

.....

• THE JDM BIBLIOPHILE No. 9, March 1968. Edited and published by Len & June Moffatt, •
 • 9826 Paramount Blvd., Downey, California 90240. Associate Editors: Ed Cox and Bill •
 • Clark. This is a non-profit publication devoted to the works of John D. MacDonald. •
 • You may remain on our mailing list by responding in any of the following ways: •
 • (1) Writing a letter or card after each issue, •
 • (2) Sending news or information re JDM, his stories, etc., •
 • (3) Writing reviews, critiques, articles, etc. re JDM for JDMB, •
 • (4) Donating stamps or postage money. •
 •
 • See back page for your JDMB "status"... •
 • •

In This Issue:

	Page No.
Editorial	1
The Seek & Swap Department	2
News & Previews	4
Please Write For Details	5
<u>Special Reprint Section:</u>	
Early JD - by Ed Cox (from JDMB No. 2)	19
Editorial (from JDMB No. 3).	22
The Spiralled Myth - by John D. MacDonald (from JDMB No. 3)	24
Paint The Coffin Fuchsia - by Bob Leman (from THE VINEGAR WORM II, 10)	26

EDITORIAL

About The Past: "Early in 1965 Len Moffatt, a sales correspondent for a paper box manufacturer and his wife June, a secretary, obtained a list of the novels of John D. MacDonald from a friend. The Moffatts ran off xerox copies of the list and gave them to others who were interested in the author. Someone suggested Moffatt publish copies for wider distribution, and THE JDM BIBLIOPHILE No. 1, a one-sheeter dated March 1965 with a press run of a little over 100 copies, was the result.

There was enough reaction to this small start to encourage the Moffatts to publish again, and the second issue, 9 pages long, included articles on the author, an editorial and the novel list. This issue was sent to John D. MacDonald.

MacDonald was astounded and delighted that anyone would publish a magazine about him, and he willingly helped the Moffatts collect a list of stories he had published over the years.

From May 1966, the date of the second issue of THE JDM BIBLIOPHILE, the Moffatts began publishing on a regular basis. When they sent a copy of their magazine to Anthony Boucher, suspense reviewer for The New York Times, and he mentioned it in his column, the Moffatts were swamped with requests for copies. Readership grew and grew. The Moffatts have added a letter column, news of TV shows and motion pictures based on MacDonald stories and many other features—all on John D. MacDonald."

The paragraphs quoted above are from NEWS OF THE FAWCETT WORLD LIBRARY, a press release written by Barbara Hendra, issued on January 15, 1968. We have one correction and one addition. June and I were not married in 1965. However, we were going steady, and were married on December 10th, 1966.

The friend who gave us the list of JDM novels was Ron Ellick. Ron had received the list from Mr. MacDonald after writing him c/o his publisher. And that was how this magazine—and the project to publish a master checklist of everything published by JDM—began.

(continued on page 2)

SEEK & SWAP DEPT.

ALBERT ASHFORTH, 1754 Hendrickson St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11234, would like to obtain:
A Bullet For Cinderella, The Neon Jungle, The End of the Night and I Could Go On Singing.

JOHN W. GAMBLE, 1827 Berkeley Ave., St. Paul, Minn. 55105, needs Border Town Girl. He may be missing other titles, but he didn't mention them...

WENDELL V. HOWARD, 2518 LaVeta Dr. NE, Albuquerque, N.M. 87110, now needs only 4 titles to complete his collection: Border Town Girl, Contrary Pleasure, I Could Go On Singing, and The Lethal Sex. He has Wine of the Dreamers in hardcover, but would like to have the pb reprint, Planet of the Dreamers. He will buy--or swap. And he is in a position to swap, as he has from 2 to 4 copies of 29 JDM titles available for trading!

GEORGE W. LOCKE, 86 Chelsea Gardens, Chelsea Bridge Road, London, SW 1 ENGLAND, wants Death Trap, The Deceivers, Ballroom of the Skies, Murder For The Bride, The Neon Jungle, On The Run, Slam The Big Door, Flash of Green, Where is Janice Gantry?, The Brass Cupcake, The Crossroads, The Last One Left, Pale Gray For Guilt and End of The Tiger. (Would also like Stark's The Damsel and The Rare Coin Score.) Will swap--write him re British books you want.

((Incidentally, Mr. Ashforth--see above--says that some of the rarer JDM titles have been published by British firms. When in London last year he saw British pbs of The Crossroads and Weep For Me in second-hand bookshops. How about that, George?))

NOTE: If you want your want list to appear in every issue of JDMB, you must send it to us each time. We have no way of knowing whether or not you have obtained the titles you seek--unless you tell us.

.....
Editorial, continued:

On January 27, 1968, Ron Ellik, a native of California, who worked for UNIVAC in the east, lost control of his car on an icy Wisconsin road, and was killed. He was 29 years old, with a brilliant career ahead of him, as a troubleshooter for computer programming, and as a writer. His first novel, The Cross of Gold Affair (Man From U.N.C.L.E. novel #14, Ace Books) written in collaboration with Frederic Langley (under the pseudonym of Frederic Davies) had just been published. Advance copies had been mailed to Ron, but it is doubtful that he ever saw them.

Here in California, his girlfriend Lois had quit her job and was packed up, ready to leave for the East by the end of January. They were to have been married in Minnesota, where Ron was currently stationed.

Ron was also the co-author (or co-compiler?) of THE UNIVERSES OF E. E. SMITH, A Concordance to the Lensmen and Skylark novels, a 272 page hardcover book published by Advent in 1966. Bill Evans did the concordance for the Skylark series, and Ron, aided by Al Lewis, did the concordance of the Lensmen series. Al says that Ron did "the lion's share of the work".

Ron will be missed by friends all over the world. I'm sure that one of them, Elmer Purdue, will not mind if we quote him: "For what it's worth, I am glad that Ron Ellik never knew the knife in the back, has never been the recipient of dirt, and that the world lay open and ready to be his oyster when it happened. We who knew Ron Ellik were fortunate. He left enough memories for all of us and to burn."

Editorial, (continued from page 2):

About the Present: The material in this issue reprinted from earlier issues of JDMB is, of course, for those readers who missed out on said earlier issues. We keep getting requests for copies of back issues, which we cannot fulfil without depleting our own file copies. And we just don't have the time to reprint all of the back issues. The JDMB and the master checklist are part of our spare-time, hobby activities, which include participation in the science-fiction fan field as well as in the mystery/detective field. (And we recently joined the Writers Guild of Downey...) We hope that the items reprinted this time will help to satisfy--in part, at least--the demand for back issues.

About the Future: We already have Mr. MacDonald's comments on Bob Leman's parody of T. McGee, but we decided to hold them until our next issue. Your comments would be appreciated, and we are looking forward to a rather interesting PWFD next time...

Our next issue will also feature a critique of JDM by Elijah Stern, and JDM's comments on the critique...

If your "status" on our JDMB mailing list indicates that you must respond (see back page)--we suggest you do so as soon as possible. We are not setting a "deadline" this time, as we do not know when JDMB No. 10 will be ready for the mails. We would like to have it ready for the mails early in June, but it could be later than that. Reason: we want to start work on the master checklist of JDM's published writings, which will be a separate publication, and which we hope to publish sometime in the next 6 or 8 months.

It, too, will be a non-profit publication, but we may put a price tag on it to help cover the costs of printing and mailing. HOWEVER, DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY AT THIS TIME! Loyal readers of JDMB will be duly notified as to whether or not they need donate. Some of you will receive the master checklist automatically because you have already provided more than enough encouragement in the way of information, stamps, money, etc. Others will be requested to make a token payment, based on the actual cost-per-copy.

In any case, don't push the panic button if your copy of JDMB No. 10 does not arrive in June or July. It should appear some time this year, and in the meantime you will know that the master checklist is in the works. (Our Roving Editor, Bill Clark, wants to make one more visit to the Library of Congress before we complete the final draft.) We might add that although the master checklist will be a one-shot publication, we may--if necessary--issue an addendum to it at some future time. Corrections and additions will always be appreciated.

February 17, 1968: We have just learned of the death of another long-time friend, Lee Jacobs. We don't have all of the details, but apparently he fell and struck his head while alone in his bachelor apartment.

Lee, like Ron, was well-known and well-liked in science fiction fandom, and was a loyal reader and supporter of JDMB. We weren't as close to Lee as we were to Ron, but God knows he will be missed by all of us who knew him. We think he was older than Ron, but as JDM said in a recent letter: "There are no good ages for dying".

And of course there really are no words to express the way we feel about the totally unexpected deaths of two good friends.

-ljm & jmm

NEWS & PREVIEWS

According to various sources, Robert Culp (of TV's I SPY) has been negotiating for the role of Travis McGee. Walter Seltzer and Jack Reeves of Major Productions, Inc. now have the right to film one book, and the right to option a second one.

We think that Culp has both the acting and the athletic ability to play McGee, but will reserve judgment until we see the movie, which we understand is to be made this year.

* * * * *

In his New York Times column, "Criminals At Large", Anthony Boucher nominates two books for Novel of the Year (1967). They are: THE WALKING STICK, by Winston Graham (Doubleday, \$4.95) and THE LAST ONE LEFT, by John D. MacDonald (Doubleday, \$4.95).

THE LAST ONE LEFT is also available in paperback from Fawcett Crest (75¢). We like the cover, which features the "Little Doll".

* * * * *

Here in the L. A. area, PALE GRAY FOR GUILT hit the newsstands a week or two earlier than February. Should be available everywhere now.

We hope that none of you McGee and/or boating buffs missed the January issue of RUDDER Magazine. JDM's "Little Doll and the Mousetrap" was interesting reading--and what I know about boats you could stick in your ear without painful results.

* * * * *

We continue to recommend two journals devoted to the mystery/detective/suspense field. Readers who have been requesting that we open the pages of JDMB to news and reviews of any and all mystery writers should subscribe to TAD and to TMLN to get what they want.

Al Rubin is publishing a Book Exchange department in TAD, so those of you who have wanted to list non-JDM titles in our Seek & Swap Dept. should contact Al.

Mrs. Carlin is looking for more checklists and articles on mystery writers for her magazine.

THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE - Allen J. Rubin, 3656 Midland, White Bear Lake, Minnesota 55110. \$2.00 for 4 issues.

THE MYSTERY LOVER'S NEWSLETTER - Mrs. Lianne Carlin, P. O. Box 107, Revere, Massachusetts 02151. \$2.00 for 6 issues.

-ljm

* * * * *

The Annual Poetry Contest of the Downey Writers Guild, which closed February 13, 1968, was divided into two categories: Humorous and Serious.

First prize in the Serious category was taken by "Exit Lines"--a poem of the post-atomic war period, by Len Moffatt. The prize was not large, but then, poetry never has paid much.

-jmm

Please Write For Details

The Readers Write...

...((The Editors Reply - ljm & jmm))

Once again we open our letter column with a letter from one of our favorite readers:

JOHN D. MacDONALD, Florida: Some quick and random replies to questions in #8:

To David Brownell: *THE END OF THE NIGHT* was based upon a growing curiosity of mine about the involvement of the adolescent and young-adult children of the upper middle class in meaningless vandalism and violence. It was written in 1959, after I had gone through a whole stack of case studies of such young people accumulated by a sociologist working in an urban area of the mid-west. About the only consistent thread I could find was that the parents were usually very preoccupied with their own lives - and it did not seem to matter whether these pursuits were idle, as in the case of the swingers and the social bag, or constructive. It seemed as if these children had been somehow closed out of the nest, given the artifacts of love rather than to tangible reality of love which children are so quick to sense. So it seemed a kind of unconscious rejection of the child, with the child retaliating against the very formless shape of a world it did not care much for. "So there! See how I can mess up? Now prove you love me."

To Larry Tauber: Glad to learn of the comment of Christopher Lee.

To Jim McKeon: In length, time, sweat, brute labor and re-re-re-writing, the 800 pages of finished manuscript of *NO DEADLY DRUG*, and the 17 months of confusion cost me a minimum of one hard cover novel and three McGees. The only thing I have ever done which could be classed as "screenwork" was to do a so-called styling of a possible television show. About fifty pages, I think, which included six outlines of sequences. I put the locale in the Bahamas, and called it Bimini Gal, and hoped they could get Mitchum to do it. (They being 7 Arts). Well, that was a couple of years ago, and 7 Arts bought Warner Brothers, and they got Richard Boone to do it, and changed the locale to Hawaii, and changed the title to Kona Coast, and changed it from a series to a movie for first showing on CBS television. So much for my single adventure in fantasy land. As regards "success" turning me off, James McK, I think you might be confusing motivation and by-product. It is very very nice indeed to at last make out well in this tin-cup racket. That I agree. But all the fun and games is in the doing, and in trying to do the next one always a little better and tighter and more controlled, and I shall not give up that pleasure until I am stopped cold by the scythe-man, or the aphasia bit. I would be as likely at this point to try screen writing as I would to open up a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise. They are equally far removed from my primary area of work and concern. Though it may astound those who think of the writer as a coast-to-coast gadabout, I must confess that I have not been to California since 1945, when I came back from 2½ years overseas and was hustled through that province by Uncle and by a considerable yen to see wife and child back in NY State.

To John Kusske: In the pulp days the range I received was from ½ cent a word to 2 cents, with the infrequent bonus which upped the effective rate to near 3. If you had mentioned the name of the story, maybe I could tell you if it made my own private personal list of My Ten All Time Worst Stories. You see, John Kusske, nobody writes badly on purpose. You write as well as you can. It just seems to come out sour sometimes. And the poor writer is unaware of how bad it is until later, when objectivity sets in. If one were given the gift of total pure objectivity, to know at the time how good or how bad a story is, I think a lot of the fun would go out of it. And there would be a lot fewer people trying.

To Harry Warner: You cannot copyright a book title or story title. But motion picture titles are something else. They have some kind of registration arrangement

through the screen writers guild and the distributors whereby if you try to put a screen title on a book they can and will take legal action. From a practical point of view, however, it would be impossible to talk any legitimate reputable publishing house into using a well-known title on a new work. The duplications are generally of books which have faded into obscurity, and were not covered in the search back through the book index for the previous half dozen years.

JOHN STANLEY, Gargling Grove, Calif.: It was a day, like any other day is a day, that I got your magnificent #8 issue. Huzzah! Wonderful! I never knew so much before.
((Argue with that, will you? -ljm))

WENDELL HOWARD, Albuquerque, N.M.: Mr. Burger asks if anyone knows what Travis McGee's original name was--a city, right? I'm eliminating Little Rock, so my guess would be Dallas, with perhaps Denver as a second choice.

RAMONA WEEKS, Phoenix, Arizona: T. McGee's original name was "Dallas" McGee.
((It was Dallas McGee, and changed to Travis for obvious reasons. And thanks, Miss Weeks, for the copy of the Mystery Writers Annual! -ljm))

KNOX BURGER continues his guessing game with our readers by sending a newspaper clipping and asking a question. The clipping reads (in part): BODIES OF 2 WOMEN FOUND IN FLORIDA: GANGS SUSPECTED. Hollywood, Fla. Dec. 9 (UP) The concrete-weighted bodies of two young women were found last night in Whiskey Creek Canal... police said that the girls were apparently slain in a boat and thrown overboard... The bodies were found...by fishermen...

Mr. Burger's Question: Which of your readers remember from what JDM novel these hoods borrowed this idea?
((It seems to us that gangsters have been dumping weighted bodies in the drink at least as far back as the prohibition era. However, the news item does remind us of at least one JDM novel...and you? -ljm))

ALBERT ASHFORTH, Brooklyn, N.Y.: I am a former newspaperman--New York Times and New York World Telegram--and I am now an English instructor at Brooklyn College. Along with stories in the daily edition of the Times, I have written for their Sunday Magazine. I recently finished a book--non-fiction, scholarly, rather specialized--on a 19th-century British scientist, Thomas Henry Huxley, which I hope will be printed this year sometime.

Since there are so many of Mr. MacDonald's books that I have not yet read, it would be rather silly to list my personal favorites, but I will say that The Last One Left is as good a book as I have ever read, bar none. In a fashion, Crissy Harkinson symbolizes our modern American life in the same way Becky Sharp (of Thackeray's Vanity Fair) summed up English life a century ago. Crissy, in my opinion, deserves the same kind of immortality Becky has acquired.

I disagree with the reader who finds McGee a two-dimensional character. What I find remarkable about the McGee series is that each one is better than the last, a remarkable achievement.

GEORGE LOCKE, London, England: I'm afraid I can't contribute anything in the way of bibliographical material on MacDonald, although, as you know, I'm a very keen bibliophile. It might interest you to hear, however, how MacDonald has become a part of my life, like beer. Like beer, the first times I sampled the nectar, I pulled a face and spat it out. I think the book was MURDER IN THE WIND. About a lot of characters who get tossed together in a hurricane in Florida. I thought it was a lousy book, although I detected a certain something beneath the surface. The next one I read was THE END OF THE NIGHT, and it struck me as being
(6)

almost as unpalatable though the writing in parts was damned good. I thought: "If this was ~~beer~~ MacDonald, then you could keep him. The only other title I remembered reading was THE GIRL, THE GOLD WATCH AND EVERYTHING, which I thought was terrific. But then, he was writing science fiction, wasn't he?

I suppose it was going to the States that was instrumental in converting me. Everybody was raving about Travis McGee, so I tried one, and then a second one, and before I knew what had happened, I was a convert, unpalatability and all. So I guess as far as I am concerned, there is a distinct parallel between beer and John D. MacDonald. The only difficulty is, I can get unlimited quantities of beer in England, but MacDonald isn't so easy to find.

I find Travis McGee and Parker very enviable heroes/protagonists in one respect: They work only when their money runs low, and appear to be filling the same role in fiction that Bulldog Drummond and the Saint did in the 20s and 30s. Unfortunately, perhaps because of the type of world it is now, they lack their sense of humor. Still, for that, I suppose one can always return to Ted Mark, although it's a pity Mark can't write just a wee bit better, so that when his ideas run thin, as they did several books ago, the writing can sustain them. MacDonald can certainly do that, which is perhaps why I didn't like MURDER IN THE WIND. I guess maybe I started with a bad one.

((See Seek & Swap Dept., this issue. -ljm))

THE REV. STEPHEN G. WILLIAMSON, Jermy, Pa.: I was very pleased with PALE GRAY FOR GUILT, it was worth waiting for. The ending, however, seemed a little reminiscent of BRIGHT ORANGE FOR THE SHROUD. Details were different, but there was, at least to me, some similarity. It also seemed to me to be somewhat an anti-climax. Freddy's ultimate end certainly tied up all the loose ends, but I wonder if it was necessary for Trav to be the instrument. Certainly most fiction requires the hero to personally kill the villain, but JDM has never represented "most fiction" as a matter of fact, he has always stood for reality. Having Freddy arrive on the Busted Flush does make it possible for Trav, through the ensuing events, to have a meaningful relationship with Tush's widow. Since I'm a worse fiction writer than letter writer (after reading this I'm sure you know what I mean) I can't think of another way to get the two of them together under the right circumstances, but JDM's talents certainly are capable of this. Well, I just felt that the book with its lack of violence could have been complete--by lack of violence I am referring to active violence by T. McGee--without demonstrating Freddy's end.

((It seemed to me that there was a flavor of inevitability about Freddy's seeking out McGee. He had already tried to frame Travis, would have murdered him if he could. What then more natural in his psychotic state than to blame McGee for it all, and take his "revenge"? -jmm))

In reply to David Brownell in JDMB8 replying to my comments which you printed in JDMB7, I would tend to agree with the thought that THE END OF THE NIGHT might well have come from the Starkweather case. There does seem to be more affinity for Starkweather than for the Clutter murders in the actions of the crimes, but the personalities seem a lot like those presented later in IN COLD BLOOD. Mr. Brownell nominates A FLASH OF GREEN for "the best JDM", I reread it to check and I still plump for THE LAST ONE LEFT. Perhaps I can see too much of myself in Jimmy Wing's moral neutrality, in his inability to stand up and fight until it is too late. I suppose also that I see too much of other people's refusal to "get involved" in the book, the kind of apathy that allows the destruction of nature in the name of "progress". I suppose that all of these reasons for finding A FLASH OF GREEN lacking are reasons which someone else could point to as being part of the reasons for its greatness.

HENRY D. RENARD, Montvale, N.J.: Why can't we find out which company has the rights to republish Border Town Girl, Ballroom of the Skies, etc., and all of us send letters requesting reprints? Some of JDM's novels

have been reprinted over and over, and must sell, so why wouldn't a new title sell? ((The man to write to is Knox Burger of Fawcett Publications, Inc., 67 W. 44th St., New York 10036. I'm not sure who has the reprint rights to Ballroom, etc. but if Fawcett rec'd enough letters I'm sure they would give due consideration to the problem--if they haven't already. Do not expect personal replies to your letters. Mr. Burger is a busy man with a job to do, as is any full-time editor or writer, and though he may appreciate hearing from you, he just might not have the time to answer each and every letter received. As a matter of fact, we don't have the time to answer all the mail we get--and ours is a small operation compared to that of a professional publisher. Fortunately, we do have this letter column...ljm))

BRIAN KIRBY, N. Hollywood, Calif.: Caught Tony Rome with Sinatra last night. About a semi-private detective who takes on the job of finding a stolen diamond pin for a percentage. He works out of a boat in Florida that he won in a crap game. What an interesting idea for a series..!

((We haven't seen Tony Rome, but I suppose that when the first McGee film is shown there will be those idiots who say "Aw, they got that idea from the Sinatra picture..." Of course it is quite possible that the people who made Tony Rome never heard of T. McGee. There are innumerable instances of two authors coming up with similar ideas, situations, characters, etc., with neither author knowing that the other had done so. It has even happened to me, and my output is infinitesimal compared to that of JDM and t'other full time writers. Years ago I wrote a story about a WWII veteran who decides to become a "Consultant". The idea was that a "Consultant" could be consulted about anything, and thus could become involved in all sorts of unusual situations. Not exactly a private eye, you see, but of course his work would take him into the field of crime, etc., so that the abilities he had learned as a Marine would come in handy (and, not so incidentally, provide action for the stories). I'm not sure that I ever finished the first story, let alone submit it.

At another time in my spotty career as a part-time writer I did write a complete novelet dealing with time travel and parallel time worlds. About the time I finished it, I picked up a book by Sam Merwin, Jr. in which so much of the plotting and situations resembled mine that I felt it would be a waste of time to submit my story anywhere. Sam was living in Florida at that time, I think, and I was in California. We had never met or corresponded with each other. Some time later we did meet and I accused him (jokingly, of course) of picking my brains at long distance, which of course led to a discussion of how these things happen more frequently than one realizes in the writing game.

Speaking of Merwin reminds me that somewhere around here we have a note from Lee Jacobs telling of how he visited Sam in New York, when Sam was editing Startling, Thrilling Wonder, etc. This was back in the 40s or early 50s, I think, and Sam at that time predicted that this new writer, John D. MacDonald, was going to go far in the field. I suspect that this opinion was shared by the other magazine editors, at least the ones who--like Sam--knew their business and knew what it takes to produce quality writing. -ljm))

DENNIS O'NEIL, New York: Has anyone suggested James Coburn for the McGee role yet? And I think Walter Matthau would be a perfect Meyer.

Somebody should do a learned article on JDM's incorporation of classical mythological themes into his tales: McGee-as-knight-errant is the obvious one, but there are several others. Another think piece possibility is JDM's status as an author in whom there is a meeting of the "underground" literary tradition--the pulps--and the "respectable" tradition of novelist-as-social critic.

((We would be happy to see articles on JDM, McGee, etc. from someone--or anyone. Why not write one yourself? -ljm))

JAMES SANDOE, Boulder, Colorado: Cuthbert (p. 7) with his careful sneer at J. Tey might explain his terms since as female writers go J. Tey was splendidly tough-minded. (So was Lady Macbeth, and Juliet was a lot more proportionate than the agonized Romeo who flung himself on floors and had to be detached from daggers. Perhaps Cuthbert means the Weak and the Strong. I think he could do a little more thinking about it all without hurting himself.) He seems to want a complaining explosion for his heterodoxy like a small child who has written a dirty word on a wall. My complaint may be clearer if I suggest that the word was ELLH. Buster needs to learn to spell and speak and then we might find what he says worth an answer.

While Buster is learning to spell he might try reading a play by Gordon Daviot, Richard of Bordeaux, to see if the same findings are found. Or Gordon Daviot's Kif which is early Tey indeed (1929).

((No comment -ljm))

CHESTER J. SKINDER, Wareham, Mass.: Personally, I would like to see you drop the data on the early short stories of JDM, and use the space perhaps for book reviews and news of other suspense and mystery writers. I rather think you will run out of material if you stick to JDM. But perhaps you could limit your magazine to MacDonalds, John D., Ross and Philip. I don't think George would qualify.

((The original purpose of this publishing project was--and is--to compile a complete-as-possible checklist of all of JDM's published writings. Actually, we have published all of the clue sheets and are now preparing the final phase of the project, which is the publication of the Master Checklist. If and when we run out of material about JDM and his works, we will simply stop publishing JDMB. There are two other journals covering the mystery/detective field--see News & Previews, this issue. -ljm))

CLAY KIMBALL, Draper, N.C.: I'm in favor of keeping other mystery authors out of JDMB. I have no interest in mystery writing in general. I just like MacDonald and a couple of others--like Donald Hamilton.

I have a couple of English reprints of Street & Smith mags that carry JDM stories. They are: Street & Smith's Detective Monthly (reprints of Doc Savage). #4-(March 1955) Bonded In Death (by "Henry Rieser"), #6-(May 1955) Private War, and #10-(Sept. 1955) The Deadly Game of Darts. Interested readers might be able to pick these up at considerably less cost than comparable American issues.

HARRY WARNER, Jr., Hagerstown, Md.: Although it has nothing to do with MacDonald specifically, I hope you noticed the new release by Pocket Books of an assortment of pulp magazine hardboiled detective fiction. It runs heavily to big name authors, contains nothing by JDM, but it might signify a lot of future reprinting from the same source.

The big feature of the eighth JDMB for me is the exposition of the writer's philosophy that closes his letter. I wonder if this outlook on life might not be more prevalent than we assume among the authors who were famous for their happy endings? It's something like the theory that violence in fiction provides a useful release for emotions and impulses which the reader might work off in more harmful ways, a release that is possible because the violence and anti-social behavior of so many characters occupies perhaps 98% of the wordage. The reader can then rapidly and quickly forget the final pages in which the malefactors are punished and the meek inherit the earth. In just the same way, maybe Dickens, Reade, and many another old-fashioned author poured into their novels what they really thought about the randomness of events through the first 224,000 words of those enormous stories, then added

another thousand words or two of vindication and revenge and happy people walking off into the sunset as a sop to their readers' consciences.

I would still feel much better if you considered these letters of comment as evidence of my interest in the JDMB and my appreciation for it, rather than as candidates for inclusion in your letter section. It looks as if I'm trying to make myself at home in a burgeoning new fandom where I would be exposed as a fakefan pretty soon, because of my lack of thorough reading experience and my failure to collect this type of fiction.

However, the letter section in general makes me more impressed than ever by the lone wolf mystery fanac that has obviously been occurring for years. I gather that many of these people have been accumulating data and drawing up reference lists for their own satisfaction, without awareness of one another. This must be just how things happened in science fiction fandom before the first prozine letter columns put fans into touch with one another. If you serve as the same catalyst, maybe mystery fandom will someday award LenJunes for outstanding accomplishments.

I normally try to fill two full pages when I write a letter of comment. But out of consideration for the condition of this ribbon, I won't make that effort tonight. I don't know if the phenomenon can be observed in California, where you don't have temperature extremes, but ribbons get much worse during a bitter cold spell with extra-dry air, even though the temperature remains the same indoors and the humidity inside the house is increased a little by running water, cooking, breathing, and other human activities. Come to think of it, there might be a gimmick for a mystery story, where the evidence about the dates when letters were written depended on the progressive lightening of the typing, and everyone but the hero overlooked the fact that weather conditions could cause mistakes in this chronology.

((Harry, you don't have to be a hardcore whodunit buff to qualify for our lettercolumn. We're happy to have you on our JDMB list because you always write interesting letters, no matter what the subject. One of these days we might even con you into writing a review of...say, THE GIRL, THE GOLD WATCH AND EVERYTHING...yes? -ljm))

MICHAEL AVALLONE, Old Bridge, N.J.:

...THE SOLID GOLD MACDONALD...

I consider the JDM BIBLIOPHILE a serious matter, so if you'll allow me some random items of dissa and data on Thy Literary God, permit me. These notes may not add to the Legend but they certainly won't detract from it:

a. For years now I have differentiated between John D. MacDonald and John Ross Macdonald simply by John Mack and Ross Mack. This is quite effective even though your JDM is perfect, though I suspect you really mean, subconsciously, Just Damn McNificent. Happily John Mack and Ross Mack are completely disparate writers. Not desparate--disparate. I deliberately didn't use the (sic).

b. John Mack was elected President of Mystery Writers of American in 1962. This is an honorary post for one year's tenure and he handled it with aplomb. The major item of interest in this is that he was the first and thus far only paperback writer ever to achieve the post. No small potatoes, that, and a sign of what MWA thought of him as a professional mystery writer despite his absence in hardcovers. A "condition" now gone with the wind.

c. John Mack calls WEEP FOR ME "clumsy" and acknowledges it is an imitation of James M. Cain. This is because every author in the suspense field has a Postman-Always-Rings-Twice-doom-novel in his keys, but he is far too modest about WEEP FOR ME. It isn't "bad" at all; it simply didn't strike the same funereal notes that Cain's classic does. Still, as early John Mack, it is very good indeed; in fact, it brought him a lot of early attention.

d. In our field, most of the byliners consider John Mack a Pro's Pro or Writer's Writer; a la actor's actor and ballplayer's ballplayer. Or putting it even simply--he is the professional writer, in a successful and artistic sense, that most of the

crowd would like to emulate. You can see by his credits, he has literally traveled the road from the ground up--pulp-action to paperback suspense to hardcover novels.

e. He does demean adaptation as a writing skill--screenplays into novels--but that is to be expected, in a way. Collaboration (of any kind) is always difficult for a genuine talent but I would argue his position--novelizing a screenplay into a good book is no pink tea. Just asking a playwright to adapt a great book for the stage is a challenge, etc. But believe me, his experience with the Judy Garland movie is by no means an exemplar--he just ran into a soap opera with music, and that would have taken three Dickens, two Londons and five MacDonalds to straighten out. Similarly, there are far too many publishing reasons for pseudonyms to go into here--but nobody can ever be "careless".

f. Finally, the trouble with all writing is that it is Hard Work and no one knows better than JDM, and while watching any worthwhile author grow into something memorable, it is always just as important to look back and remember When...and I'll bet anybody ten dollars to a wet noodle, JDM has a lot of old copies of yellowing pulp mags that signaled the start of a great career.

((Generally we agree with your remarks--which we really should have printed as an article--except that we don't think that JDM does demean adaptation as a writing skill. He once said that he would rather "catch hot anvils in his teeth than attempt to write a screenplay" which indicates to us that he does have respect for script writers, but prefers to stick to his own methods of story telling.-ljm))

FRANCIS M. NEVINS, Jr., Roselle Park, N.J.: Not the least interesting feature of #8 was the fascinating commentary on chance which I apparently provoked JDM into writing. Apparently he thought I was criticizing him for not reassuring us and for not painting in black and white; actually, his determination not to conceal the "immutable randomness of reality" and the "constant gross inequity" is precisely one of the distinctive elements that leads me, along with Anthony Boucher and many others, to regard JDM as an honest and serious writer rather than a contriver of escape fiction. If I ever begin to crave the "accepted equations" JDM mentions, I shall at once found a Clarence Budington Kelland Bibliophile. When I referred to JDM's frustration of the natural but immature desire for a "comeuppance" ending as unpleasant, I was merely saying in another way that the truth hurts. (Incidentally, JDM's comments on chance and inequity not only illuminate his own writings but could also serve as a preface to the work of Cornell Woolrich, for example his "Too Nice a Day to Die" in The Dark Side of Love, Walker 1965.)

On to other polemics. From the standpoint of characterization, jmm, I must agree with what you said about Rex Stout. But where I disagree with you (although I may be misinterpreting your views here) is with regard to your implication that characterization is the sole, or at least the most significant, criterion in evaluating mystery fiction. To my mind that position is an unduly strong reaction against the one-sided thesis of Van Dine and Barzun that the plot is all and that good writing and character-drawing is an excrescence. My own bias is closer to the flexible, eclectic view of Boucher, who accepts different degrees of excellence in plotting, character-drawing and writing in different authors, and who neither criticizes JDM for not creating involuted intellectual puzzles nor faults Erle Stanley Gardner for flat writing.

And somehow ((somehow? Hah! -jmm)) that brings me to those unflattering parentheses about ESG. No, I was not kidding when I put Gardner's name with Carr, Christie and Queen. ((I didn't really think you were -jmm)) I'm currently engaged in a running fight on this subject with Al Hubin, who seems to agree with you completely about ESG and who has asked me to write a piece on Gardner for The Armchair Detective. If you have the time, I'd appreciate your help on this project in the form of raising, either by private letter or in JDMB, every objection to Gardner as a major mystery writer that you can muster. The project needs a good devil's advocate. (And somehow that reminds me--I'm now a full-fledged member of the New Jersey bar.) ((So sue me--jmm)) ((Seriously, though, it seems to me that once-upon-a-time, the Perry Mason

stories--just for an example--were inhabited by at least semi-living characters, instead of robots. Or was I just younger and less crotchety then? Or is it that Gardner runs his plots at the same machine-gun speed that he turns out his stories? I read "The Jeweled Butterfly" in the current EQMM, and found the characters believable enough, but the same exceedingly fast-paced plotting. I wish I had read it when it first came out, so as to have a basis of comparison between my attitude now and then. One's tastes do change, you know! -jmm))

((We have already answered Mr. Nevins's letter, but perhaps our readers have some comments which they may send to us or to THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE...ljm))

BJO TRIMBLE, Los Angeles, Calif.: We got JDM Bibliophile, and I read it with interest, especially MacDonald's letter. His points on people being born as a random factor, and so on, are well-taken, and I am suddenly very, very appreciative of being alive. Even more so than usual, and I am usually rather happy about the situation. I also think that death seems a bit more understandable (from the point of accepting it) than it ever has before. I've never quite gotten over the death of my husband's mother, you know, but now I'm simply grateful for the time I knew her; it is stupid and illogical to fuss over the inevitable.

In that sort of "mystery", I'm awfully happy about the two small children we've got, too. This is a very new idea to me, and I wonder if it will help still those nightmares of having one or both of the children die? It is something I will ponder for a long, long time.

But I must admit that it won't make some of JDM's books any easier to read; if Real Life As She Must Be Lived is so random and inexplicable, it is ever so much more relaxing to know (at least now and then) that a book isn't going to sock you between the eyes with that fact! On the other hand, there are times when I can take anything JDM can hand out; depends on how much Real Life I've had to put up with lately, I guess.

Of course, many people can read something particularly nasty and think "but.... that can't really happen..." and I can't do that. Mom was a deputy sheriff too long, and she brought home too many casualties of human cruelty (the nearest police station/juvenile hall was 18 miles away over terrible roads, and winter made it difficult to drive with a hysterical, hurt, hopped-up kid trying to Get Away, as it were, so mother sometimes brought these people home, and we patched up what we could, physically and mentally.)

Nearly forgot to add that we've got a new catch-line around here, when things go wrong. John used to say he was going to move to Samoa, but now he starts muttering about going to Cuernavaca and opening an art colony...

BILL WILSON, East Point, Ga.: As to "Three For McGee", apparently Doubleday didn't give the book much of a promotion. I tried for it at two bookstores in Atlanta without success, and wound up putting in a special order for it. I haven't seen a Publisher's Weekly for ages so I don't know what kind of an advance push Doubleday gave the book. It's interesting to see in PW the advance some books get, while others are barely mentioned.

As to Francis M. Nevins Jr.--let me start by explaining that I am a tolerant soul. I believe in everybody to their own kick as long as it doesn't transgress on the rights of the majority of the community; or to have secret vices as long as you don't bug others by trying to get them involved. So to those who like the so-called classic detective novel in which the genius patiently solves the crime for the stupid police, have fun! And for those who like the problem-type crime with all the clues neatly placed for the reader to pick up (and the writer must play fair) and package up, waiting for the denouement to see if he was right, might be considered a good mental fun game. However, for a lawyer to make an unqualified remark by calling Carr, Gardner, Christie and Queen the "supreme untouchables" evokes from me a WHAAAT! ((But what does his being a lawyer have to do with it? Even lawyers are people, and as such, are entitled to personal opinions--which that unquestionably is! -jmm)) Carr

has written some real good stuff, but the others fall strictly into a type. I don't put them down to others for a minute. If you like them, have fun, but please don't take them seriously. Life, people, and crime just aren't that way. I won't attempt any further critique or analysis as Raymond Chandler did it years ago in a couple of essays which are considered by many as classics. I agree with jmm's comments--people are the main interest. ((Why thank you, kind sir -jmm)) Crime is committed by people and involves people. So to be believable, the characters should act and talk as real (or identifiable) people and the situations should be reasonably possible. For example, I think everyone is familiar with the real-life story behind "The Last One Left". The full facts are never published in the newspapers, but are pretty well known to the reporters and the investigators who work on the case. However, there is a lot of difference between what you know and what you can legally prove in court. As to the trick pulled on Crissy in "The Last One Left", this is not unreasonable. With the aid of the powers that be, I worked a similar ploy on a child molester. When put under pressure the subject cracked up and was committed to a mental institution. (This was several years ago.) (Most people who commit continued or multiple crimes are psychopaths and in some cases are borderline psychotics. The latter type are front runners who blow up when they start to lose. A good book concerning this is "The Mask of Sanity".)

As to why JDM thinks "Weep For Me" is lousy, I have an idea--a few years ago I read a short story, or, rather a novelet by Frank Gruber (can't remember the title) which had the same basic plot with a different twist. My theory is, both stories were based on the same actual case and neither author knew of the other's effort. This can and does happen quite frequently since many of the good mysteries and adventure novels are based on actual cases.

Raymond Chandler did very well in the rewrite of actual case material. For example, The Big Sleep is a rewrite of three actual cases which he reworked and added a twist here and there for effect.

To qualify myself, I have been in U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division for 22 years. For some time I specialized in homicide and sex crimes. I have attended the University of Vienna, Institute of Criminology; The Federal Bureau of Narcotics Training School; and the Seminar of Legal Medicine, Medical School, Harvard University, and I am a member of the Harvard Associates in Police Science. Also, for several years I was an instructor at the CID School. For the past couple of years I have been doing case report review. Incidentally, Dr. Helpert, who was instrumental in the Coppolino case was one of my instructors at the Harvard School.

The point I'm getting around to, is I take a busman's holiday reading mysteries and adventure stories. I critique them from a professional standpoint (examples later) and have fun uncovering the elements of the true case on which they are based. To this extent, several years ago I did professional critiques for a writer of mysteries. He used a pen name and was actually well-known in his professional field, but made good money on the side with short stories and novelets. He used to send me the drafts and I'd make professional comments as to the technical competency of his stories, e.g. No policeman with half a brain would be fooled by this, or The slang used by the hood went out several years ago, or While the Luger is one of the finest shooting and most accurate of handguns, due to its shape it is not desirable as a concealed weapon. Incidentally, JDM apparently does a considerable amount of homework on his stories, as I have very little if any criticisms on his stories, and a nit-picker, I ain't!

Anent David Brownell's letter, for those who may be interested, there is an in-depth study of this case, including the family reaction. "The Murderous Trail of Charles Starkweather" by James M. Rinehart (an authority in his field), published by Charles C. Thomas. Unlike "In Cold Blood" (the Clutter murders) which contains some fictional reconstruction, the book concerning Starkweather is completely factual.

To Jack Cuthbert--Stark has a hardcover book about Grosfield, "The Damsel", published by MacMillan. He is a buddy of Parker and was introduced in "The Score". Could be a spin-off for a new series. Under his real name of Westlake he has a new

humorous one called "God Bless The Mark". He also did a fine characterization of a professional killer. If you're interested, I'll look it up. The book was printed several years ago, but should be available from libraries, as it was a hardcover.

Things that writers goof up:

"He carried a .45, a weapon of tremendous firepower." Firepower refers to rate of fire. A handgun does not have a high rate of firepower. What the writer should have said was shockpower. ((Impact power okay? -jmm))

"The Texas Ranger reached for his Frontiersman revolver." The Frontiersman is a single-action revolver, therefore slow. Most Texas Rangers prefer the Colt Army Style .45 automatic.

"He pulled his .38 Detective Special and snicked off the safety." Writer shows his complete ignorance of guns. There is no safety of this type on the gun described.

In general, Lugers, 9mm Mausers, and .357 Magnum revolvers are too big for anything except open hip holsters. And the .357 is larger than the .38!

The Gestapo used the Walther PPK 7.65 automatic and was a plainclothes outfit. No uniforms or armbands.

Heroin is a depressant drug. A person under its influence is not normally dangerous, but an addict who needs a fix may be capable of most anything.

I have worked with the police of twelve countries in my time, and am pretty familiar with their methods of operation. Some of the things I have read at times have been downright funny.

Finally--more peeves with books, movies and TV--

The detective tastes and/or smells a powder and says "Heroin". I wonder how he does it. I have worked many cases and on one occasion had six pounds of what I suspected was heroin (lab test proved it was). I don't know what heroin tastes like, and smelling it might give one a jolt since many addicts sniff the stuff. The Federal Bureau of Narcotics School teaches never taste a suspected narcotic. Two reasons: one, you can't tell a thing by taste, and second, some hood could slip in a deck loaded with cyanide, and then where would the taster be? Also, there is a simple field test that can be made. Every narcotic investigator knows all about it. This test is made with a small vial of acid, and shows that the product could be an opium derivative.

The detective talks glibly about the Mafia, Syndicate, Organization and cosa nostra as though they were the same thing. One of the many things I like about JDM is that he knows the difference.

The detective walks past an open door (or opens it) and gets slugged by a man hidden behind the door. Question: where has he been working all these years?

The detective sees a body (obviously dead) and while busybodying around the corpse either gets slugged from behind or the murderer escapes. Any experienced investigator knows that when you find a corpse you get busy and secure the scene and search it. The medical examiner will take care of the body.

I can see an amateur doing and/or being taken by any of the above, but a pro--ye gods!

Finally: The hero in a denouement shows the suspect that he is the only one who could have committed the crime, so the suspect either screams out his guilt or obligingly commits suicide, or engages the hero in a death struggle. I had two real experiences that might be interesting to you: I confronted a chemical engineer with the "only one" bit. His reply was, "That's really interesting, but I'm afraid, old boy, that you can't prove a thing." On another occasion I confronted a toughie with

the "only one" and he told me to go and commit a physical impossibility.
 ((Ever read Stephen Leacock's "The Great Detective"? -jmm))
 ((Bill, you should be writing a regular column for THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE or for
 THE MYSTERY LOVERS NEWSLETTER, or even for JDMB...! -ljm))

JACK CUTHBERT, Greensburg, Pa: To Barbara J. Hendra, Fawcett Pub.: The information regarding Philip Atlee and E. Aarons was appreciated BUT Fawcett has published six of P. Atlee's Joe Gall books--not four. The one in March should be #7. Names on request. Really!!

In my letter in #8, in amongst my dissertation on female writers and male female writers, a certain jmm sticks in her proboscis ((you damn betcha! -jmm)) and says--I quote: "You will have to include JDM in your category of male female writers...as his female admirers at least equal if not outnumber the males..." I will do nothing of the sort, by jeebers! You have not interpreted the true meaning of the term "male female writer". To me, he is one--or even her is one--who directly slants or directs his or her writing to a certain type of female reader. For example--Frank Slaughter, Frank Yerby, and the numerous writers of both sexes who turn out those Gothics which have a cover picture of a distressed ((with no hair, you mean? -jmm)) maiden standing adjacent to a broken-down castle, etc. etc.

((Gee, I'm glad you defined your terms--but wothell does all this garbage have to do with Josephine Tey? I'm beginning to doubt that you've ever read anything by her. Maybe you're thinking of Faith Baldwin--or Marie Corelli. -jmm))

JDM does not belong in this crew,((now here I agree with you -jmm)) as I doubt he slants his writing toward any particular type mind--male or female--except those who enjoy suspense-action and suchlike.

Anyhow--all female type characters do not go for romantic tripe--whoops--type books. Therefore, there are those who enjoy such as JDM, Hemingway, Conrad, Aarons, even Winnie-the-Pooh. ((You left out Steinbeck--you prejudiced or something? -jmm))

As for my usage of the term female writer etc. sounding Victorian--why not? I remember the Queen well. Also Lincoln. Anyhow, anybody who recalls "Archie the Manager"ain't no chicken. ((Oh? And what were you doing the night of the Johnstown flood? -jmm)) I could have used "broadminded writer" but feared misinterpretation.

Re Gold Medal non-original reprints, that seems to happen every so often. Just recently, a small epidemic of Alistair MacLean books came out under the Gold Medal label, although all were former hard covers.

BOB BRINEY, 176 E. Stadium Ave., West Lafayette, Ind. 47906: Why don't you include the full addresses of the contributors to "Please Write For Details"? It would be a great convenience to your readers--sometimes a published comment or question just cries for a reply, and it is inconvenient to wait until the next JDMB; in addition, the matter may not be directly relevant to JDM, and so might never get into the magazine anyway... ((How can you say such a thing, Bob? Read the letter preceding yours! -jmm)) Anyone who wishes to remain unaddressed can tell you so, and you can leave out his/her address.

For what it is worth: on my recent passage through Chicago (on the way to visit relatives for Christmas), I checked all the downtown bookstores that I could get to--about 8 of them--and found that only ONE of them had THREE FOR McGEE. (This was the book dept. of Marshall Fields.) Krochs & Bréntanos, supposedly the largest bookstore in the city, professed to have never heard of the book... Is this poor publicity on Doubleday's part, or just contrariness on the part of the bookstores?

Re: Andy Zerbe's letter in JDMB8: apparently Fawcett has abandoned their Gold Medal original vs. Crest reprint dichotomy, at least with regard to authors who have a number of genuine originals on the Gold Medal list. Some of the Gold Medal "originals" by JDM are in fact reprints from earlier Dell First Edition paperbacks; and JDM's A FLASH OF GREEN, originally a Simon & Schuster hardcover, was first reprinted by Crest and then reissued as a Gold Medal book. Same for Donald Hamilton; NIGHT

WALKER was a Dell First Edition paperback before Gold Medal reprinted it, and THE STEEL MIRROR had a hardcover edition in 1948 and (I think) a pb edition earlier than the Gold Medal one. ## As for the recent Ellery Queen paperbacks not listed in the CBI, the periodic BOOKS IN PRINT volumes list all of these. Although I am an EQ fan, I have stopped keeping track of these paperbacks; most of them are terrible, and I have heard rumors from several sources (who should know) that the books are not in fact written by Dannay and Lee, but are farmed out by a literary agent to any author who happens to need a few hundred bucks. The same rumors apply to recent "Ed McBain" and "Richard Prather" paperbacks, and the sharp drop in quality of many of these books lends credence to the rumors...

I recently checked over my collection of MacDonald books, and find that I lack only one title. Wouldn't you know it would have to be the one book that MacDonald does not want reprinted! ((Weep For Me))

Note to anyone listening at Fawcett: please reprint Donald Hamilton's THE BIG COUNTRY and THE MAN FROM SANTA CLARA. My copies are old and ragged from much re-reading, and I have not been able to find better ones. The books are two of Hamilton's best.

((We do publish readers' full addresses when they request it, or indicate that they have no objection to the practice. So those of you who want your full addresses printed in PWFD must so advise us...ljm))

DENNIS RICHARD, Lawrence, Mass.: Would you know if the Baker Street Journal is still being published--and the address?

((Baker Street Journal--Quarterly, from Dr. Julian Wolfe, 33 Riverside Drive, New York, N. Y. 10023. \$4.00 per year. -ljm))

PAUL KNIEPP, New York, N. Y.: It would seem that with my facetious remark about being against Troy Donahue playing Travis McGee, I opened a bucket of worms. But, since it seems to have become a kind of game to suggest actors suitable to captain the Busted Flush, I think I'll haul off and give you my suggestion. First, tho', a few qualifying requisites. He should be masculine, but not brutish. Solidly built, but not Muscle Beach-y. Good looking, but not pretty. Hard, when need be, but capable of tenderness. And, of course, he should be a good actor. Darned if that doesn't sound just like Brian Keith to me. And how do you like Norman Fell for Meyer? If I were doing the casting, they'd be them!

((See News & Previews, this issue--ljm))

MRS. LARRY L. KEELEY, Jacksonville, N.C.: I would like to see all (of the McGee stories) in hardcovers, even though I have them in paperback.

((Mrs. Keeley's wishes are shared by all of us McGee buffs. Anybody awake and listening at Doubleday? -ljm))

DAVE STAMPFLI, Carrolton, Mo.: It was interesting to note in Mr. M's letter how my two favorite authors worked out the conflict over their similarity in names. It was, however, just such a mixup in names that put me on the track of JDM back in 1958 when I picked up a novel thinking it was another "Lew Archer thriller". Needless to say, I've been a JDM fan ever since.

I can readily understand why JDM is reluctant to have some of his "pre-dawn" works republished, and he is, after all, absolutely right in his reasoning. Far be it for me to set myself up as any sort of a critic, but just from what I've read in your clue sheets I would say that a number of JDM's "early-vintage" stories are still heads and shoulders above many of the current crime mysteries that regularly hit the paperback racks. If a selection of the oldies can be published under a "house name" as JDM suggests, I would certainly look forward to it.

((Likewise, we're sure! -lj&jm m))

KEN & RITA TOOKER, Pittsburgh, Pa.: Rita Tooker's comment: "I feel that John D. MacDonald's writing is far superior to most others in the field. I have felt for some time that John D's writings probably have not been properly promoted. So many authors of inferior works receive far better promotion, and I wonder if perhaps his publishers have not been remiss in this respect. The reading public is growing by leaps and bounds, there is a voracious appetite for good writing in this field, and John D's work should be brought to the attention of more of that reading public.

Ken Tooker's comment: I thought that "The Last One Left" was a good example of "in depth" development of a story line. (The detailed knowledge that this man John D. MacDonald possesses about almost everything is amazing.) "The Last One Left" is a gripping, exciting story for all of three-quarters of the book, then seems to slow down. I wonder if John D. got a little bored with "in depth" writing, or if perhaps I was in one of my mean, critical moods when I read the last part of the book.

((Try re-reading it, and see what you come up with. -jmm))

We both enjoyed your magazine. Seeing your "want" list of titles brought home to us how naive we had been. You will laugh when we tell you that upon receipt of his list of published books, we immediately wrote the various publishers, ordering copies of all the books we had not read. Since most of those show up on the "wants", we are doubtless doomed to be disappointed. So we will start asking our friends to look in their attics. (Do you Californians have attics? Those are third floors, you know. This is a neighborhood of larger houses, built when many people had large families, so most of the houses in this area of Pittsburgh, called Squirrel Hill, are houses with attics.)

((I was raised in Pennsylvania and know old attics well. I've seen nothing that I would qualify as a real attic in California, but June, a native Californian, claims that the older houses out here do have real honest-to-gawd attics. -ljm And basements, too! -jmm))

LEE HOFFMAN, New York, N.Y.: I am completely off my head about the Travis McGee books, and have also found them very valuable in my work. Every once in a while I read a spate of new Western pbs, and usually end up depressed as hell because they're so badly written. When this happens, I read a MacDonald and it cheers me up. It shows me distant goals to aspire to. It leads me again to appreciate how bloody much I have yet to learn about the fine craft of fiction writing.

By the way, in recent weeks I have turned three friends onto McGee. Am presently plugging the hardcover, as per your instructions.

((And we take this opportunity to plug Lee's Western pbs--which are NOT badly written! -ljm))

GEORGE C. HOYT, Jr., Sepulveda, Calif.: I have compiled a large want list of magazine stories by JDM. Do you have any idea where I can buy them?

((Used bookstores often carry old mags as well as books. And there are mail order houses that deal in old mags. Some charge ridiculous prices, but perhaps some of our readers can advise us of the fair dealers. Thanks for the checklist info, George. We are slowly but surely Getting There! -ljm))

LEONARD BROOM, 337 E. 50th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022: I've been rereading JDMB8 which, as I told you, is just elegant--the best yet. At the same time, there are some disturbing thoughts that emerge from closer scrutiny of the two MacDonald letters in it. Is he going high-hat on us? This hardcover kick--on 7,000 copies he sure as shooting ain't going to get rich and, while I've never been one to knock a man for trying to improve his status, I can't help wondering if it's just that. Is JDM abandoning his genre?

Granted that one function of the novelist is moral comment and that he must have the prerogative of choosing his themes and approaches, I am nevertheless perturbed at the possibility that our favorite author is about to pull a Truman Capote with a pretentiously promoted "non-fiction novel".

I have more faith in MacDonald's ability to pull off something like this than I have in most of his contemporaries but what is he trying to prove? Surely one of the few advantages every moralist from Swift on has had is the freedom to base his comments on events in an artificial universe. To confine oneself to the petty sordidness of the mundane seems unnecessarily restrictive. Let Capote play in that ball park; let MacDonald swing in McGee's world--where he can alter circumstances to fit his cases.

It's not so much that MacDonald won't make beautiful music with the Coppolino caper, but rather that he can do other things so well that it seems a pity for him to be wasting time on the Coppolino trials.

And that's precisely the point. Have you considered what this brush with reality has done to MacDonald's output? For fifteen years we've been able to look forward to something like four new JDM titles a year. 1967 brought forth exactly two--and one of them came so early that it really should be counted as a 1966 publication. The Coppolino thing will have to be pretty damn good to make up for that. I'm not convinced it will be--and I shudder to think of the bleak future ahead for all of us in a world where JDM comes out once a year making like a latterday Rebecca West.

I'm fascinated at the news that McGee's adventures are planned to end with #12. If it works out that way we'll miss him--but MacDonald's non-series stuff is so good that I daresay we can learn to live without the gent from the Busted Flush. By the way, it occurs to me that I may have given the impression it was exclusively McGee yarns I'd miss if JDM switched to a rich diet of "No Deadly Drugs"--actually, even more than the McGees it's JDM's general output over the years--things like "The Only Girl In The Game", "The Drowner", "The Last One Left", even "The Girl The Gold Watch" and Everything (that punctuation is deliberate--as it should be from a fan who even treasures "Please Write For Details".)

((Mr. Broom's sweeping statements brought a personal reply from us. We were going to use part of it here, but first let's see what the rest of you have to say... -ljm))

DAVID MEAD, Gainesville, Fla.: Did you know that the UoF Library has asked for JDM's manuscripts, proofs, letters, etc.? And that John obliged? We now have a good many of his papers, including the various versions of A FLASH OF GREEN. There is a strong interest in Florida writers here; the main interest so far has been in the "literary" writers, mainly Marjorie Rawlings, Richard Powell, James Leo Herlihy. I've been calling John to everyone's attention and, with luck, the Florida Quarterly will have a contribution to JDM Bibliography sometime in the next year or two. Is it legitimate to prime the pump--like wonder in print why Florida's most prolific and best-selling writer is being/has been ignored in the FQ? ((Yes -jmm))

I met Mr. MacDonald this past summer in Sarasota, while chaperoning a field trip for some bright highschool students from Tallahassee. They had all read a couple of the McGee stories and were quite interested in hearing John talk about his writing. I think they were a bit shaken to find him so unlike McGee. I think John told us that Travis was originally "Tampa". Travis got his name after several abortive attempts at characterization. ((Not "Tampa"--"Dallas". -ljm))

CHARLOTTE TAYLOR, Katonah, N. Y.: Sean Connery play Travis McGee?? Over my dead--SEAN CONNERY!!//??*&\$# T-E-KKK!! Mrs. Keeley, bite your tongue!

Now, may I nominate my favorite man in the whole world to play TMCG? He has the looks, the build, and he's "boatish", though engine is a dirty word to a sailing man. Sterling Hayden. JDM might change his mind about preferring an unknown, I hope. ((See News & Previews. -jmm))

EARLY

J. D.

(Reprinted from JDMB No. 2)

by ED COX

The greater part of fandom probably became acquainted with the writing of John D. MacDonald with the appearance of The Girl, the Gold Watch and Everything. Somewhat older fans might have remembered a number of MacDonald science-fiction stories appearing in ASTOUNDING, the Thrilling Magazines, even in WEIRD TALES. But it was the appearance of the first-named novel that fired the enthusiasm of current fandom, and the advent of the Travis McGee stories that caused fans to go after the older and many paperback novels with his byline, usually a guarantee of good reading. As a result, probably a lot of fans know him only by his paperback (and those who can afford the hard-cover) novels.

I remember the early J. D., the few that I have of, if I remember reading correctly, several hundred short stories he sold before The Brass Cupcake heralded his ascendancy to the paperback throne.

Here we will take a look at his stories in a limited selection. Only those I happen to have in DOC SAVAGE and SHADOW Magazines. It appears that he started selling (to Street & Smith, at least) in mid-1946, his first printed story in this market appearing in the August 1946 DOC SAVAGE Magazine. If these two are a weathervane to his output in all the other myriad mystery and detective magazines still extant in those years, it would appear that it was about here that he started selling any stories of any type. This remains to be verified by those with runs of other pulp magazines in the field.

But these stories do show glimpses, a continuing improvement, that finally became a polished, alive style of writing now to be found in any of his novels. It was possibly the fall of the pulp field that caused the original paperback field to flower into the major fiction business it is today, and with it, the number of novels that could be published that the hard-cover publishers couldn't fit into their output. It was our gain.

Let's get to the stories.

"The Dry Mouth of Danger", novelette, DOC SAVAGE, August 1946. This first, of this group, sets the pattern for most of them. Usually they were first person, an unattached young man, a veteran of the recent World War II, almost always out of some branch of military intelligence (OSS a lot!), and an overseas setting in the Far East. This one takes place in Ceylon, and the hero is dissatisfied with his job, unadjusted to the world and looking for excitement and danger. He finds it by becoming mixed up in a smuggling game...and murder! He gets tabbed for it, and we have a pursuit of the quarry business with him finally solving it and getting off to more excitement, we presume.

"The Dead Dream", short story, THE SHADOW, September 1946. Same pattern, only shorter. Hero is bored with post-war office job after OSS excitement during the war. Finds lovely girl, gets mixed up with her personal problems and murder. And, like our previous hero, gets tabbed as a "fall guy". He gets out of this one via the old gimmick method. But a trace of the nostalgia for Something that appears, blended so smoothly, in his current novels makes its appearance.

"Justice in the Sun", short story, DOC SAVAGE, October 1946. Back to the mid-east, India (wherever it is) this time. Our hero gets into a little trouble with some local snobbery and winds up getting framed for murder. A little gimmickry and he gets out of the local bastille and kidnaps his suspect, forcing a confession from him out in the desert. Local police give him a break for his methods, and that is the end of this frothy bit, exhibiting a bit of humor, off-hand.

"The Little People", novelette, DOC SAVAGE, November 1946. Here we have some of the MacDonald that was to come in bigger, better novel-size chunks, a fine story that exhibits his ability to quickly sketch in a character, his background, hopes, aspirations, some quality of him as a human being...whatever kind. This is the story of a scrummy piece of humanity name of Turin, who plotted an elaborate plot to take over a small upstate New York town, clean it out and make a clean getaway, using trucks and a plane, machine guns and brutality. It takes us from the beginning, where it is a big, shiny, air-tight plan, to the end where, bit by bit from the start, the little people smash off a chunk here and there, going down fighting, until Turin and what remains of his company wind up in a big ball of tin.

"The Whispering Knives", short story, THE SHADOW, November 1946. Another character piece. A cold little story set in a small Pennsylvania coal-type town, featuring a fearsome rate with a knife, named Santoni, and a big, hard guy who came back, and got Santoni. Rather simple, unrounded story like "Justice in the Sun", but the two characters stand out. Working, working...

"A Bat in the Hall", short story, THE SHADOW, December 1946. Another short, hard bit, rough and incomplete-seeming, it centers on a private-guard type who got into a bit of trouble and compounded it to where he couldn't get out of it. It was called murder.

Unfortunately, that's the end of the SHADOWS that I have, but he kept appearing as long as they lasted. The new Shadow Mystery starting in January 1947 contained "You've Got To Be Cold". It also contained Anthony Boucher. Anybody have these? From here on, MacDonald is almost the co-feature with the routine DOC SAVAGE novels in that magazine. I doubt if Dent wrote many of them, and a strong co-feature probably helped sell that magazine.

"Private War", novelette, DOC SAVAGE, December 1946. This wasn't one of the good, big co-features! It is probably one of the least smooth MacDonalds of this era in these two magazines. It was also tabbed as the start of a series and was specifically written for the magazine, mentioning Doc Savage in the story. Benton Walters, our hero, is yet another guy bored with his office job after being in the recent war (Engineers, this time). So he chucks the job and somehow gets into a civilian cloak-and-dagger type business directly concerned with the cold war. It has its moments, sometimes rather humorous, but it is crude and the action and continuity expect a lot of help from the reader. It was another in a light, offhand manner, breezy hero, etc. Not exactly the MacDonald that was to come, or even of "The Little People".

Whether or not there were more Benton Walters stories, I don't know, missing the bulk of the 1947 issues, but the next story finds MacDonald a cover-name, with:

"Or the World Will Die", novel, DOC SAVAGE Science Detective Mag., Nov-Dec 1947. This was a science-fiction story inasmuch as it was laid two years in the future, but other than that it was quite a bit more of a cloak-and-dagger story than any mentioned above. Cartier illustration, by the way. Here is full-grown MacDonald featuring all the instant and in-the-round characterization at which he has become a master. Again the hero was an OSS type in the War, but has gone to writing very

successful novels (MacDonald predicting...?). A government agent wants him to come back for a desperate job needed to be done. Somebody, and I mean Somebody, is kiboshing our efforts to complete a radiation-detecting device that would end forever the sneak-building of atomic weapons. The things have been outlawed, but who can trust anybody? Hero declines, but is chilled into cold anger and takes the assignment, on his own hook and expense, when he finds that the man has been killed.

He recruits two old buddies still working for the government, but tied down to non-exciting desk jobs. One is a lovely girl-type who he once had eyes for, but who is hopelessly in love with the other, a old buddy. So this threesome checks out clue after clue, and ends up down in Texas near the site of the installation working on this device. Lots of shooting and killing wind up this tale of suspense and sneaky-spy-like stuff. It's comparable with some of his later novels.

"The Cold Trail of Death", novel, DOC SAVAGE etc., May-June 1948. This one could come out in paperback and nobody'd worry about it being a pulp reprint. It is more like one of the Dell or Gold Medal novels than anything heretofore mentioned so far. The hero comes back from the war, bitter, disillusioned and rather works himself hollow-cheeked, trying to forget the woman who divorced him while overseas.

But after working two-and-a-half years, nonstop, it doesn't work, and the boss says take a vacation. So he goes to a wonder-laden spot that they had gone to on their honeymoon, maybe to purge the old ghost. And finds murder. HER! It is a chilling scene, written with the MacDonald touch that is now standard excellence. And he goes on the track, on his own, to find out what happened, who did it, to wreak his own vengeance. Here you can settle down to enjoy another good MacDonald, that same attitude I have when I start any MacDonald paperback. I'm surprised this hasn't been issued in paperback. It's worth it. Excellent J. D.

"Deep Death", novel, DOC SAVAGE, Sept-Oct 1948. Everything I said about the above novel can be said about this one as to its excellence and handling. This time another ex-OSS type, now in the private-eye biz in New York, goes upstate at the request of his old C.O. to help him out with a Problem. One settles down to enjoy, enjoy, and is immediately rewarded. All the hallmarks of the John D. MacDonald novel are here, the quick and/or in-depth characters, plot, description, and more and sexier women than before, plus an added ingredient: humor. Remember Please Write For Details? A preview of the hilarity to come in that novel is amply blended into this one, which has its grim moments. By now, The Brass Cupcake had made its Gold Medal debut, and I'll bet that if the paperback field was as large then as it is now, this one and probably "The Cold Trail of Death" would've seen paperback publication. I think they could stand publication now in that form. For the MacDonald buffs, it wouldn't hurt to get ahold of these last three items, they are worth it if you can find them.

A final note. In these same DOC SAVAGE magazines, other authors whose bylines are probably familiar to the hard-boiled school of detective story readers were very much in evidence. Edward Ronns, Thorne Lee, Bruno Fischer, etc., but after all these years and early Gold Medal publication, MacDonald is the only one who seems to have made it Big. But then, that could be because I don't follow the field that closely, and do follow MacDonald very closely. You sort of have to run to keep up..!

-Ed Cox

(Reprinted from JDMB No. 2)

Reprinted from:

* THE JDM BIBLIOPHILE, No. 3, August 1966 (Biblio-File No. 4). Published by *
* Len Moffatt, 5804 E. Gage Avenue, Apt. 5, Bell Gardens, California, 90201, *
* for the August 1966 FAPA Mailing, with extra copies going to interested *
* persons outside of FAPA. Edited by Len Moffatt, June Konigsberg and Ed Cox. *

E D I T O R I A L

We sent a copy of our 2nd issue to Mr. MacDonald, and wondered what his reaction would be. We were reasonably sure that he would react favorably, but I must say that his response was something more than we had expected. (For the benefit of new readers, we might explain that we had not sent a copy of the 1st issue to JDM, as it was simply a one-sheet ditographed listing of his published novels. He had sent this list to Ron Ellik some time ago, and there was no point in supplying a busy writer with information he already had...)

To give you an idea of what I'm talking about, I'll quote from his letter of comment:

"Received the JDM Bibliophile No. 2...and wish to report that I am non-founded and dumb-plussed. The pin has gone through the thorax and I am here under glass, wings spread."

Ed Cox's article ("Early JD"), covering some of the MacDonald stories that appeared in Doc Savage and The Shadow magazines deserves most of the credit for Mr. MacDonald's response. It served to get him interested in digging up some of his old magazine stories, in the hopes of getting them reprinted in paperback. In so doing, he is helping us to compile a list of the stories he has had in magazines over the years. We plan to publish as complete a listing as possible, devoting several pages each issue to the project. In this issue you will find a partial listing of the JDM magazine stories most likely to be of interest to science-fiction and fantasy fans. The information on the stories listed this time was supplied by Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Ed Cox.

Regarding his plan to get some of his older stories reprinted, JDM says: "My stipulation for publication, which he (the publisher) understands, would be that they should be prominently labeled as Very Early Me. I do not believe I would care to re-write. It would be like making genuine original worm holes in the wormy chestnut."

Personally, I don't think some of those early JDM stories are really "wormy chestnut", compared to some pulp writers of that era, but I couldn't resist quoting that paragraph, as it does give us some idea of what kind of man this author is.

Thanks to JDM we have enough material on hand to fill several issues, material that will be of interest to collectors, completist or otherwise. However, there are a number of "unidentified" stories, that is, stories he sold but does not know where or when they appeared. His files are incomplete because pulp publishers were not in the habit of sending tear sheets to their writers, save for the few editors who, as JDM puts it, "took on the chore as a favor".

"You had to prowl the newsstands and check them all to get file copies," says JDM, "So when we were out of the country for a year, holes appeared in the records."

So, this project consists of two operations. (1) Publish a list of all the "identified" JDM magazine stories. (2) Track down the ones we know about (thanks to clues supplied by JDM) and then list them... We may never come up with a complete list, but we would appreciate help from those of you who are in a position to supply the missing information.

You may or may not be interested in helping an already successful author complete his records (and perhaps make some money from reprints), but some of you, I am sure, are interested in bibliophilia.... Sounds like a disease; maybe it is, but a rather enjoyable one.

As I said in my last editorial, I'm not a completist collector, and do not plan to try and collect every story JDM has had published--but I am interested in bibliographic information in as complete a form as possible, so that I can find the stories I may want to collect and read. I might add that JDM has appeared in all kinds of magazines, pulp and slick...detective, sports, mystery, western, women's magazines, and on into the night. And I used to think that Fredrick (Max Brand) Faust was prolific!

About Travis McGee: DARKER THAN AMBER, the 7th in the series, has been on the stands for a couple of months. The final draft of #8, titled ONE FEARFUL YELLOW EYE, was completed in May. JDM was working on the "9th McGee" early in June.

"My accomplice, T. McGee," says JDM, "is to date published in the Queen's English, and in Danish, Norwegian, German, Portugese, Spanish, Italian, Swedish, Dutch, Israeli and Japanese. The Japanese bit bemuses me. Stories of McGeesan. Though a lot of the other works appear in French, it appears that McGee won't. Reason: The French publishers do not believe in series characters. Perhaps because they have one of their own--DeGaulle.

"Add incidental information: I have turned down the 4th substantial offer for the rights to put McGee on the little home boob tube. Not because I am rich and indifferent. Because I am never going to let the cufflink set mess with my boy. He would not translate well. I will entertain a motion picture proposal which would give me artistic control--but for the whiter wash, armpit and hair goo set, nevah!"

To go from the bibliographic to the biographic, I'll quote from a later letter. I wrote to him about the World Science Fiction Convention in Cleveland this fall, and mentioned that after the convention I planned to visit my old stomping grounds in western Pennsylvania. He replied:

"My old stomping grounds in western Pennsylvania are Sharon, where I was born, and that dreary Shenango Valley, Mercer, Farrall, etc. When I was a little kid we had a small, unworked farm we went to for the summer, over in Orangeville, Ohio on the Pymatuning River. Left that area when I was 12. My father changed jobs, went to work in Utica, New York. It so pleased my mother that in the Utica winters the snow didn't get "all dirty" like it did in Sharon.

"I am not one for conferences and conventions...It is my increasingly firm position that anything which requires three or more people to accomplish is doomed from the very beginning--whether it be soccer or Eastman Kodak."

In the same letter, JDM writes of an incident that will remind us of a similar incident in Ray Bradbury's life:

"Once up at our place in the Adirondacks, when my son was about ten, I kept him busy a large portion of one afternoon feeding impossible manuscripts into the burning barrel. Ten grossly swollen boxes which had once contained 500 sheets each of nice unmarred, unblemished bond. He had to feed it into the wire basket a few sheets at a time or it would not burn. I would guess 2 million words. It made a lasting impression on him."

I can add only that John D. MacDonald has made a lasting impression on all of us who have read him with the (how many million?) words he did not burn. Many writers are prolific, but few are as consistently entertaining.

-ljm

(Reprinted from JDMB No. 3)

The author's files indicate that this piece was published by the Spectator Club, possibly in 1948. Our thanks to Mr. MacDonald for permission to reprint it here. Further information as to when and where it first appeared would be appreciated. Of this piece, the author says: "The bit is certainly weird enough." And it is. Weird--and gripping... -ljm

The Spiralled

Myth

Reprinted from:

JDMB No. 3

by John D. MacDonald

As she walked along beside him, she thought that it would be far better if he never walked. Standing, he was white, firm and unified, with bones and flesh neatly arranged in solid pattern. When he walked it was as though a generator bolted to the concrete of a power plant, tore loose the bolts and galumphed away. His white cheeks juggled and shook and the spasm of his step was uncertain and swooping, making her wary lest he might fall.

Walking beside him in the noon streets of the city, she felt contempt and scorn for her own rhythmic articulation of bone, tendon and muscle, activated by the secret and bitter little white nerves in their rubbery casings. It was as though her grace were a playful and slightly nasty little trick.

Because she knew that she was by far the weaker.

The city itself was in evidence against her. It was hard to maintain the tight little smile when she remembered that the city itself did not exist. He was so clever about it, that it was easy to forget.

Of course, he had given himself away when he had constructed the city for her, because he had made it more real than life itself.

He was the sort who enjoyed walking her through the noon streets, proud of his creation of the city and confident that she would never detect the falsity of it.

It would not be wise to let him know that she had long suspected that the city was composed of what he wanted her to see and to believe.

The faces of the people he had put in the city were moist clots of clay thrown against a rotting wall, and their eyes were dead, though still amused.

They scurried and hustled and pushed rudely, hiding their amusement, buffeting the man who had created them in a wonderful frenzy of playing their parts to perfection.

Sometimes when she looked high at the dusty windows shining in the sun, it was hard to remember that the city was not actually there. He was very good with windows.

But he had gone to too great extremes in the sidewalk litter, in the bits of torn paper that rolled in the hot noon wind, in the grey clots of spittle, in the flattened cigarette butts, the green gum wrappers, the sooted puddles. She knew that no city, unless it grew from his mind, would be littered with such intricate perfection.

He never talked while they walked the noon streets, and she knew that he was eager for her to live in this city he had made for her.

But his people were lazy. When she stopped and listened she could hear that the bustle and activity surrounded the area of their walking for but a few blocks. Beyond that was the great silence, where his creatures sat at the base of the walls, motionless, dead and amused.

Once she had turned quickly away from him, had fled down the iron treads to where the trains rumbled. She had almost caught them unaware, caught them sitting quietly on the cool stone, their clay faces quiet and amused.

But in the instant of her arrival, they were in furious activity. The stiles clacked and the trains rumbled and they jostled her with amused scorn, laughing silently at her idea of surprising them.

She walked beside him in the noon streets of the city he had made for her, and as she walked, she touched the tip of her tongue to the tiny stinging gash that his teeth had made on the inside of her lower lip.

That touch of tongue to gash was reality and the city was the fiction he had made.

She knew that there would be many more noons when they would walk together. And then one day she would tire of his incessant cleverness, and she would stand in the raw babble, in the clanging cauldron of the city, and with a perfect clarity of understanding, she would say loudly, "All this is not!"

Thereupon the city would fade, starting with the high and clever windows, and the bits of paper would cease to roll in the hot breeze, and his creatures would diminish to nothingness and, as had happened countless times over ten thousand years, they would stand together, facing each other, on a vast and barren plain.

The city would be gone and he would look at her with the expression of a child from whom candy has been taken.

He would stand in his solid, white clumsiness and she would face him, vital with her quick and perfect articulation of bone and tendon.

Then, without regret, without thought, she would kill him as she had countless times before.

Quickly and without mercy.

-JDM

Paint the Coffin Tuchsia

A parody, by Bob Leman

It was an ordinary afternoon aboard the Reading Railroad. There were twenty or thirty smooth-rumped kittens with heavy breasts running around the flight deck, and Moss and I were sipping Bols gin over Angostura rocks in the lee of the abaft luft. Moss lifted his glass in a toast: "Minnows don't sing well," he said. We drank.

He's a subtle man, Moss. He looks like an ape who has bad genes somewhere in his ancestry. I'm the only one who knows that when he came here to live on the beach he had seventy-two million dollars in the bank, even though he had started in a slum. When money-making palled, he had tried scholarship, but even the Nobel prize in physics seemed to leave a lack in his life. And after a gold medal in the high hurdles in the Olympic Games failed to satisfy his hunger, he had, at twenty-seven, retired from the world to see whether he could find happiness among smooth-rumped kittens with heavy breasts on the beach in Florida. We had hit it off immediately, and now he spends a lot of time here with me on the Reading Railroad.

The Reading Railroad is my home. She's a converted aircraft carrier I won from a Liberian Rapid-Shave tycoon in a Monopoly game. She's named after the investment that broke his back in the game and gave me her ownership. He had invested several million in converting her from a warship to a comfortable floating dwelling, and when the New York police asked him to remove her from the port of New York because he was using her as a site for parties involving people whose sexual tastes ran toward parrots, he brought her to Florida, where we had our game and she became mine.

There's a golf course on the flight deck, and the body landed close to the dogleg on the seventh fairway. A helicopter clattered down close to the deck and suddenly, in a pale sprawl of arms and legs, the body burst out of it and slammed down and bounced.

Moss and I rushed out to calm the kittens and examine what had fallen. I wasn't surprised at a body falling out of the sky. Everything else seems to be falling out of it. Despite the sensible warnings of agencies commissioned to measure the deadly dangers of pollution of the atmosphere, people insist on driving automobiles and heating their houses in the wintertime and puffing pipes and cooking food, while the deadly fumes permeate and poison the formerly clean air so that even the newest baby is born tiny and weak and disgusting.

I examined the body. I didn't feel enthusiastic about the thing. Gee, body, I said, you don't look well. Look at the crusty cavities where you used to have eyes, and the raw hole that used to be your nose. Why, my gosh, look, I can see through the shredded flesh and slippery white ribs to the squashy purple viscera beneath. You don't look well, body, I said, sweating.

Out of the frozen flock of kittens burst a wildcat who flung herself on the broken lump and embraced it passionately. I dragged her off the damned thing while she hissed and spat and clawed at me. "Stop it!" I snarled. She kept on clawing and hissing. That's the way youngsters are raised nowadays. She was spoiled, like the rest of her generation. All of today's parents, fat with the satisfaction of attaining a middle-class income and doing their inferior best to imitate upper-class ways are spoiling their children rotten. They think they have it made, with an Oldsmobile and a Volkswagen in the garage and a barbecue grill in the back yard and a wall-to-wall Nylon carpet, and they try, with their Book-and-Record-of-the-Month clubs, to acquire Kulcher. The women talk about Pop Art while the men drink boilermakers in the kitchen and the children zoom along the highways in hotrods, high as kites on airplane glue.

So I was kind to the kitten. "Who is he, kid?" I asked. She writhed with a smooth, slippery rolling of haunch and thigh. I licked my lips and slapped her. She calmed.

"He's my grandfather," she said. "He came down here six months ago from our

home town, New Sphincter, Ohio, in pursuit of a confidence man named Carlo Grutt, who had bilked most of the townspeople of their life savings through a scheme to purchase a stolen Rembrandt to hang in the City Hall."

A thin thread of memory unraveled at the back of my mind. "How did he work, this Carlo Grutt?" I asked.

"It started with an old woman," she said. "She came into town last summer and day after day went strolling up and down our streets. Then Carlo Grutt arrived. The old crone had sized up the town by then, and knew who the influential people were. My grandfather was one of them. After Grutt had made his score and fled, Grandfather vowed to recover the money. He followed Grutt here, and when we failed to hear from him, I followed as well. I never found grandfather--until now--but I found Grutt. He's right here on your boat! That's Grutt!"

She shrieked the last two words. She was pointing at Moss.

I stared at him. For the first time since I had known him, he looked sheepish.

"I suppose I'd better tell you about it, McCurd," he said. "Carlo Grutt is my twin brother, and he's a criminal, all right. My father and I have worked for years to forestall his nefarious schemes. We almost stopped him in New Sphincter, but he slipped away just ahead of us. The old woman, by the way, was not Grutt's accomplice; that was my father in disguise. I didn't dare show myself, because Carlo and I look exactly alike."

That made sense. I turned to the kitten. "Have you found any clue to Grutt's whereabouts?"

"Quelkey Choase," she said. "He's been associating with a woman named Quelkey Choase."

I said to Moss: "Do you know her?"

He hesitated, and then said, "Yes. She has an exclusive shop where the rich and fashionable buy their whoopee cushions and dribble glasses. Its address is known to very few."

"Do you know it?"

"Well--yes." He gave me the address. I rumbled over there in my Hispano-Suiza garden tractor and halted at the Olde Englyshe front that bore the proper number. I sized the building up and stepped inside. Quelkey Choase was standing there, staring at me wide-eyed. She fell on all fours and began to bark like a dog. I wondered about her mental health.

"Here, puppy," I said. "Good puppy." She rolled onto her back and wagged her tail. "Come here, puppy," I said.

When we got up in the morning she was no longer the twitching, shambling wreck with wild eyes and fissured skin that I had first seen. Now her eyes were softly bright, and her creamy skin was fresh and blooming. She was dressed in the height of fashion and her grammar was impeccable. Her voice was gentle and cultivated as she said, "You did this for me, Arvis McCurd, you six-foot-four of experienced muscle, you with your steely gray eyes and short pale hair, you with your languid air of total sophistication. It seems incredible that only last night I believed that I was a Weimaraner with an ear infection. The world may be a rotten place, but I can face it now, thanks to you, Arvis McCurd. I'm sane again."

A cold wind from the far reaches between the stars squeezed at my heart. I knew what had to be done. I softly took her tear-wet chin in my hand and tilted the elfin face up toward mine. "Quelkey, you'll have to tell me where I can find Carlo Grutt," I said. My voice was harsh.

She gasped. "Carlo Grutt! He's a hard man, McCurd."

I tightened my grip. "Tell me, Quelkey. I don't want to hurt you."

She whimpered. I squeezed harder, and she said, "All right. He'll be going aboard your boat this afternoon, disguised as the old woman, so Moss will believe it's his father and let him come aboard. He plans to kill Moss and the kitten. Then there'll be no one who can identify him."

Except you, I thought to myself as I roared back to the boat. He'll be after you, next.

All was quiet aboard the Reading Railroad. I climbed down to the gun locker and selected a Spittlicher .707 with a telescope and some magnum cartridges. Back on deck I took a position along the rail behind a spinnaker-baffle. I was concealed, but I had a clear view of the dock.

At the far end a figure was approaching, strolling along in a casual fashion. I peered through the telescope. It was the old crone, right enough. I centered the crosshairs on her belly.

"Drop it, McCurd!" barked a voice behind me.

I didn't move. "Ah, there you are, Grutt," I said. "Or should I say--Moss?"

"Damn you, McCurd," Moss snarled. "How did you know?"

I turned slowly, just in time to see his knuckle tightening on the trigger of the Ruger .28 with carved walnut grip. I launched a Hung Fo kick at the bridge of his nose and his face dissolved into a red mush. He collapsed to the deck, and I turned around to see what the crone was doing. She had whipped out a submachine gun and it began to stutter a leaden hail in my direction. I lined up the crosshairs and fired. She dropped to the dock and lay still.

The kitten popped out of the taffrail bulkhead, where she had been hiding. "McCurd," she sobbed, "McCurd. Moss was Grutt all the time. But who's that down there?"

"Quelkey Choase," I said. "She's been his accomplice from the beginning. She was going to come aboard and finish you off after Moss had killed me."

"But how did you know?"

"I knew as soon as he told me that the old woman was his father in disguise. I knew that it had to be a lie, because it was contrary to a truth I learned very early in life."

"What was that, McCurd?"

"'A strolling crone fathers no Moss,'" I quoted.

She began to groan loudly and to beat at me with her small fists. I picked her up and carried her to my cabin. She seemed to be in a disturbed mental state, and in need of treatment.

-Bob Leman

Editorial Comment

To: Our Correspondents

Re: Publishing of Letters

This is to try to clear up a point of confusion that seems to exist regarding our publishing of letters received.

If we find your letter interesting, we will print either all or part of it, depending on content and space available.

If there is anything in your letter that you consider particularly actionable or simply not for publication, tell us so, and we won't publish it. Some of you have expressed surprise that we would want to print your letter(s).

Don't be surprised! People are still the most interesting thing there is--to other people, anyway--and we aren't publishing for anything else. Just Keep Writing!

PLEASE NOTE!

() A checkmark here indicates that you must respond if you wish to receive future issues of JDMB.

A few of you were in this category last time--but we are giving you just one more chance to respond. We did remove about thirty names from our mailing list due to no response to No. 8. (And another thirty were added to our mailing list from new requests!)

() A checkmark here indicates that you will receive--at least--the next issue.

SOME JDMB STATISTICS: One of our new readers seems to think that JDMB is read by "thousands". That figure could be correct--if each copy is read by about three and one-thirds persons.

We have been printing about 300+ copies of each issue. About 260 are mailed as soon as ready. The other 35 or 40 copies go fairly fast, as new requests come in. What with the deletion of unresponsive readers, and the addition of new readers, JDMB's "active circulation" has remained steady at 250+ for the past couple of issues, although close to 300 copies of each issue were distributed.

If we did not drop unresponsive readers we would have to run at least 400 copies per issue, perhaps more. (At one time in the past we thought that we would have to run 500 copies--but that was before our "circulation dept." hardened its nose.) We are interested in sending JDMB to those who are interested--and demonstrate it. We are not interested in printing 400, 500, or more copies just for the sake of having a "big circulation". That's fine for the mags(amateur or pro) that sell ad space, but not for us.

-1jm & jmm

[illegible]

JDMB No. 9
Len and June Morfett
9826 Paramount Blvd.
Downey, Calif. 90240

PRINTED MATTER

RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

TO:

John & Bjo Trimble
417 N. Kenmore Avenue
Los Angeles, Calif. 90004