [literally *Miss West's Admirer*], original title: *The Case of the Terrified Typist* (1956) (literal translation would be *Sprawa przerażonej maszynistki*). Moreover, for the period of over 20 years (1967–1991), Polish renditions of the titles lost the iconic element of "The Case of..." / "Sprawa...". This part, however, re-emerged in novels published after 1991, and in 2020 the edition of *Perry Mason i sprawa podmienionego zdjęcia* (original: *The Case of the Substitute Face*) was different from the original title, with the name of the main character as the first element. The reason for this title modification may be the fact that pay-cable HBO broadcast a new series titled *Perry Mason* in 2020, and, therefore, the publishers may have wanted to appeal to the readers via this association.

Popular readers' community websites show that Gardner's books rated the highest by Polish readers have 72% likes (*Sprawa uciekających zwłok* (1991) / *The Case of the Runaway Corpse* (1954)), while English-speaking readers rated two of the novels highest at 80% likes (*The Case of the Howling Dog* (1934) and *The Case of the Fugitive Nurse* (1954)). Among the top-rated novels, only one title overlaps between Polish- and English-speaking readers and it is *The Case of the Postponed Murder* (1973) / *Sprawa zakochanej ciotki* (2001).

My research has demonstrated that contemporary Polish- and English-speaking readers prefer books written by Gardner after the 1940s (with the exception of *The Case of the Howling Dog* (1934) and *The Case of the Substitute Face* (1938), which were two of the highest rated titles by English-speaking readers) in which the main character lost his "hard-boiled" harsh characteristics. It is also possible that earlier novels were not rated higher due to their more sinister undertones and lack of subtle humor, present in the later novels.

Moreover, this article showed that Gardner novels had numerous adaptations, including those for the big screen (in the 1930s) by Warner Bros. and those for the silver screen. The cinematographic version was not shown in Poland, or at least no information has been found to suggest otherwise. Even now, the 1930s movies are very rarely available on streaming services, which is why only four of them were rated by Polish viewers (Filmweb rating) based on DVD editions available for purchase.

Among other adaptations, English-speaking audiences tend to prefer the classic courtroom drama version of the series, broadcast in America between 1957 and 1966, rating it as high as 8.2/10 on the IMDb website. Polish audiences did not have the opportunity to see the series at the time when it was broadcast in America. This was probably due to the fact that at that time Polish television had only two television channels, both operating under strict censorship supervision, which did not allow broadcasting “subversive”/“Western” content in the People’s Republic of Poland. However, this series was shown later, in 1972, on public television TVP1 (only a few dozen out of 271 episodes). It was also shown in 1990–1993 on Pro7 channel, and then in 2003 on PL channel NOVA – as presented in statistic data in Appendix (both channels were only available on cable TV).

The two versions of Perry Mason adventures broadcast both by Polish and American television are the television films (1985–1995) and HBO’s *Perry Mason* (2020). A series of television films presenting the adventures of the aging Perry Mason were shown in Poland somewhat later (the earliest episode in 1992, resumed in 1998, and in the years 2002–2008 on various cable channels). A modern version of the 2020 *Perry Mason* series, created and broadcast by HBO, received mixed reception from both Polish- and English-speaking viewers. This series draws on the style of *noir* cinema, but in the opinion of many viewers it contains too many violent scenes and too much graphic sex. Therefore, it leaves the audience divided into love-hate attitudes towards it.

Last but not least, it must be noted that this study does not tell the complete story of publishing Gardner’s crime novels and broadcasting the film adaptations based on his literary output. Rather, it offers a brief journey across its reception of contemporary (post-2000) audiences, both Polish- and English-speaking, regarding both the author and his main character that have become popular over the decades.

Appendix 1. Polish editions of Erle Stanley Gardner's Perry Mason novels (in order of Polish publication)

Translator	Title	Org. edition	PL edition	Publisher / place of publication
Dehnel, Tadeusz, Jan	<i>Torebka szantazystki</i>	1945	1957	Czytelnik, Warsaw
Zarzecki, Krzysztof	<i>Aksamitne pazurki</i> reprint	1933	1967	Iskry, Warsaw
	reprint		1978	
	reprint		1988	
Zarzecki, Krzysztof	<i>Blondynka z podbitym okiem</i> reprint	1944	1971	Iskry, Warsaw
	reprint		1992	Amax, Warsaw
Tomorowicz, Krystyna	<i>Adorator panny West</i>	1956	1977	Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, Warsaw
Zielonka, Barbara	<i>Zalotna rozwódka</i>	1949	1977	Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, Warsaw
Morawińska, Agnieszka	<i>Potrzebna atrakcyjna brunetka</i>	1946	1977	Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, Warsaw
Milczarz, Andrzej	<i>Sprawa uciekających zwłok</i>	1954	1991	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Kruk, Paweł	<i>Sprawa nieostrożnego kota</i>	1942	1991	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Lipski, Robert P.	<i>Lodowate dłonie</i>	1962	1991	Art., Kielce
Ignaczak, Maciej	<i>Sprawa fałszywego obrazu</i>	1962	1992	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Karkowska, Danuta	<i>Sprawa przebiegłej laluni</i>	1963	1994	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Ronikier, Michał	<i>Sprawa szczęśliwego hazardzisty</i>	1957	1996	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Stawiński, Marian	<i>Sprawa przedziwnej mężatki</i>	1934	1996	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Żebrowski, Jerzy	<i>Sprawa upolowanego wilka</i>	1950	1997	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Bockenheim, Krystyna	<i>Sprawa znikającej staruszki</i>	1950	1998	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Milczarz, Andrzej	<i>Sprawa niecierpliwych spadkobierców</i>	1964	1998	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Matlaez-Roguska, Lidia	<i>Sprawa fałszywego biskupa</i> reprint	1963	1998	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
	reprint		2004	Hachette Livre Polska, Warsaw
Kruk, Paweł	<i>Sprawa opanowanej złodziejki</i>	1938	1998	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Kocowska, Barbara	<i>Sprawa władzkiej klientki</i>	1967	1999	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Rojkowska, Anna	<i>Sprawa szantazowanego męża</i>	1956	1999	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Pisarek, Teresa	<i>Sprawa opieszałego Kupidy</i>	1968	1999	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Witek, Rafał	<i>Sprawa wynajętej brunetki</i>	1946	1999	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Bockenheim, Krystyna	<i>Sprawa świetlistych śladów</i>	1951	1999	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Rojkowska, Anna	<i>Sprawa odłożonego morderstwa</i>	1973	2000	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Białoń-Chалеcka, Magdalena	<i>Sprawa kulawego kanarka</i>	1937	2000	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Hrycał, Beata	<i>Sprawa sztucznego oka</i>	1935	2000	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Bihl, Agnieszka	<i>Sprawa podzielonego domu</i>	1973	2000	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław

Translator	Title	Org. edition	PL edition	Publisher / place of publication
Kocowska, Barbara	<i>Sprawa ostrożnej kokietki</i>	1949	2000	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Milczarz, Andrzej	<i>Sprawa aksamiitnych pazurków</i> reprint	1933	2000	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Hrycak, Beata	<i>Sprawa siostrzenicy lunatyka</i>	1936	2001	Hachette, Warsaw
Hrycak, Beata	<i>Sprawa zakochanej ciotki</i>	1963	2001	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Rojkowska, Anna	<i>Sprawa pięknej zebaczki</i>	1965	2001	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Lipski, Robert P.	<i>Sprawa lodowatych dłoni</i>	1962	2001	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Pankiewicz, Ewa	<i>Sprawa leniwego kochanka</i> reprint	1947	2001	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Madejski, Bartłomiej	<i>Sprawa śmiercionośnej zabawki</i> reprint	1959	2002	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Rojkowska, Anna	<i>Sprawa szkarlatnego pocatunku</i>	1948	2002	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Rojkowska, Anna	<i>Sprawa wijącego psa</i>	1934	2002	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Lipski, Robert P.	<i>Sprawa lodowatych dłoni</i>	1962	2004	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Madejski, Bartłomiej	<i>Sprawa nerwowej żalobniczki</i>	1951	2005	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Hrycak, Beata	<i>Sprawa bigamisty</i>	1961	2006	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Rojkowska, Anna	<i>Sprawa blondynki z podbitym okiem</i>	1944	2006	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Madejski, Bartłomiej	<i>Sprawa haczyka z przynętą</i> reprint	1940	2006	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Madejski, Bartłomiej	<i>Sprawa zdenerwowanej współlniczki</i>	1955	2007	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Kloczkowska, Anna	<i>Sprawa samotnej dziedziczki</i>	1948	2007	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Witezak, Lukasz	<i>Sprawa niedobudzonej żony</i>	1945	2007	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Cendrowska-Werner, Barbara	<i>Sprawa niebezpiecznej wdówki</i>	1937	2008	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Kloczkowska, Anna	<i>Sprawa upartej kłamczuchy</i>	1969	2008	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Góralaska-Gluma, Beata	<i>Sprawa rezolutnej rozwódki</i>	1964	2008	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Białoń-Chalecka, Magdalena	<i>Sprawa mądrych małp</i>	1959	2008	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Kosińska, Anna	<i>Sprawa podwójnej tożsamości</i>	1958	2010	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Witezak, Lukasz	<i>Sprawa podmiotonego zdjęcia</i>	1938	2010	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław
Witezak, Lukasz	<i>Perry Mason i sprawa podmiotonego zdjęcia</i>		2020	Wyd. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław

Appendix 2. Reception of Gardner's novels by English- and Polish-speaking readers  
 (in order of American publication)

Original title	Average	% of total "like"	Polish title	Average	% of total "like"	First review date in Poland
<i>The Case of the Velvet Claws</i>	3.85	77	<i>Sprawa aksamiitych pazurków</i>	6.4	64	2010
<i>The Case of the Sulky Girl</i>	3.93	78.6	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Lucky Legs</i>	3.82	76.4	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Howling Dog</i>	4.0	80	<i>Sprawa wyjącego psa</i>	6.7	67	2011
<i>The Case of the Curious Bride</i>	3.89	77.8	<i>Sprawa przedziwnej męzatk</i>	6.5	65	2015
<i>The Case of the Counterfeit Eye</i>	3.94	78.8	<i>Sprawa sztucznego oka</i>	6.9	69	2012
<i>The Case of the Caretaker's Cat</i>	3.94	78.8	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Sleepwalker's Niece</i>	3.84	76.8	<i>Sprawa siostrzenicy lunatyka</i>	6.6	66	2012
<i>The Case of the Stuttering Bishop</i>	3.81	76.2	<i>Sprawa fałszywego biskupa</i>	6.4	64	2012
<i>The Case of the Dangerous Dowager</i>	3.91	78.2	<i>Sprawa niebezpiecznej wdówki</i>	6.6	66	2011
<i>The Case of the Lame Canary</i>	3.88	77.6	<i>Sprawa kulawego kanarka</i>	6.5	65	2012
<i>The Case of the Substitute Face</i>	3.96	79.2	<i>Sprawa podmienionego zdfjcia</i>	6.6	66	2013
<i>The Case of the Shoplifter's Shoe</i>	3.86	77.2	<i>Sprawa opanowanej złodziejki</i>	6.9	69	no review
<i>The Case of the Perjured Parrot</i>	3.94	78.8	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Rolling Bones</i>	3.91	78.2	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Baited Hook</i>	3.91	78.2	<i>Sprawa haczyka z przynętą</i>	6.9	69	2013
<i>The Case of the Silent Partner</i>	3.87	77.4	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Haunted Husband</i>	3.85	77	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Empty Tin</i>	3.85	77	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Drowning Duck</i>	3.89	77.8	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Careless Kitten</i>	3.77	75.4	<i>Sprawa nieostrożnego kotka</i>	6.7	67	
<i>The Case of the Buried Clock</i>	3.92	78.4	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Drowsy Mosquito</i>	3.67	73.4	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Crooked Candle</i>	3.86	77.2	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Black-Eyed Blonde</i>	3.77	75.4	<i>Sprawa blondynki z podbitym okiem</i>	6.4	64	2014
<i>The Case of the Golddigger's Purse</i>	3.84	76.8	<i>Torebka szantażystki</i>	No info		no review
<i>The Case of the Half-Wakened Wife</i>	3.91	78.2	<i>Sprawa niedobudzonej żony</i>	6.9	69	2011
<i>The Case of the Borrowed Brunette</i>	3.78	75.6	<i>Sprawa wynajętej brunetki</i>	7.0	70	2013

Original title	Average	% of total "like"	Polish title	Average	% of total "like"	First review date in Poland
<i>The Case of the Fan Dancer's Horse</i>	3.80	76	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Lazy Lover</i>	3.71	74.2	<i>Sprawa leniwego kochanka</i>	6.3	63	2011
<i>The Case of the Lonely Heiress</i>	3.81	76.2	<i>Sprawa samotnej dziedziczki</i>	6.7	67	2011
<i>The Case of the Crimson Kiss</i>	3.67	73.4	<i>Sprawa szkarlatnego pocałunku</i>	5.8	58	no review
<i>The Case of the Vagabond Virgin</i>	3.86	77.2	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Dubious Bridegroom</i>	3.80	76	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Cautious Coquette</i>	3.84	76.8	<i>Sprawa ostrożnej kokietki</i>	7.1	71	no review
<i>The Case of the Negligent Nymph</i>	3.81	76.2	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the One-Eyed Witness</i>	3.84	76.8	<i>Sprawa jednoocznego świadka</i>	6.8	68	2016
<i>The Case of the Fiery Fingers</i>	3.84	76.8	<i>Sprawa świetlistych śladów</i>	6.4	64	2015
<i>The Case of the Angry Mourner</i>	3.97	79.4	<i>Sprawa nerwowej żałobniczki</i>	6.4	64	2011
<i>The Case of the Moth-Eaten Mink</i>	3.91	78.2	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Grinning Gorilla</i>	3.96	79.2	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Hesitant Hostess</i>	3.93	78.6	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Green-Eyed Sister</i>	3.86	77.2	<i>Sprawa zielonookiej siostry</i>	6.6	66	2011
<i>The Case of the Fugitive Nurse</i>	4.00	80	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Runaway Corpse</i>	3.93	78.6	<i>Sprawa uciekających zwłok</i>	7.2	72	2014
<i>The Case of the Restless Redhead</i>	3.86	77.2	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Glamorous Ghost</i>	3.09	61.8	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Sun Bather's Diary</i>	NR	-	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Nervous Accomplice</i>	3.78	75.6	<i>Sprawa zdenerwowanej współ- niczki</i>	6.8	68	2014
<i>The Case of the Terrified Typist</i>	3.77	75.4	<i>Adorator panny West</i>	6.4	64	2012
<i>The Case of the Demure Defendant</i>	3.71	74.2	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Gilded Lily</i>	3.75	75	<i>Sprawa szantażowanego męża</i>	6.9	69	no review
<i>The Case of the Lucky Loser</i>	3.91	78.2	<i>Sprawa szczęśliwego hazardzisty</i>	6.9	69	no review
<i>The Case of the Screaming Woman</i>	3.81	76.2	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Daring Decoy</i>	3.90	78	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Long-Legged Models</i>	3.85	77	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Foot-Loose Doll</i>	3.82	76.4	<i>Sprawa podwójnej tożsamości</i>	6.5	65	2013
<i>The Case of the Calendar Girl</i>	3.82	76.4	-	-	-	-

Original title	Average	% of total "like"	Polish title	Average	% of total "like"	First review date in Poland
<i>The Case of the Deadly Toy</i>	3.83	76.6	<i>Sprawa śmiertelności zabawki</i>	6.7	67	2011
<i>The Case of the Mythical Monkeys</i>	3.97	79.4	<i>Sprawa mądrych małp</i>	6.5	65	2011
<i>The Case of the Waylaid Wolf</i>	3.71	74.2	<i>Sprawa upolowanego wilka</i>	7.0	70	no review
<i>The Case of the Duplicate Daughter</i>	3.73	74.6	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Shapely Shadow</i>	3.79	75.8	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Spurious Spinster</i>	3.95	79	<i>Sprawa znikającej staruszki</i>	6.7	67	2014
<i>The Case of the Bigamous Spouse</i>	3.75	75	<i>Sprawa bigamisty</i>	6.6	66	2014
<i>The Case of the Reluctant Model</i>	3.80	76	<i>Sprawa fałszywego obrazu</i>	6.6	66	2014
<i>The Case of the Blonde Bonanza</i>	3.74	72.8	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Ice-Cold Hands</i>	3.77	75.4	<i>Sprawa lodowatych dłoni</i>	6.4	64	2013
<i>The Case of the Mischievous Doll</i>	3.77	75.4	<i>Sprawa przebiegłej laluni</i>	6.4	64	2017
<i>The Case of the Stepdaughter's Secret</i>	3.64	-	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Amorous Aunt</i>	3.96	79.2	<i>Sprawa zakochanej ciotki</i>	7.1	71	2011
<i>The Case of the Daring Divorcee</i>	3.93	78.6	<i>Sprawa rezolutnej rozwódki</i>	6.5	65	2012
<i>The Case of the Phantom Fortune</i>	3.80	76	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Horrified Heirs</i>	3.78	75.6	<i>Sprawa niecierpliwych spadkobierców</i>	6.7	67	2019
<i>The Case of the Troubled Trustee</i>	3.90	78	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Beautiful Beggar</i>	3.79	75.8	<i>Sprawa pięknej żebraczki</i>	6.8	68	2010
<i>The Case of the Worried Waitress</i>	3.70	74	-	-	-	-
<i>The Case of the Queenly Contestant</i>	3.66	73.2	<i>Sprawa władzcej klientki</i>	6.6	66	no review
<i>The Case of the Careless Cupid</i>	3.71	74.2	<i>Sprawa opieszałego Kupidydy</i>	6.3	63	2012
<i>The Case of the Fabulous Fake</i>	3.76	75.2	<i>Sprawa upartej kłamczuchy</i>	6.6	66	2014
<i>The Case of the Fenced-In Woman</i>	3.70	74	<i>Sprawa podzielonego domu</i>	6.7	67	2014
<i>The Case of the Postponed Murder</i>	3.89	77.8	<i>Sprawa odłożonego morderstwa</i>	7.1	71	2014

Appendix 3. Reception of film adaptations by English- and Polish-speaking viewers (in order of American release)

Year	Title	IMDb rating	Filmweb rating	Notes
1957–1966	<i>Perry Mason / Perry Mason</i>	8.2/10 (5,242)	7.8 (48)	In Poland, 28 March 1972, TVP1. The series returned 1990–1993 on Pro7. In 2003, on NOVA channel
1985	<i>Perry Mason: Powrót Perry Masona / Perry Mason Returns</i>	7.3/10 (673)	5.7 (18)	12 October 2002, BBC Two; 17 August 2002, Movies 24
1986	<i>Spadająca Gwiazda / Perry Mason: The Case of the Shooting Star</i>	6.9/10 (416)	6.9 (15)	17 August 2002, Movies 24
1986	<i>Perry Mason: Notoryczna zakonnica / Perry Mason: The Case of the Notorious Nun</i>	7.3/10 (451)	5.9 (18)	20 February 2008, Movies 24
1987	<i>Perry Mason: Tajemnicze morderstwo / Perry Mason: The Case of the Murdered Madam</i>	7.1/10 (345)	7.3 (18)	Shown as <i>Śmierć królowej nocy</i> TVP1 1992; 20 February 2008, Movies 24
1987	<i>Perry Mason: Złowrogą duch / Perry Mason: The Case of the Sinister Spirit</i>	7.2/10 (397)	7.3 (25)	Shown as <i>Zły duch</i> 2 January 1998, TVP1
1987	<i>Perry Mason: Utracona miłość / Perry Mason: The Case of the Lost Love</i>	7.2/10 (392)	7.5 (15)	27 December 2007, Movies 24
1987	<i>Perry Mason: Skandaliczny łajdak / Perry Mason: The Case of the Scandalous Scoundrel</i>	7.1/10 (322)	6.6 (17)	1 August 2007, Movies 24
1988	<i>Perry Mason: Pomścić asa / Perry Mason: The Case of the Avenging Ace</i>	7.1/10 (336)	6.5 (13)	14 December 2007, Movies 24
1988	<i>Perry Mason i Pani z jeziora / Perry Mason: The Case of the Lady in the Lake</i>	7.0/10 (417)	6.8 (29)	6 March 1998, TVP1
1989	<i>Perry Mason i morderstwo w teatrze / Perry Mason: The Case of the Musical Murder</i>	7.2/10 (342)	7.2 (23)	6 February 1998, TVP1
1989	<i>Perry Mason: Mistrzowski morderca / Perry Mason: The Case of the All-Star Assassin</i>	7.0/10 (324)	7.2 (12)	14 December 2007, Movies 24
1989	<i>Perry Mason: Śmiertelna lekcja / Perry Mason: The Case of the Lethal Lesson</i>	7.4/10 (338)	7.1 (17)	As <i>Mariwy student</i> , 5 December 1997, TVP1
1990	<i>Perry Mason: Urwany śpiew</i>	7.2/10 (335)	no review	5 September 2010, Movies 24
1990	<i>Perry Mason: Desperackie oszustwo / Perry Mason: The Case of the Desperate Deception</i>	7.4/10 (361)	6.6 (13)	
1990	<i>Perry Mason: Niepokorna córka / Perry Mason: The Case of the Defiant Daughter</i>	7.3/10 (353)	6.9 (15)	Poland 2008, Movies 24

Year	Title	IMDb rating	Filmweb rating	Notes
1990	<i>Perry Mason: Trujące pióro / Perry Mason: The Case of the Poisoned Pen</i>	7.1/10 (334)	6.6 (18)	20 February 2008, Movies 24
1991	<i>Perry Mason: Szklana Trumna / Perry Mason: The Case of the Glass Coffin</i>	7.3/10 (326)	7.2 (14)	27 December 2007, Movies 24
1991	<i>Perry Mason: Fatalna moda / Perry Mason: The Case of the Fatal Fashion</i>	7.3/10 (339)	7.3 (14)	5 September 2010, Movies 24
1991	<i>Perry Mason: Bezwzględny reporter / Perry Mason: The Case of the Ruthless Reporter</i>	7.2/10 (280)	6.7 (25)	21 November 1999, Kabel 1
1991	<i>Perry Mason: Opętany mafioso / Perry Mason: The Case of the Maligned Mobster</i>	7.3/10 (281)	6.9 (15)	27 December 2007, Movies 24
1992	<i>Perry Mason: Śmiercionośne fałszerstwo / Perry Mason: The Case of the Fatal Framing</i>	7.1/10 (293)	7.1 (20)	1992 TVP1
1992	<i>Perry Mason: Lekkomysłny Romeo / Perry Mason: The Case of the Reckless Romeo</i>	7.3/10 (326)	7.3 (16)	14 December 2007, Movies 24
1992	<i>Perry Mason: Zrozpaczona panna młoda / Perry Mason: The Case of the Heartbroken Bride</i>	7.1/10 (309)	7.2 (15)	29 November 1999, Kabel 1 21 December 2007, Movies 24
1993	<i>Perry Mason: The Case of the Skin-Deep Scandal</i>	7.2/10 (347)	6.3 (9)	8 November 1999, Kabel 1
1993	<i>Perry Mason: Zabójczy pocałunek / Perry Mason: The Case of the Killer Kiss</i>	7.4/10 (347)	7.6 (13)	5 September 2010, Movies 24
1993	<i>A Perry Mason Mystery: The Case of the Wicked Wives</i>	6.9/10 (265)	7.3 (6)	NBC
1993	<i>Perry Mason: The Case of the Telltale Talk Show Host</i>	7.2/10 (313)	7.4 (8)	NBC
1994	<i>A Perry Mason Mystery: The Case of the Lethal Lifestyle</i>	7.2/10 (227)	6.3 (7)	NBC
1994	<i>Perry Mason: Pechowy gubernator / A Perry Mason Mystery: The Case of the Grimacing Governor</i>	7.1/10 (250)	7.2 (12)	21 December 2007, Movies 24
1995	<i>Perry Mason: Zadrósny dowcipniś / A Perry Mason Mystery: The Case of the Jealous Jokester</i>	6.8/10 (227)	7.2 (9)	5 January 2009, Movies 24
2020	<i>Perry Mason</i>	7.6/10 (14,005)	6.9/10 (2,145)	21 June 2020, HBO

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