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Alexander Waugh :-

Books that pitch into live quarrels are always fun, and I expect at least one good pot-boiler in the Shakespeare authorship question to be published every year. In 2010 I was convinced by James Shapiro's "Contested Will", which argued that anti-Stratfordians were all barmy romanticists. This year A.J. Pointon, in his clearly articulated counter-treatise, "The Man Who Was Never Shakespeare", convinces me that Mr. Shapiro and his fellow Stratfordians are the ones who are really off their heads.

Mr. Pointon's book sets out to prove that "William Shakspere" (an illiterate player and tradesman from Stratford) never wrote the poems and plays credited to the pseudonym "William Shakespeare". The book's strength is that it doesn't attempt to peddle any of Mr. Pointon's own theories as to who actually did write them. His evidence is clear and compelling. So I am currently on Mr. Pointon's side against the Stratfordians, enjoying my gullibility and looking forward to reversing my views many more times in the coming years.

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Mr. Waugh is the author of "The House of Wittgenstein: A Family At War"

[And of course the grandson of Evelyn Waugh. -RM]