

NAXOS
AudioBooks

Tom McNab
Flanagan's Run

THE
COMPLETE
TEXT

UNABRIDGED

Read by **Rupert Degas**

POPULAR
FICTION



NAX36412D

| | | |
|----|---|------|
| 1 | Chapter 1: Los Angeles | 6:26 |
| 2 | There were only three miles to Los Angeles... | 5:33 |
| 3 | 'Your name, mister?' asked an attractive blonde girl... | 6:12 |
| 4 | Chapter 2: Flanagan Meets the Press | 5:36 |
| 5 | 'But the Coliseum, boss? Two thousand men...' | 9:02 |
| 6 | 'James Ferris, <i>The Times</i> of London.' | 7:03 |
| 7 | Carl Liebnitz, of the <i>New York Times</i> ... | 7:15 |
| 8 | 'Munaur, <i>Paris Match</i> . Is there any truth...' | 6:44 |
| 9 | Chapter 3: The Broo Park | 6:34 |
| 10 | Then, after two years at the mine... | 6:08 |
| 11 | Hugh felt the hair on the back of his neck rise... | 6:29 |
| 12 | 'I'd like you to see someone,' said Stevie... | 6:23 |
| 13 | Hugh did not even glance at him... | 4:39 |
| 14 | The 'tanner-a-man' matches were desperate affairs... | 5:00 |
| 15 | Meanwhile Jimmy G. had kept the final part... | 5:47 |
| 16 | Chapter 4: The Press Meets Doc Cole | 6:40 |
| 17 | He had gone bald early in middle-age... | 6:51 |
| 18 | 'Carl Liebnitz.' The thin panama-hatted journalist... | 6:33 |
| 19 | 'What do you mean by only racing the last...' | 7:19 |
| 20 | Chapter 5: The Start | 6:15 |

| | | |
|----|--|------|
| 21 | '... Go!' The explosion of the gun... | 5:54 |
| 22 | The race had already divided into four... | 5:16 |
| 23 | The area beyond the bannered finish... | 6:16 |
| 24 | Oddly enough, they did not act like competitors... | 7:55 |
| 25 | Chapter 6: The Girl from Minsky's | 5:02 |
| 26 | 'Sit down, Miss...?' said Flanagan... | 6:08 |
| 27 | Flanagan slowly poured out two further glasses... | 6:03 |
| 28 | 'Well,' said Doc at last. 'You certainly do...' | 7:26 |
| 29 | Chapter 7: Morgan's Story | 6:46 |
| 30 | Sharpe blew smoke into the icy air... | 5:59 |
| 31 | Only his instincts kept him in contention... | 6:00 |
| 32 | A hush fell upon the crowd. Morgan turned... | 6:41 |
| 33 | Chapter 8: Across the Mojave | 6:06 |
| 34 | They were now deep into the Mojave... | 5:51 |
| 35 | Doc watched the first hundred-odd finishers... | 5:55 |
| 36 | Kate had never realized that there were men like this... | 5:45 |
| 37 | Chapter 9: Into the Devil's Playground | 4:55 |
| 38 | Behind them, in thirtieth position, Doc could see... | 5:49 |
| 39 | Two miles ahead, Doc decided it was time... | 7:13 |
| 40 | And Morgan. Morgan did not appear to acknowledge... | 7:30 |

| | | |
|----|--|------|
| 41 | An hour later Flanagan looked out of his caravan... | 7:47 |
| 42 | There was a moment's silence, then another... | 4:57 |
| 43 | Doc next drew out from his knapsack... | 5:39 |
| 44 | Chapter 10: Cross-Country to Las Vegas | 8:03 |
| 45 | 'A real ball-buster,' said Doc... | 6:03 |
| 46 | Unaware of Flanagan's problems... | 5:52 |
| 47 | Albert Koch looked up apologetically... | 5:51 |
| 48 | As the rain lashed down, Kate was glad... | 5:07 |
| 49 | Meanwhile Doc and Hugh tumbled crazily downstream... | 5:10 |
| 50 | Chapter 11: The Meadow with Many Streams | 4:55 |
| 51 | After that things had happened quickly. | 5:19 |
| 52 | Las Vegas, 27 March 1931. | 7:07 |
| 53 | 'Now see here, Mr Flaherty,' he said... | 6:11 |
| 54 | 'Vegas,' said Doc at last... | 5:47 |
| 55 | 'Christ, you don't know the half of it...' | 6:18 |
| 56 | In another corner of the tent Flaherty... | 9:04 |
| 57 | 'What exactly do you intend, Mr Clay?' | 8:21 |
| 58 | Chapter 12: The Picnic Games | 6:02 |
| 59 | Half an hour later Flanagan was to find out... | 5:43 |
| 60 | The tall Texan, Kane, stood up... | 5:39 |

| | | |
|----|---|------|
| 61 | The two hundred miles into the town... | 6:53 |
| 62 | Elsewhere in McPhee things were going... | 4:39 |
| 63 | The crowd, composed mainly of Americans... | 7:43 |
| 64 | The caber itself weighed about a hundred and twenty pounds... | 6:25 |
| 65 | 'I've got to give credit where credit is due...' | 5:49 |
| 66 | 'A song,' he said again. | 4:37 |
| 67 | Flanagan's mind, though blurred, sensed danger... | 5:52 |
| 68 | Twenty minutes later all was ready... | 6:21 |
| 69 | Chapter 13: Moment of Truth | 6:41 |
| 70 | 'So how many do you reckon will make it...?' | 6:38 |
| 71 | Hugh pulled down his sombrero... | 7:27 |
| 72 | Morgan looked around him... | 7:00 |
| 73 | 'Sprinting,' said Lord Farne loudly... | 6:22 |
| 74 | This time Hugh did not sweat at all... | 6:03 |
| 75 | Hugh shook his head... | 6:17 |
| 76 | Chapter 14: Across the Rockies | 3:54 |
| 77 | In Europe, every nation with runners... | 6:20 |
| 78 | 'Bullard,' Hoover mused... | 5:53 |
| 79 | Muller and Stock, after a fruitless appeal... | 5:59 |
| 80 | The field was telescoping... | 6:29 |

| | | |
|-----|---|------|
| 81 | 'And what did you think of the idea?' | 5:57 |
| 82 | At 10 a.m. next morning, 15 April 1931... | 6:01 |
| 83 | Eventually the snow started to thin... | 8:17 |
| 84 | Chapter 15: Denver: A Thousand Miles On | 6:05 |
| 85 | 'Could you be just a bit more specific...?' | 6:31 |
| 86 | Bill Campbell of the <i>Glasgow Herald</i> ... | 6:28 |
| 87 | Ernest Bullard decided that it was time... | 5:30 |
| 88 | Doc Cole stood up, pre-empting Flanagan... | 7:13 |
| 89 | As the conference broke up... | 4:58 |
| 90 | Hugh stood alone in the noisy, crowded room... | 4:38 |
| 91 | Chapter 16: King of the Wharf | 5:26 |
| 92 | Flanagan's mind travelled back... | 5:10 |
| 93 | 'So what's that got to do with the Trans-America?' | 6:10 |
| 94 | 'Perhaps it might help if I tell you...' | 7:50 |
| 95 | 'And that's where Toffler comes in?' said Flanagan... | 7:33 |
| 96 | The two men walked back slowly... | 8:22 |
| 97 | Chapter 17: The Gamble | 6:38 |
| 98 | 'I'll tell you so what,' Doc shouted... | 9:02 |
| 99 | The rhythmic tapping of Dixie's typewriter... | 8:28 |
| 100 | 2 May, 1931: Nine hundred and seventy eight men... | 4:29 |

| | | |
|-----|---|------|
| 101 | 'Thank God for that,' said Doc... | 7:11 |
| 102 | Chapter 18: Doc in Trouble | 6:12 |
| 103 | The cars of local sightseers blew dust... | 6:07 |
| 104 | He scowled. Only ten miles... | 5:47 |
| 105 | 1 May 1931: It was getting better. | 5:33 |
| 106 | Two miles ahead, at the front of the pack... | 6:38 |
| 107 | The boy, who could not have been more than nine or ten... | 7:59 |
| 108 | Doc was as good as his word... | 6:57 |
| 109 | Chapter 19: St Louis: Man versus Horse | 5:59 |
| 110 | Men who themselves lack physical ability... | 5:57 |
| 111 | Betting was now down to nine to one against... | 4:55 |
| 112 | 1:30 p.m., 10 May 1931. | 7:10 |
| 113 | 1:45 p.m. Thurleigh, Morgan and McPhail... | 7:10 |
| 114 | He felt the roughness of the grit of the track... | 7:47 |
| 115 | 'Finished,' said Doc a moment later... | 7:01 |
| 116 | 'Prepare yourselves, gentlemen.' | 7:44 |
| 117 | Another bugle from the hillside... | 7:34 |
| 118 | All in all, the city of St Louis... | 6:39 |
| 119 | 'One final matter,' he said... | 7:08 |
| 120 | Chapter 20: The Big Fight | 6:56 |

| | | |
|-----|--|------|
| 121 | Many men went down after the first punch... | 6:11 |
| 122 | 'The booth fight of the century,' he bellowed... | 8:28 |
| 123 | It was like the old days, only Doc had never... | 5:59 |
| 124 | He lowered his voice to a whisper... | 5:25 |
| 125 | The two men gave the crowd... | 5:55 |
| 126 | Somehow Morgan was able to keep on... | 7:03 |
| 127 | Chapter 21: Showdown with Toffler | 7:20 |
| 128 | 'Let me get this clear,' said Flanagan... | 7:19 |
| 129 | Charles C. Flanagan was back in his rocking-chair... | 6:19 |
| 130 | Lily looked at him... | 6:55 |
| 131 | Chapter 22: Meeting Mr Capone | 6:51 |
| 132 | This time it was different... | 6:11 |
| 133 | Like all industrial cities of the north... | 6:33 |
| 134 | On his right, a black Ford limousine... | 6:35 |
| 135 | At 11 a.m. on the morning of 24 May... | 7:56 |
| 136 | 'Well,' said Capone, 'what else do you want?' | 7:05 |
| 137 | Chapter 23: End of the Road | 6:00 |
| 138 | At the top the position changed almost daily... | 8:06 |
| 139 | 'Wait a minute,' said Flanagan... | 5:56 |
| 140 | 'So what are you going to do?' said Willard... | 5:31 |

| | | |
|-----|---|------|
| 141 | Flanagan was not found, however... | 6:04 |
| 142 | Edgar J. Hoover's flat, square face... | 6:57 |
| 143 | 'Charles Rae, <i>Washington Post</i> .' | 8:02 |
| 144 | Chapter 24: Marathon | 6:38 |
| 145 | The Dorando marathon triggered... | 5:12 |
| 146 | His concentration was broken by a knock... | 5:40 |
| 147 | 2:15 p.m. Saturday, 20 June 1931. | 5:27 |
| 148 | Liebnitz found Maurice Falconer standing... | 5:58 |
| 149 | Six miles in thirty-three minutes and nine seconds... | 5:59 |
| 150 | Kate Sheridan saw the figures '220'... | 6:37 |
| 151 | With five miles to go, as she crossed... | 7:30 |
| 152 | Postscript | 1:52 |

Total time: 16:13:37

Much of my youth was spent in sport: endless hours of football in Glasgow streets, athletics on waste ground, staggering across muddy fields in cross-country races, scraping my behind over cane crossbars in my back garden. For in those post-war days it was not natural for a boy to be in the house. No. The house was for eating and sleeping. The rest of the time, until a lad left school, was spent in play.

But not quite, in my case. For I was an obsessive reader, at first of the great D.C. Thomson comics, *Rover*, *Wizard*, *Hotspur* and *Adventure*. My favourite was *Wizard*, which featured the great athlete William Wilson. 148 years old when I first encountered him in 1943, Wilson had been given the elixir of life by a hermit called Matthew. For some reason he spent the early years of the 19th century running after and catching bewildered hares on Yorkshire's Staying Moor. Unlike Wilde's Dorian Gray, he did not spend the rest of his life in debauchery, but in athletic endeavour, and by 1943 had run 100 yards in nine seconds and leapt seven feet in high jump, carrying a 16-pound

shot. I well remember Roger Bannister's surprise when I informed him that Wilson had beaten four minutes for the mile long before him, back in 1820.

On such tales my imagination feasted. And to them I added Richmal Crompton's *Just William* books, essentially a collection of marvellous short stories, thus taking me to Glasgow's Riddrie Library. This, with the Mitchell Library in the centre of town, became my university for the period of my adolescence.

For although a formal Scottish primary school education had equipped me well, in terms of spelling, grammar and arithmetic, secondary school was subject- and exam-based, and I did not take well to it. But, never let your education interfere with your studies; by the age of 18 I had read everything that Wilde, Shaw and Orwell had written, plus Slaughter's *Famous Trials*, and a host of other random literature. It was what I call promiscuous reading, and it served me well when I came to study the history of athletics, and express it in fiction much later in life.

In the meantime, aged 15 I had joined an athletics club, Shettleston Harriers,

and every week plodded through the dark, misty streets of Glasgow's East End and at weekends stumbled across the open country outside our ramshackle clubhouse. My club had a library, and a book called *Powderhall and Pedestrianism*, the story of Scottish professional athletics. This triggered my interest in the history of the sport, quickened by the fact that our trainer, Alan Scally, featured in the book. There Alan stood in a misty 1920s photograph, one of the great professional distance runners of the period.

A year later, I was in southern Scotland, picking potatoes at £1 a week in my school holidays, a princely wage. I found out that a professional athletics meeting was being held a few miles away, on a local village green, and I entered. It was like stepping back into the 19th century, for there were no take-off boards, no landing pits, nothing from the amateur world from which I had come. But at £1 for a win, it was good money, and I came away with three crisp pound notes in my sweaty palm, having won high, long and triple jumps. Much, therefore, of what was to appear in print 30 years later was

being experienced and studied, even in those early days.

All of this, this subterranean world of professional athletics and Scottish rural games, was to fascinate me in my early years as an athlete, for it was the dark side of the athletics moon. In those days professional athletes were pariahs, not to be mentioned in polite company. And I had come upon, in the literature, the Transcontinental Races of 1928, organised by C.C. (Cash and Carry) Pyle. The information on these Depression races was surprisingly sparse. The first 3,000 mile race had been from Los Angeles to New York in 1928, the second from New York to Los Angeles a year later, and both had been nightmares for C.C. Pyle, who had struggled to cover his costs and pay the athletes.

By the age of 30 (after a career in which I had won five Scottish triple jump titles) I had become National Athletics Coach for Southern England. This resulted in the writing of a plethora of technical and historical works in the period between 1963 and 1977, and in the collection of an athletics library that had to be one of

the most extensive on earth.

In 1978 I went freelance, and a year's contract for a failed Dubai sports venture cushioned me, enabling me to embark on the work of fiction which eventually became *Flanagan's Run*. The Transcontinental Races must have festered in my mind somewhere, all those years, and now the time was ripe.

By that time I had written many books and articles, but not a word of fiction, not even a short story. And so I started with three self-contained chapters (the parts that were short stories in themselves), and approached several publishers. One, Hodder & Stoughton, replied immediately, through an editor, Richard Cohen. This was fine, he said, but where was the rest of the book?

At a meeting with him, I replied that there was no 'rest', that these three chapters were the sum total of my literary endeavours. Richard (an Olympic fencer) asked me to provide a chapter-by-chapter summary of the book, and promised me a set of edits. His edits turned out to be almost as long as the three chapters, and it took me almost a month to respond

to them.

Richard Cohen's response was immediate. I had shown him that I could respond to his editing, and he would recommend the book to the Hodder board. I was in business.

This was 1979, and I was by that time British Olympic Bobsleigh Coach and embroiled as Technical Director of *Chariots of Fire*. I thought it essential to get some idea of the terrain covered in the first part of the race, so I travelled by car across the Mojave from Los Angeles, taking notes. At a desert motel I came by chance upon a photocopy of a Las Vegas newspaper from 1931, outlining the 'Wobblies' dispute at the Boulder Dam in that year. Thus the race had to travel through Las Vegas, in order to embrace that 1931 strike.

For the rest of the journey I relied on a vast knowledge of the American landscape derived from thousands of hours viewing American films. There is, apparently, a view in America that I must be an American. No. Only an ardent devotee of Hollywood movies.

On my return from the United States I worked chapter by chapter, never

moving on until each was fully edited and completed. I could not type, and my typist had no liking for those new-fangled computers. So I ground out 12 drafts by hand, over one million words. Each character had a physical basis somewhere in my head (Charles Bronson/Morgan, Jane Fonda/Kate) and where possible a psychological basis (parts of myself in Doc, Hugh and Flanagan); others came straight from the ether.

The essence of the book is that athletes from all over the world come together in the middle of the Depression to attempt something that has never before been achieved. They come from a village in Mexico, from the mines of Fife, from the steel works of Pennsylvania to run up to 60 miles a day for weeks on end. In the end, all sport of this nature is not about winning and losing, but about proving who you are by what you do. It is about the power of the human spirit, how we change with challenge.

One of the questions that I am often asked is what experience I have had of distance (let alone ultra-distance) running, and my answer is always 'absolutely



Tom McNab was born in Glasgow in 1933, and educated at Whitehill Senior Secondary School and Jordanhill College of Physical Education. A UNESCO Essay medallist at 14, he was already in his teens contributing to the national press.

His passion was sport, and by 1952 he had represented Glasgow Schools at football, and was Scottish Junior Triple Jump champion. After national service in the Royal Air Force as a Flying Officer, he became a physical education teacher (1958–62) and National Athletics Coach to Southern England (1963–77). During this period, he created the Five Star Award, the world's most successful athletics award scheme, and the national decathlon programme which produced Daley Thompson.

In 1980, having coached several world-class athletes, he was appointed coach to the British Olympic Bobsleigh team. At the same time, he was preparing the cast of *Chariots of Fire* as Technical Director, having previously worked with screenwriter Colin Welland on the script .

It was at this time that he embarked upon *Flanagan's Run*, which was published in 1982, going immediately to no. 1 on the British best-seller lists. In 1983–4, he worked with Peter Jay in the setting up of Tvam, Britain's first commercial breakfast station. Since then, he has been coach to two English World Cup rugby teams (1987–1992), has coached world-class athletes such as the long jumper Greg Rutherford, and was twice British Coach of the Year.

Tom has written three radio plays for the BBC, and three stage plays, the most recent of which is *1936*.



Rupert Degas, a versatile and charismatic audiobook reader, has read a substantial list of books for Naxos AudioBooks, notably Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase*, *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* and *Dance Dance Dance*, Kafka's *The Trial*, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and Rose Tremain's *Restoration*. He is in considerable demand as a voice for cartoons, and is the voice of Pantalaimon in Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights*, but is also regularly seen in London's West End in plays as varied as *Stones in his Pockets* and *The 39 Steps*.

Credits

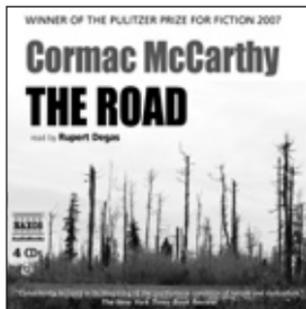
Produced by Malcolm Blackmoor
Recorded at Motivation Sound Studios
Edited by Josh Brooks
Mastered by Mike Shah

© 1982 by Tom McNab

Cover image: *Trail runner* © Michael Svoboda; Courtesy of Dreamstime.com

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE,
BROADCASTING AND COPYING OF THESE COMPACT DISCS PROHIBITED.

Other works on Naxos AudioBooks



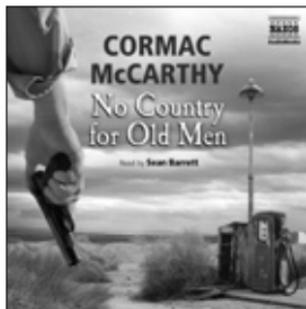
The Road

(McCarthy) ISBN: 9789626349717
read by Rupert Degas



Blood Meridian

(McCarthy) ISBN: 9789626349946
read by Robert G. Slade



No Country for Old Men

(McCarthy) ISBN: 9789626349809
read by Sean Barrett



The Road Home

(Tremain) ISBN: 9789626349465
read by Juliet Stevenson

Other works on Naxos AudioBooks



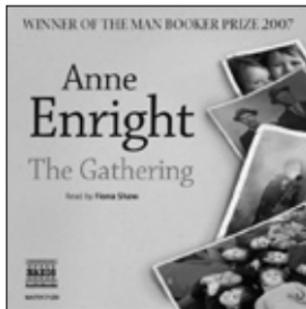
Restoration

(Tremain) ISBN: 9789626349762
read by Rupert Degas



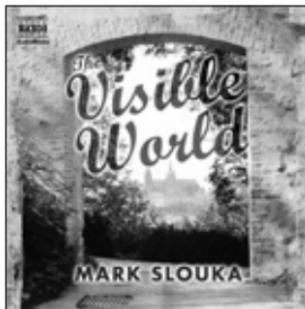
Music & Silence

(Tremain) ISBN: 9789626349755
read by Michael Praed with Clare Wille
and Alison Dowling



The Gathering

(Enright) ISBN: 9789626349175
read by Fiona Shaw



The Visible World

(Slouka) ISBN: 9789626349328
read by Glen McCready



Tom McNab *Flanagan's Run*

Read by **Rupert Degas**

During the Depression the ebullient American entrepreneur Charles Flanagan assembles 2,000 runners from all corners of the earth, to run from Los Angeles to New York for prize-money of \$150,000. Flanagan's Trans-America runners face 3,000 miles, across the Mojave desert and the frozen Rockies, running a daily average of 50 miles for three months. The American sports establishment, however, is desperate to crush what it sees as a professional challenge to the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics. Every day is therefore a struggle for survival, for Flanagan himself as well as the runners. *Flanagan's Run* is an epic tale, and a testimony to the strength of the human spirit.



Rupert Degas, a versatile and charismatic audiobook reader, has read a substantial list of books for Naxos AudioBooks, notably Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase*, *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* and *Dance Dance Dance*, Kafka's *The Trial* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*.

CD ISBN:

978-184-379-364-9

View our catalogue online at

www.naxosaudiobooks.com



Produced by
Malcolm
Blackmoor

© 2010 Naxos
AudioBooks Ltd.
© 2010 Naxos
AudioBooks Ltd.
Made in Germany.

CONTEMPORARY
FICTION
UNABRIDGED

Total time
16:13:37