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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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The Dan Brown Conspiracy

Being being truly obsessive, I decide I need to read "Angels & Demons" before reading "The Da Vinci Code" because it's the first book introducing the Robert Landgon character played by Tom Hanks. So I go to Barnes & Noble where only three brutally battered copies of the mass market (at \$8) are left on the shelf. In their place? A new slightly oversized mass market that is almost an inch taller (why?), has about 120 more pages (it's thinner too) and costs \$10! Yes, after four years on the market, they've RAISED the price of "Angels & Demons" in anticipation of the movie coming out shortly. So go to Amazon.com and you'll find this version available for \$10 or a hardcover version available for just over \$15. Gee, and publishers say people don't want cheap, easily portable editions of books. They really want bulkier, more expensive, more "classy" trade paperback that often cost \$14-\$18 and are not much less expensive than heavily discounted hardcovers. How idiotic are publishers, to raise the price of a paperback that's been out for four years and wonder why people aren't snapping up books? They look to DVDs for inspiration and include readers' guides and author interviews in new editions of paperbacks as "extras." If they really wanted to mimic DVDs, they'd also have to make the editions nicer than the hardcovers and LESS EXPENSIVE. Many, many people would buy more books -- especially books that have been out for years or even decades -- if they were published in well-produced, portable paperbacks with attractive covers and for around \$6-\$7. Charge them twice that, make them wait YEARS after a hardcover comes out for even the trade paperback (which costs as much as many DVDs, if not more), and a year after that (if ever) for the truly inexpensive mass market and all you do is drive away customers. In the UK, mass market paperbacks often come out the same day as hardcovers and their covers are invariably much nicer than the US equivalent, so you don't have to feel like a dolt for buying a \$6 book. God forbid US publishers learn something from them.



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