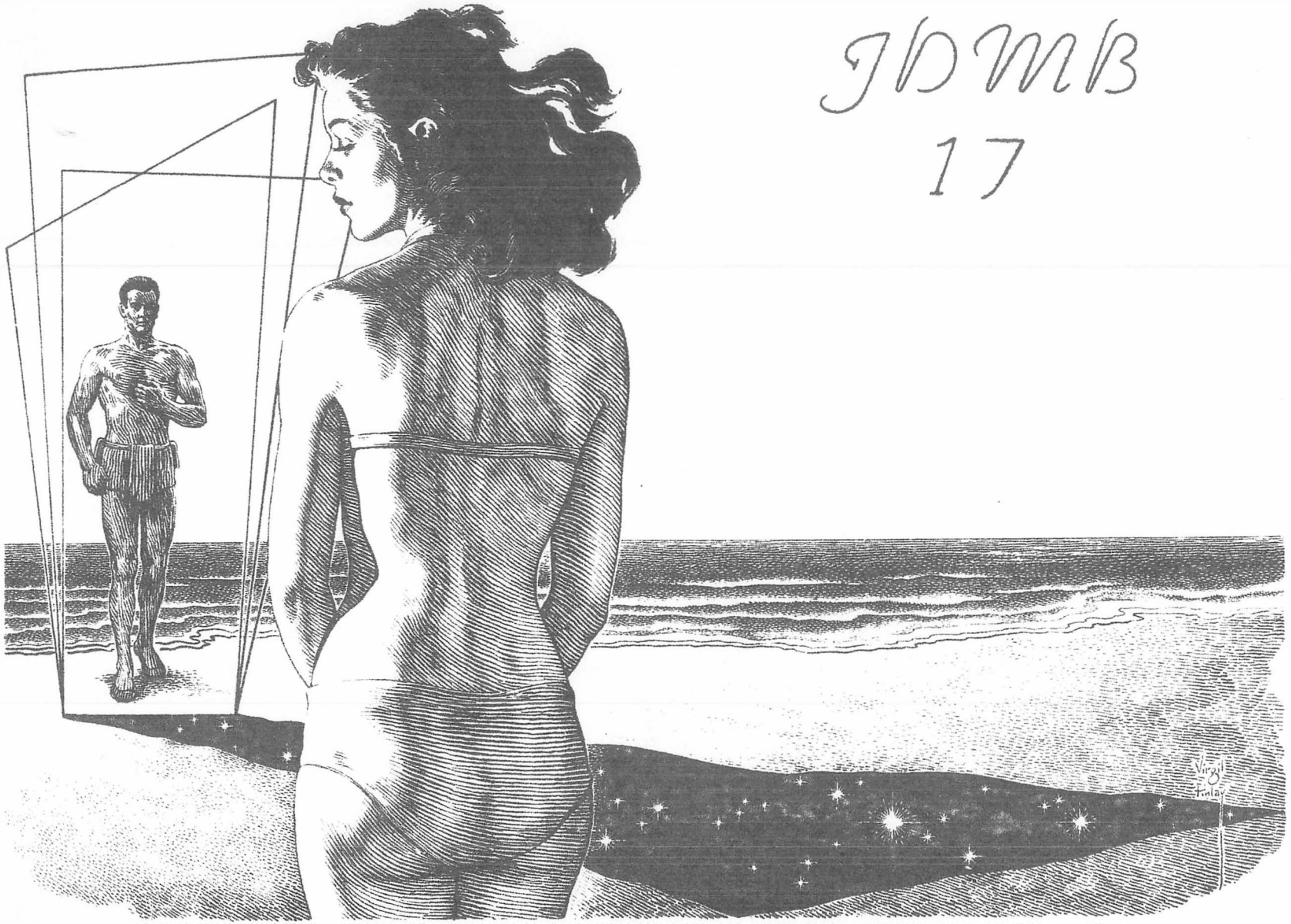
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THE JDM BIBLIOPHILE NO 17, MARCH 1972

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This is a non-profit amateur journal devoted to the works--and to the readers--of John D. MacDonald. Price: 50¢ per copy--or a publishable letter of comment will bring you the issue in which your letter appears. If there is an "X" on your mailing label, you must do something to receive the next issue.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: July 1, 1972

IN THIS ISSUE

SEEK & SWAP

FRED BLOSSER, Box 4119, Star City, WV, 26505 has a copy of the June 1948 issue of DIME DETECTIVE featuring "Call Your Murder Signals" by JDM. Would like to trade for other JDM pulps.

CHESTER J. SKINDER, 130 Marion Road, Wareham, MA, 02571 has the following paperback first editions of JDM novels: THE ONLY GIRL IN THE GAME: CRY HARD, CRY FAST; I COULD GO ON SINGING; A MAN OF AFFAIRS; SOFT TOUCH; APRIL EVIL; MURDER IN THE WIND; THE DECEIVERS. Would like to swap for moderately hard-to-find hardcover mysteries.

*Our thanks to Phyrne Bacon, 3101 NW 2nd Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32601, who owns this original Finlay illustration and who gave us permission to use it on our cover. Write to Phyrne if you want a litho print of the original.

This drawing by Virgil Finlay was done for the story "SHADOW ON THE SAND" when it was reprinted in the 1957 WONDER STORIES. The drawing and the story were reprinted in the 1963 WONDER STORIES.

News & Previews

John D. MacDonald writes:

Funny thing last week: On the very same day I received a French contract (Gallimard) for THE PRICE OF MURDER, for my signature, showing an advance more generous than usual, and also an urgent request from Italy for information regarding the availability of television and motion picture rights in the same book! The book was published fifteen years ago. Why the sudden simultaneous interest in it? I will probably never know.

****

I am on the Board of Trustees of New College, a small (500 students) fully accredited innovative and scholastically very impressive institution. Because we are new (and good) we were able to make a matching funds deal on a 4 to 1 basis with the Ford Foundation, two years ago. The arrangement lasts for five years. Each year we have to raise $1 million in order to qualify for the annual Ford grant of $250,000. We have just barely squeaked by these first two years. The idea is to be able to set aside the Ford money so that at the end of the five years we will have $1.25 million in the endowment fund.

Now we are beginning the uphill struggle once again to raise $1 million in 1972. I happen to have several dozen mint copies of my hardcover books available: THE LAST ONE LEFT, THREE FOR McGEE, NO DEADLY DRUG and some of the English editions of the titles published there by Robert Hale, Ltd.

If any reader would like a personally inscribed book for a gift, or for his or her own library, please send to me at 100 Ocean Place, Sarasota, Florida, 33581, a check for at least $10 made out to New College, a statement of the inscription desired, and an addressed mailing label.

The book will be a gift from me. The check will be a tax-deductible donation to New College, and will be acknowledged as such by the school directly to the donor. Though I certainly do not expect any roaring torrent of requests, I will inscribe the few dozen books I have on a first come, first served basis, and in the event there should be more requests than I have books, I will return the checks.

****

I wish to kill off an ugly rumor. I most definitely have not been approached by Howard Hughes and asked to write the definitive biography of Clifford Irving. Howard did not say to me, "Cliff has led a more interesting life than I have."

Best regards, /s/ John

-oOo-

Back in August, 1971, we heard that Filmways, Inc., in association with Jack Reeves and Walter Seltzer (who filmed DARKER THAN AMBER) had made a deal with NBC-TV to develop A DEADLY SHADE OF GOLD as a "World Premiere", the picture to be a pilot for a series based on Travis McGee. At that time it was reported that shooting would begin in October '71 in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Previous to this report we had heard that the next (i.e., second) McGee movie would be THE DEEP BLUE GOODBYE, but the above report further stated that all other movies were pending the TV deal for GOLD. If the pilot were successful, then all of the books in the series would be aired on TV.

In February 1972, we received confirmation from John that Filmways, Inc., headed by Martin Ransahoff, and Jack Reeves are indeed planning on turning GOLD into a motion picture. Cast not named as of this writing, but the option has been activated. So watch for further news in the trade journals and in your TV GUIDE....

-oOo-

(Continued on Page 14)

DEATH OF A "JOHN DEE" FAN

by Dave Stewart

In an article in the Toronto TELEGRAM of 9/19/70, John D. MacDonald is quoted as saying that violence is "a part of the animal heredity of the whole human race". He also says that, as an author, he often tries "suddenly to introduce violence into a hitherto orderly and patrolled existence. It can happen, without warning, to anyone".

I would not think to question these observations, but I would introduce the old question about free will, in this case: Is violence not only hereditarily part of the race but inevitably so? Or can it occur less frequently if men pursue certain policies? Does violence so bewilder us today because it must or because our emphases are misplaced?

I admire JDM's writing, even his sudden introductions of violence, yet the increasing incidence of many of the same kinds of violence in real life very much concerns me. Are fiction and fact two unrelated spheres, or can we observe in them various mutualities, certain trends?

This summer, an unabashed "John Dee" fan was sickled to death. Underscoring the tragedy was the fact that I was in love with her. She was not, in the Moffatt jargon, a fan of "JDM" nor of the "MacDonald" referred to by me and my friends, in the habit of that peculiar high-school insolence we practiced, as if there were only the one. No, this one was a "John Dee" fan, the first such I had ever encountered, and that was one of the many small delights to which I responded so quickly.

Let me set the scene. I was the big awkward kid from Hayseed City, come to Las Vegas, Nevada, to ogle the dancers, watch the neon parade, drop some small bets on the green machine and for a few days pretend I was up there on the level with the suave and coiffed. But among the vast array of wealth and glitter and glass, I found nothing that was not in some sense counterfeit...except Donna Fitzhugh.

Donna was unique, a Doll. A strictly grownups-only stacked and saucy woman-child blonde, with a pair of eyes that rushed out to hit you with an impact that could make you flinch. Large movie-star lavender-streaked blue eyes, filled with naughty intelligence and with frank appraisal. Dangerously frank, if you failed to notice the gently mocking humor in the smiling curl of a mouth just full enough to draw your gaze down from the eyes, away from the tall, lush figure, from the uncontrollable mop of cotton-candy hair.

Before I could call out or come or summon help, this twenty-eight-year-old woman was demeaned by a death too ugly to recreate. Even "John Dee" would have been shocked by it.

Donna Fitzhugh was the maitresse d' in a Mexican restaurant in Las Vegas when I met her. She had simply the warmest and friendliest smile I had ever seen--and she offered it to a complete stranger. What could I do except fall in love with her? No, I never loved her blindly, or unreservedly, nor "'til the end of time", but I did love her, to the extent of my loyalty to the sense of life she embodied, to her benevolence, her warmth, her awesome confidence. To the sum and substance of her spirit. And all aspects of my life improved and grew richer because of it. I loved her for a too-brief autumn too long ago, leaving me a memory like the one Kodacolor in a thick album of black and white.

But, to the misfortune of all, the subject was not quite properly framed. Donna had married too young, borne too many children and had finally and painfully separated from her husband. All of her good years, the years of growing and choosing and preparing, had been spent more or less standing still. At twenty-eight, she had both a home and children to support by herself and a raggedy-axled old car to nurse along on all the errands and routine, all on a salary smaller than she could have gotten further down the Strip.

But Donna didn't care much for people, not the ones she met every day, not the ones she would have met as a waitress or Keno runner on the Strip. She once wrote me that people's "lives, their spirits, their aspirations are so mediocre and so tedious that I seem to be flying miles high in the sky above them". When I kidded her about being every ounce the "great lady" her name connoted, she looked at me and smiled, her eyes sparklingly amused, as though saying, "Of course, have you only just realized?" The sparkle was her self-esteem showing; the amusement, her knowing that a casual observation at that time would have indicated otherwise. My observation wasn't casual, and I sang "Bridge Over Troubled Water" to her before I ever knew the lyric.

That probably amused her, too, for Donna was soon to go back to her husband. I was to go back to Hayseed City, no longer quite the hick. And six months later, death was to come for her out of a July midnight, "laughing, grumbling and growling like an animal", a death without even the decency of an obvious cause, like an auto wreck or a bad heart, and easy to deal with.

No, Donna, hearing her different drumbeat to the end, tried to hold off a sickle-swinging madman with a rifle she couldn't work; a life spent flying above the crowd ended in a whirlpool of pain and shock and red confusion. Did it bring her finally to a feeling of horror as well? Or, amid these last flying images, the dying scatter of a film sent off the track, was there only the sadness that the six-foot drop was coming sooner than expected?

A six-foot drop...lavender-streaked gray eternity...take your pick. I never tried to ease the pain by imagining Donna going to some kind of a heaven or rosy afterlife. The least objection being that she would hate it. In these places, everyone is supposed to be free of concern. Donna liked being out of step. She was a true free spirit, not free of the day-to-day trifles and bothers, but free of concern about them, free in the long-run, long-range, overall knowledge of the joy available in life and on earth. Flying up there in her world, she had the special joys of Burl Ives' singing, "John Dee's" novels and camping the many free and beautiful Edens of the Western States, one of which proved to be not so very beautiful after all.

Some distance below, I had the special nontransferable joy of knowing her, of having her for a few short weeks of a shared autumn to walk with, to talk with and to hold. My joy and the similar joys she gave out to others in unreturnable measure were savagely darkened in a placed called Dog Bar along Bear River in California.

What abides is not just the horror of the event, but also of the knowledge that no one will remember. The murder was seen and it registered--but only for a moment, then gone, like yesterday's newspaper, like last night's table scraps, gone like Simas Kudirka, like fiscal responsibility, like objectivity in the arts, like honesty in business, like 50,000 Americans in Indochina, like forty percent of our paychecks, like the quaint notion that life is meant to be a beautiful series of cherished excitements... gone, in a society pre-punched and determined by its intellectual leadership.

Anyone who doesn't agree that JDM is an intellectual, please leave; however, anyone who thinks that I now intend to make him guilty of the death of Donna Fitzhugh, please hang around--only one bloodstained hand is guilty of that. But vacuums don't exist in the human realm. The conditions in which a murder occurs can be discussed, and discussed calmly, without malice and without ascribing guilt.

I contend that one act of moral irresponsibility assists and encourages subsequent acts. Violence accumulates. Any unpunished or unprotested act of hooliganism--particularly one on the front page or over network prime time--makes another more likely next week. Every successful plane hijack to Cuba is an invitation. A hundred "free speechers" disrupt UC Berkeley; not long after, several thousand cousins capture Columbia University. The Mets win a World Series and fans tear up Shea Stadium; the Pirates' fans tear up downtown Pittsburgh. The mass murders accumulate. No one goes to trial for murdering the President; Whitman climbs the tower in Austin. Twenty-five migrant workers are exhumed; two months later and twenty miles away, a man with a sickle goes berserk. And the pain-destroyed men who kill their families and then themselves are hardly even news any more.

Can anybody believe that such a tidal wave of average men turned criminal could mass in a societal atmosphere which stressed, not conformity, not law and order, but the basic premise that values cannot be achieved by force? (If nothing else, self-esteem won't permit it.) If such a premise were stressed in every editorial, by every commentator, politician and personality, apparent in every play, implicit in every song, obvious in every author's novels, does anyone doubt it wouldn't filter down to most potential murderers and to nearly all potential hooligans? Even if one declares that this kind of mind is inherently weak and extends back no further than the last remark it heard, it could still be swayed at the moment before irrationality by the wisdom of wife, children, TV, newspaper, co-workers, friends, relatives.

Morality works this way--as that inner scanning system under which pass the meanings of the events of our lives. Morality is that which prevents a multi-million dollar department store with one hundred employees from being ransacked by its several thousand shoppers on any given workday, impossible for the shoppers because the alarm bell would ring immediately in ninety-nine percent of them. And, I am convinced that all but the most hopelessly psychotic murderers hear that bell also, but, because it's been muted by the moral cotton of our present culture, feel safe in not heeding its message.

Obviously, all of us have a vital interest in the ideas (or lack of them) which shape the murderer, since we must share the society with him. It does not profit not to get involved. For an author, not to get involved is to pull up his legs, abandon whatever traction he may have had, and slide along with the muddy mob, on their terms and with their premises. This may be a cleaner posture for the author, but it's undignified and definitely of no help.

Of course the hard part is convincing others to get involved. Mention morality to modern intellectuals and they look embarrassed for you, cough and turn away. Say to them, why not stress what is right, and they look wildly about for the hostess, and then go home and write in their little magazines about "current petty moralists". Enter JDM, who writes (in a quotation I've used before): "...in all this which diminishes me, no act of mine, or of anyone else, has consequence. Morality is a self-conscious posture. Dedication is delusion, based on a fraudulent interpretation of face, a wishful projection of our present velocity. The only valid role is that of observer. Soon we will all eat stones." --A FLASH OF GREEN. Did JDM by chance "observe" the status of wit granted to the barbarian who, within a week, was prancing about San Francisco with "When guns are outlawed, only outlaws will carry sickles" on his bumper?

In NEWSWEEK, JDM comments, "If I make /my novels/ sufficiently strong and sufficiently believable, then the reader is caught up. Then I have room to say something about our society, about the little areas of our culture. I can whip a lot of dead horses.", apparently forgetting that last phrase's derogatory meaning, i.e., the antics of an idiot unable to realize the futility of his task. Why "little areas" for JDM, and why always little people? Why not some "live" issues? Why not some of that great literary savvy serving up a situation, and a hard, well-thought moral judgment driving across the ace? Why not an angrier, younger, more involved JDM?

Consider. In THE LAST ONE LEFT, his best and most ambitious novel, after the hero's arduous struggle to unravel all the complexity of a personal disaster and to save a marriage heading swiftly for the rocks, after learning that his stake in the disaster is

non-existent--his sister actually alive--that a change in his attitude has given his marriage another chance, and that justice will very likely--thanks almost exclusively to his own efforts--await a thoroughly malicious antagonist, after more than 300 pages of a type of tension, anxiety and pain few people experience in all of their lives, JDM's hero makes this statement:

"What the hell good is logical behavior? It's a cold satisfaction, gentlemen. I can verify that. I have always been a very logical type. You have to let people be as irrational as they want to be, and maybe there are better reasons than you know." That's it?? I mean, is that all John? Your final statement? "You have to let people be as irrational as they want to be..."?

There, in an ugly little nutshell, is the whole killer attitude, the great undigestible lump of non-involvement in the modern intellectual stomach. I hope no one says I'm being unfair, that I'm blowing up two or three random sentences far out of context, that JDM is, in his own way, involved. I can't believe that. There are too many hundred thousand words and too few value judgments. There is far too wide a breach between JDM's literary genius--admitted in hushed tones by practically everyone in the JDMB--and the literary stature of the novels in which he chooses to exhibit it. With all the capacity for magnificent oils, he is content doing pastel portraits for the tourists, but no amount of "contentment" on his part can reduce the objective waste of talent. It becomes difficult even to say whether his greater transgression is an esthetic or an intellectual one.

Probably the latter. When I met Donna's children, they were golden with the coin of childhood, intelligent and eager haystacks of eyes and hair. I hope that whoever was with them gave them something more to hold onto in those first tragic days than "You have to let people be as irrational as they want to be."

No, JDM is not guilty in any sense of the death of Donna Fitzhugh. But if violence accumulates in the present culture in a consistent ratio to the amount of moral cotton put out by its intellectuals, then JDM is part-father of a son made very obstreperous by such teachings as he received on his collective pop's knee.

"Morality is a self-conscious posture." Not at all--it's a practical necessity; only those who don't understand why are self-conscious about it.

"Dedication is delusion". Not so--rather it's the recognition that while one can't change everything, one can be an effective voice in chosen, limited areas.

"The only valid (read safe?) role is that of observer." Not to a man of genuine self-esteem--even an earnest belaboring of wrong answers would be more satisfying to him. And JDM is too often right in the "little areas" to worry about this problem.

"Soon we will all eat stones." Perhaps--but only after all men of JDM's intellectual and/or artistic ability have come to believe that "no act of (theirs)...has consequence." And I, for one, do not believe that they could. Not so long as occasionally a Donna Fitzhugh walks past their lives. All of the sunlit consequences of their actions would be too tempting.

Donna was one of the exceptionally good ones. Youth, beauty, intelligence and, yes, decency, combined in a person of rare quality. And youth, beauty, intelligence and decency spoke up for "John Dee", declared his work to be a value, announced that they cared about his existence.

"John Dee's" non-involvement on the explicit and causal levels of such very human phenomena as these can have no other ultimate, final meaning than that he cannot return the concern.

And that's not a nice thing to have on the record.

- Dave Stewart

A LETTER FROM

JOHN D. MacDONALD

David Stewart is concerned about my role in adding some unknown increment to the violence of our times through my apparent acceptance of violence as part of the human condition.

To many tastes, to many people of stature in the literary establishment, I am and shall remain a writer of less than genuine literary merit because I am, at the heart of it all, a moralist. I believe people must accept responsibility for all those acts which affect the lives of others. I believe that though people do try to live as well as they can within the constrains of their environment, heredity and experience, there is such a thing as evil in the world--evil apart from what we could call flaw or warp. If I could not believe there is evil, then I could not believe that in every person there is a time and place where they will, through some wondrous synergistic miracle, be so much more, so much greater in loving and giving than the sum of all their traits and talents, it touches the heart to see it happen, or hear of it happening.

I am considered, also, to have the limitation of believing in some kind of divine order in the universe. No two leaves which have ever grown on earth are identical. Nor any two hearts, nor any two minds. I don't know what I am, exactly. Advertant hurting is the primary sin, I think. Predatory invasions of another person's life and emotions is the second sin. Not laughing at it all is not a sin. Rather, it is a flaw in the perception of truth, a failure in gallantry.

My chore, my pleasure, my dedication is to try to turn my personal view of various realities into stories. Stories are about things happening to people. The shallowest portions of stories are about the physical things that happen to people, even when they are killed by madmen. The serious parts of stories are about changes in the way the light and shadows fall on the secret and lonely heart.

Were I to rely in any way upon outside judgments, I could not work. To find truth in David Stewart's indictment, I would have to accept myself as corrupt. To find truth in establishment appraisals of the merit of my work, I would have to believe that there really are people walking the earth who can compartmentalize their peers. I level, believe me, harsher judgments upon myself than these two I mention.

As to violence, I cannot see that there is more now than ever before. The one area where FBI statistics can be deemed reasonably free from local police distortion is murder, and my almanacs keep telling me that each year there are fewer per thousand of us. Instant news is also, we must remember, an obligation to fill a preordained space. The front page and the half-hour must be filled by either puffing up a half-measure of violence to fill them, or by compressing a double measure. Most of the indictments of our times on grounds of violence come from younger people, say 18 to 30. It is this age group which, for many reasons, is less well versed in the history of man than the preceding generations of this century. Because they do not know history, they sentimentalize it, view it all as quaintness, mythic, stylized and somehow sweet.

The reality of Vonnegut's corpse mines in the moon-scape of Dresden are no less real than the tons of flesh rotting on the barbed wire of Verdun, the stench of the cities pillaged by Tamerlane, the heads of dead Goths on Roman pikes. Man is hair and sweat, bowel and membrane, frightful hope and fearful fright. When the priests of the Holy Roman Church sent word to the Pope through his emissary in Spain regarding the triumphant conversion of the Indians of Florida to the faith, they also mentioned that,

by their count, after long and perilous journeys, there were three Indians left alive on the entire peninsula, and these three were living in the compound of the church at St. Augustine. This is so grotesque a revelation, it is difficult to remember that the Indians screamed, shat, bled and died in as much piteous confusion as did Lt. Calley's momentary wards.

This is not apology, nor can I believe that it is a pollyanna approach to say that now that man has an international forum through instant communication, indignation is making man a more moral, and more careful animal, that the incidence of individual and group violence is measurably less, and should continue to diminish.

I suspect that with enough careful search of my own works, I could accumulate quotations to prove myself everything from beast to satyr to seven year old girl. But I want to quote one portion of THE END OF THE NIGHT. It is an interior monologue by a father whose daughter has been slain by a quartet, possibly "laughing, grumbling and growling".

He sat in the kitchen of his home and thought about his daughter. He was a realist, a man of sentiment without sentimentality. He saw how easy it was to abuse himself for not giving her more of his time, yet it would have been artificial and unsatisfying to have done so. The relationship had been loving and good. He knew that genetically and emotionally they had had good luck with her, and he knew that luck is a factor with children. The twin boys were going to present far more serious problems.

Yet, realist that he was, he could not completely ignore the superstitious feeling that in some way he was at fault. This was his small ship, and he was captain, and someone had been lost, so it was his fault. Paul Wister knew that life is an almost excessively random affair. Health and love and safety are not earned. They are not rewards for behavior. They are part of the luck that you have or you don't have. When you have it, in your blind human innocence you think you have earned it. And when it is gone, you feel you have offended your gods.

He sipped the steaming coffee and he thought of the things that had happened to others—so abrupt, so cruel, so meaningless. The Stallings family. Ard Stallings had been head of surgery at Monroe General. A lovely wife named Bess. Two teen-age children, a boy and a girl, bright and popular. For them it was as though a wall had suddenly been breached, releasing disaster. Ard had been walking in the woods with Bess. A stray bullet, never traced, had struck his right hand at a devilish angle, inflicting maximum damage. Paul Wister had operated three time, nerve grafts, muscle transplants. But he could not put the cleverness back. That had been the beginning. The boy was driving back from a dance with his date. A truck driver fell asleep. The boy and his date were killed. The truck driver suffered a sprained wrist and superficial lacerations. Bess had a cervical biopsy, a diagnosis of malignancy. Radical surgery was too late. It had spread. The only good thing about it was its speed. She died in a hard, dirty way, but it was quicker than most. Father and daughter went

away. They were fleeing from disaster, but it was their appointment in Samarra. Their *turismo* left the highway in the mountains east of Mexico City. Ard Stallings was thrown clear. The girl died with the other passengers. Three months later, in the basement of the house in Monroe which was listed with the real-estate people, Ard injected himself with a lethal dose of morphine. He left no note. There was no one to leave a note for. From the time the bullet struck his hand until the night of his suicide, it was only thirteen months. It was as though there had been a magic circle around them, protecting them. And when the bullet struck, the circle was gone, and the blackness came in upon them. They were gone as though they had never existed. People clucked and shook their heads. Terrible bad luck for those folks.

You could ask a man of God about it, Paul Wister thought. You could ask *Why*. He would say it is God's will. He would speak of a pattern we cannot see or understand. So do not try to understand. Just accept.

This, he told himself, is the ultimate sophistry. Life is random. Luck is the factor. The good and the evil are struck down, and there is no cause to look for reasons. There is a divine plan, but it is not so minute and selective that it deals with individuals on the basis of their merit. Were that so, all men would be good, out of fear if nothing else. Those unholy four could have gathered up a [illegible] in front of a bar. They happened to take Helen. It was chance. No blame can be assessed. And any living thing is the product of a series of intricate accidents—46 chromosomes in each living cell—the stupendous roulette wheel of fertilization. So even as a man cannot accept the cold knowledge that all his uniqueness, all his magical identity, is the product of chance, he will not accept disaster as the other side of the casual coin. He must look for a pattern: The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. He gave Helen her special identity, her soul, her heart, the shape of her mouth, in a random genetic pattern. And He can take it away through another accident, and in that sense it is an offense against Him to demand in a puny and indignant way that any pattern be made clear, or even to demand that there be a pattern, discernible or not.

Sincerely,

John D. MacDonald

A TAN & SANDY THIRTEENTH

by Dean A Grennell

"We read the stories again and again; perhaps most of all for the little introductory interiors which give a glimpse of 221B Baker Street."

- Christopher Morley
Introduction to "The Complete Sherlock Holmes"

Some few years back, someone--it may well have been William Rotsler--reported that they had heard that, originally, there had been a contract between MacDonald and Gold Medal to produce twelve McGee mss. Supposedly, it had been the cold-blooded intent of the good Mr. MacD to put a quietus to the career of his hero with the spit-colored eyes at that point, so that he could write about someone else, in the Reichenbachian manner.

I will confess that I have been contemplating this possibility with no small degree of diaphoretic qualms. Certainly, no veteran student of the canon can have any doubts as to the author's outer limit of cold-bloodedness after assimilating the divers non-McGee works. One recalls, with a sick shudder, the summary fates meted out to the leading ladies of works such as "The Only Girl In The Game" and "On The Run", and has no delusions as to the formidability of the antagonist.

At the risk of marring the catenary curves of your suspense, it can be revealed: McGee survives TAN and remains available for whatever chromatic nuance that may be destined to identify the fourteenth link in the chain. Business of mopping the clammy brow.

Preliminary information leaks had intimated that the locale of much of TAN would be Canada. This also depressed me to a shallow extent. I have naught but the warmest of regards for that great nation which borders this country along its northern limits. Perhaps it is due to a surfeit of James Oliver Curwood yarns at some point in my formative years, but I go "ecch!" at the thought of Canada as the milieu for a fictional work. It may be the prospect of scarlet-coated Mounties, staunchly propelling birchbark canoes and ravelling the welkin with paeans to Rose Marie; or hirsute voyageurs exclaiming "By Gar!" At any rate, it has been an unyielding policy of this small firm, for uppards of forty years now: If the story takes place in Canada, foh-gitt-it, Friendly!

Again, a word of calming reassurance, if you happen to share my foibles: The camera never peeks across the border into Nelson Eddy country. Florida and a few of the more exotic isles of the West Indies covers everything. Relax; enjoy!

For those of you who share my preoccupied concern with the tenuous cartilage which unites the links of the series into a coherent whole, there is not too much carry-over from previous books. Once, there is a passing allusion to Junior Allen. Meyer, of

course, is there with bells. Not, perhaps, the Meyer who seems to have seen his finest hour to date in GRAY, but a good round Meyer, for all that.

Heidi Geis Trumbill seems to have completed her therapeutic ministrations from the shag-end of LAVENDER and faded back into limbo. No breath of her in TAN. Alas, an equal dearth of breath for the ingratiating Raoul. There is a flick-mention of the Munequita--first and only since GRAY--and no more.

But no Chookie McCall of the dark brows and dampened armpits; no Dana of the Dear Crooked Tooth and no slightest scantling of Skeeter and Quimby. (Please, Mr. MacDonald, Your Worship: some day, could you reanimate Skeeter and trot her past the camera one more time, por favor?)

If you care to hear Constant Reader's arpeggio impressions on a fast pass through the galley-proofs of TAN, goes like unto so: (1) McGee is losing compression and stands in dire need of a competent ring job. (2) He survives past the final "30", chiefly because of a solicitous and compassionate author. (3) This is not the worst of the McGee books, nor is it a serious contender for the top slot.

I would not presume to render any sort of subjective verdict on any McGee book till I had read it for at least the fourth time, with appropriate fallow interludes between. I think I can say, with considerable assurance, that, imho, RED and GOLD are a damned sight better--add ORANGE, YELLOW and GRAY to that roster, please--and LAVENDER and INDIGO are worse, in about that order.

I will note that I continue to regard PURPLE as a fine book which, only coincidentally, had a character called Travis D. McGee as its protagonist. BLUE stands in a class by itself, a true chef d'oeuvre; after nearly a decade, it stands as a benchmark against which the rest are measured. PINK had certain fine touches, memories of which are brought out to contemplate, odd-times, and plummety low-water marks, as well. BROWN had a cop with galloping halitosis and, imho, was a concatenation of events in which McGee participated as a marshmallow might star in an avalanche. AMBER...well, AMBER.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that TAN and AMBER, cousins-German in the color wheel, are linked in my subjective sifting. It may be significant that I had to do the ticked-off fingers routine a couple of times before I could stimulate my thought-buds to recall AMBER, despite the fact that it has been the only hue thus far sanctified and ratified by the cine camera.

By the time we rack up 17 or 18 colors, I may have blockages to flush loose in recalling TAN. If it has any of the ultra-memorable phrases which continue to reverberate through the memory--e.g., BRASS CUPCAKE, to me, shall forever be the book of "plum-taut convexities"--they eluded my eye on the first go-round.

We seem to be chafing under some sort of grim, sardonic legacy from the defunct incubator of James Bond in that it is necessary for our latter-day heroes to undergo a sort of cleansing, penitentiary meed of suffering. Presumably, Fleming found it effective to have Bond's cojones tenderized with a carpet-beater and, as the faceless SMERSH agent can be quasi-quoted: "We see no end to the trouble this has caused."

By the time a number of well-sellers had been consigned to the roaring presses, Fleming seemed to feel that he had discovered a secret comparable to a latter-day philosopher's stone: Have the protagonist live very high off the hog for some several pages, so that the marks will envy him; then have him suffer some fearfully sticky-wicket business so that they will go on living their tedious little lives with a small, glowing scrap of gratitude for not having to play the role of Jas. Bond.

((Editor's Note: "imho" = "in my humble opinion" in Grennellese.))

Mercifully, I seem to have forgotten the name of the trepid tad who essayed to pick up the reins of 007's destiny after Fleming made with his coronary; not Christoper Isherwood, but something vaguely along those lines. The book was called "Dr. Sun" and it dawned with fanfares of ballyhoo and, condignly enough, received the unanimous acclaim that might be accorded chocolate-covered seagull entrails at a gourmet's convention.

Having put forth gallantry in vain, I endured through to the waning pages of Dr. Sun and recall that one of the ostensible climaxes consisted of the inscrutable oriental villain--a sort of Dr. Egg Fu Young Manchu for absolute paupers--driving bare bodkins into Bond's left eardrum, via the right ear, or perhaps it was vice-versa. At any rate, if I'd had any remote trace of relish for vicarious masochism before--which I don't think I had--they'd've turned me off it for all the time that is yet to come.

Which is by way of saying that, imho, when I take the trouble to tune in and blesh with a fictional protagonist, toward the purpose of traveling step by step through a narrative with him, I take it unkindly if the omnipotent Writer, up there in the blue-vaulted heavens, chooses arbitrarily to have some baddie donk us across the boko with a croquet mallet.

If, a couple of paragraphs back, I cited Chris Isherwood when I really meant to indict Kingsley Amis, it is because practically the entirety of my library--hardcover, paperback and intermediate stages of flaccidity--is packed away for an incipient change of address at some unpinpointed focus of the future. Thus, this entire diatribe puts its full weight upon the rubber crutch of my memory. If it sags, I'm sorry.

But, in packing away all of those tomes, I could not help but reflect that--allowing for the uncountable books I've jettisoned along the way--I've expended one goshawful slice of my assigned span on this planet in treading the feetprint of myriad fictional characters. Devotion of equal time could have seem the completion of a scale model of Notre Dame, all in kitchen matchsticks, surely.

Along the way, the number of times I/we have been knocked unconscious by a surreptitious blonk across the carapace is marching inexorably toward the rounding of its first googolplex. I have borne this with whatever degree of stoicism I could muster, but I will depose that I'm getting effing-well sick of being anesthetized via blunt instrument, even by proxy. If I never read another book in which the hero gets laid among the sweet peas, it will be anyhow six weeks too soon.

This is a small, personal wimwam, and should not be interpreted as valid literary criticism.

If the lead lad in Willson's "Music Man" can set up a canticle-in-faunch for the sadder-but-wiser girl, then perhaps I might claim the privilege of hungering after a cannier-but-less-donkable hero for me.

I will concede that a totally competent and coping protagonist could get dull, boring and insufferable in a screeching hurry. But there has to be--there absolutely just simply HAS to be--some judicious and temperate point between the unsinkable Holmes and the incessantly blopped-off heroes such as Mike Hammer or Lt. Colonel Andrew Blodgett Mayfair.

By all of this dark muttering, you may deduce that TAN sees the tunking of McGee yet a few more times. I think that the infury of it all is that one comes to realize that it is but a convenient plot-advancement of the part of the author. If you can't think of anything else to have happen, let the hero get knocked cold or have the delectable damosel get captured and left to the prime evil-doer. I don't know about you, out there in JDMB-land, but I've seen the Queen-in-check gambit so many times my eyes are getting tired.

In the instance under vivisection, as in the early phases of AMBER, the lead-lady stands convicted of reprehensible deeds and thus is denied the shriving solace of the Busted Flush's master. Campaign-calloused camp-followers of MacD mss will know, intuitively, that such peccadilloes will be visited by decisive and irreversible consequences (and they are).

Lisa Dissat is the hapless Canuckess's name, and, like the ill-fated Vangie, she may be redeemed if a film version ever emerges; but not while the less-than-placable source of it all is at the keyboard. Perhaps she deserves what she gets, quite possibly. But this reader continues to creeb at the high-handed fate handed down to the heroine of "On The Road"; and forevermore shall do so.

First encounter with a new McGee book in galley-proof form is a novel experience; particularly if you happen to be engaged in substantial slugs of your dayside time as a proofreader. Somewhere, passim in the text, there is a reference to "Merrill, Lynch, Pearce, Fenner & Smith." I hope some hooked-into-the-circuit proofreader pulled out the comma between Merrill and Lynch, because it doesn't belong there.

Be it noted in that big scoreboard up yonder that this particular episode does not close with the Busted Flush sailing off into the sunset with a cargo of distraught damsel-in-distress, destined for the therapeutic ministrations of the vessel's Captain. This book makes brave efforts to break fresh trail by dispatching the Flush with a supercargo who has absolutely nothing at all in this world or the next wrong with her.

Warm plaudits and a standing ovation, JDM, sir.

- Dean A. Grennell

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News & Previews

Continued from Page 4:

Roger Smith of PUBLISHERS WEEKLY was to interview John in February. We assume that Mr. Smith will write an article on the interview, and that it will appear in PUBLISHERS WEEKLY.

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY (date unknown, but probably in December 1971) had a full-page ad from Fawcett, announcing the 13th McGee novel, A TAN & SANDY SILENCE, which was published in January. The ad featured a reprint of Dorothy B. Hughes's Los Angeles Times column of November 28, 1971, in which she tells of how she and her "nonmystery-reading but otherwise discriminating reader-daughter" love the works of John D. MacDonald. The ad also announces that "more than one million Travis McGee novels will be published this month (i.e., in January 1972). We assume that they mean more than one million copies of the thirteen McGee titles... John has written more than 60 novels, but not hardly more than one million novels, with or without McGee. (Hi Phyllis!)

More recent word is that Fawcett will be distributing over 2,000,000 copies of John's titles in the first three months of 1972. We can easily believe that half of the 2,000,000 copies would be McGee titles, as ol' Trav's popularity continues to increase, and more new readers discover him.

-oOo-

Lippincott will continue to reprint the McGee novels in hardcovers, as they continue to sell well. Thus far they have published DARKER THAN AMBER, PALE GRAY FOR GUILT and DRESS HER IN INDIGO. THE LONG LAVENDER LOOK is scheduled to go on sale March 13, 1972, and this will be followed by BRIGHT ORANGE FOR THE SHROUD.

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(Continued on Page 32)

A REPORT ON BOUCHERCON II

The Second Annual Anthony Boucher Memorial Mystery Convention (Bouchercon II) was held at the International Hotel in Los Angeles, over the 1971 Columbus Day weekend (October 8-11).

Bill S. Ballinger was the Guest of Honor. Bruce Pelz chaired the convention, aided and abetted by Gail Knuth, Drew Sanders and the Moffatts, who were on the official committee, and with additional help from the MWA chapters of Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Attendance was down from the 1970 convention. The official membership count of Bouchercon I (as listed in the Bouchercon II Program Booklet) was 85, though the actual attendance was 100 or better, I'm sure. There were 32 members of Bouchercon II at the beginning of the convention, but by the end of the convention the official count was 74, with approximately 85 or 90 in actual attendance.

It had been hoped that Bouchercon II would have a better attendance count, and the reason for it not being somewhat larger than the first Bouchercon was discussed at a critique session on the last day of the convention. The primary reason was obvious: lack of advance publicity. Without the help of the MWA, as mentioned above, the attendance would have been even smaller. Your reporter understands that a greater effort will be made this year to promote and advertise Bouchercon III.

However, those who did attend Bouchercon II had no reason to regret it. The Friday night Reception (with Cash Bar) was quite enjoyable. Here we learned that Bill Ballinger had once traveled with the Ringling Bros. Circus, researching material for THE TOOTH AND THE NAIL and, I think, one other book. Here, also, we met the charming Phyllis White ("Mrs. Anthony Boucher") and her sons and daughters-in-law, Mr. & Mrs. James White and Mr. and Mrs. Larry White. (It made this old fan feel even older as it seems only a few years ago that James and Larry were little boys attending sf conventions with their parents.)

Mr. Ballinger left the reception earlier than he would have liked, as he had to go to his room and work on a CANNON script, the deadline for which was the following Tuesday! Now that's what makes a real Writer a real Pro. The ability to attend a weekend convention where one is Guest of Honor and somehow manage to work in time to meet a writing commitment.

I could write several pages about the Reception alone--there were so many interesting discussions.

The Opening Session was delayed on Saturday because one of the keynote speakers, Joe Gores, was late. His plane from San Francisco was delayed by fog over the LA Airport. Meanwhile, Chairman Pelz had to leave the hotel to pick up people who lacked transportation, including Howard Browne. Mr. Browne was car-less due to a recent accident. He had received a bump on the head but was otherwise okay, save for needing a ride. As he was on the panel that followed the keynote speeches, it was necessary to get him there as soon as possible.

After opening the convention to announce the reason for the delays, Bruce asked Len Moffatt to chair it in his absence. When Joe Gores arrived, Len re-opened the con and introduced Mr. Gores and Clayton Matthews. They gave a survey of the Mystery Field, 1970-71. (In re-opening the con, Len said that Bruce was out trying to round up more attendees...)

Messrs. Matthews and Gores gave reports that combined pessimism and optimism. There are only 2 or 3 regular mystery magazines buying new material--the short story market isn't much better than it was a year ago, but there is the paperback market, which can be good or bad, depending on the publisher and whether or not he wants to push mystery fiction. Their reports were well-prepared and well-received, and I think this should be a regular item on Bouchercon programs.

Bruce returned with Mr. Browne and others, and introduced the "Old Pulps" panel: Robert Bloch, Howard Browne, Richard Deming, Larry Shaw and Robert Turner. William P. McGivern was also listed in the Program Booklet, but we learned from Len Moffatt, who chaired the panel, that Mr. McGivern was home fighting the flu bug. The panel was a continuation of the 1970 Pulp Panel which had discussed in some detail the death of the pulps, and what caused it. The 1971 panel got more into the history of the pulps, how the writers and editors worked together, what it was like to be a pulp writer in those good/bad old days.

Several interesting and entertaining stories were told by various members of the panel. For instance, Howard Browne told of how he wrote the Mickey Spillane fantasy story that appeared in FANTASTIC STORIES, a magazine he edited some years ago. He almost got into trouble for re-writing the story so thoroughly, but, as it had appeared almost in its entirety in another magazine (as part of a report on Spillane) he had that and other reasons for re-doing the story for FANTASTIC.

Robert Bloch (who was Guest of Honor at Bouchercon I and will be Guest of Honor at the World Science Fiction Convention in Toronto in 1973) was superb--as usual. When it came his turn to speak, he rose to his feet and spoke from the podium rather than from his seat as the other members of the panel had done. He pointed out that beer had been served to the panel and that he--and only he--had not imbibed. Consequently, he was the only member of the panel capable of standing at this point. He was also the only member of the panel who had sold to the pulps without moving to New York or Chicago to be near the publishers. He lived in the sticks in Wisconsin at that time, and submitted his work from there.

The Q & A session, after the individual talks, went over well, with several interesting questions from the flcor, and equally interesting answers or comments from all the panelists, plus some informative comments and answers from the panel's "official heckler", Bill Clark, who was asked by the moderator to sit up front for exactly that purpose.

The Pulp Panel was followed by a brief auction of books and magazines, after which Jon L. Breen gave a talk on a Prospectus for a Course in the Mystery as Literature. You will find many courses in science-fiction (reading and writing) in high schools and colleges nowadays, and the same could be done for or with the mystery field. Mr. Breen, who is a professional librarian as well as a hell of a good writer and parodist, recommended that such a course not lean too heavily on the old school of mystery writing, or take up more time than was necessary on the beginning classics, such as Poe or Doyle, as these items are usually a part of general literature courses. His talk inspired quite a bit of discussion from the floor, and your reporter would like to suggest that the subject be given further discussion at a (hopefully) better-attended convention in the future.

Three movies were shown at Bouchercon II: AND THEN THERE WERE NONE, DEAD OF NIGHT, and DOWN THREE DARK STREETS. The latter two were shown Saturday night, and DEAD OF NIGHT (because of its popularity) was shown again Sunday night along with AND THEN THERE WERE NONE. (We understand that DEAD OF NIGHT will also be shown at the World SF Convention, Labor Day weekend this year at the International Hotel in LA. It is more of a fantasy than a mystery film, per se, but it is Good.)

Guest of Honor Bill S. Ballinger spoke at the luncheon on Sunday. He told us about his cats, and how he felt that writers should help each other, something in the manner that Alcoholics Anonymous help each other by phoning fellow members when they need Help.

Writing is a lonely profession, and Mr. Ballinger felt that writers should help each other when help is needed, more so than they do now.

The H. H. Holmes Awards were announced and discussed at the luncheon. (H. H. Holmes was another of Tony Boucher's pseudonyms for the benefit of those who might confuse the name with Dr. Watson's buddy.) It seems that the science-fiction field has its Nebula Awards which are given to the pros by the pros, and its Hugo Awards which are given each year (at the World SF Conventions) to the pros (and to the "best fan") by the fans. The Mystery field has its Edgars, which are given to the pros by the pros, but until now, no awards on which the fans or the readers could vote.

Bruce proposed that the first set of H. H. Holmes awards be given at Bouchercon III. Categories were discussed, and we understand that the 1971 H. H. Holmes Awards will include three categories to start with: Best Mystery Novel, Best Mystery Short Fiction, and Best Mystery Dramatic Presentation. (The latter would include stage plays, movies and TV.) The nomination ballots are ready and obtainable with Bouchercon III Progress Report No. 1 from Bruce. ((See ad this issue - ljm))

Sunday afternoon featured two panels. The first was on the State of the Art, 1971, with Ed Hoch (who is probably the most prolific short story writer extant), Jack Matcha and Jerry Pournelle. Bruce was the moderator for this panel as well as the next one. Again the difficulties of the writing profession were discussed as well as the fun and rewards. As with all of the panels, there was discussion with the audience so that all present could feel a real sense of participation rather than just being talked at. The reader-writer relationship at these conventions is something wonderful, and can do nothing but strengthen the field.

The next and final panel had to do with Collecting and Bibliography. Bill Clark, bibliographer and lost-story detective par excellence, and June Moffatt were the panelists, with Bruce bringing along some samples of bibliographic work in s-f and allied fields. The panel was augmented nicely by Dean and Shirley Dickensheet, who spoke from the floor on the work they have done are are trying to do, including the hope for a more complete bibliography of Tony Boucher's work.

The critique session, originally scheduled for Monday, was held that afternoon too. With the small attendance it was decided to close the convention that Sunday. The films were shown that evening, as previously reported, and only a handful of diehards stayed overnight to go home the next day.

Despite its handicaps (lack of publicity, illness and accidents) I feel that the second Bouchercon was something of a success. The major gripe that the attendees had was that there weren't more attendees, and this problem can be solved by more advance advertising in future. Perhaps part of the problem is that mystery readers and professionals aren't used to the idea of an annual convention. They may see a notice about it but still not really know what it is all about. Never having attended one, they can't be sure that the expenditure of time and money is worth it. I can assure them that it is, but then I have been to many such conventions and have long since been hooked. I go, not only for the program items, but to meet the people--the writers and the readers, to commune with those who share similar interests. We may not even talk about mystery fiction (or science fiction if it is an s-f con), but our mutual interest has brought us together and we may talk informally on umpteen subjects.

But how does ones convince those who equate this type of convention with businessmen's or lodge conventions (a most incorrect equation!) where it is all booze and broads and electric buzzers to harass the locals, and dreary meetings, or who think they might want to give a reader-writer convention a try but aren't really sure? This report told you something of what happened at Bouchercon II, but there is no way I can make you feel the experience. You have to be there to truly appreciate it.

Or have a John D. MacDonald as your reporter.

- Leo Rand

Early JDM:

TO ANY LENGTHS

JDM's fiction at less than novel length has ranged from the short-short you can read in a spare three minutes to the story that's almost long enough for separate book publication. MYSTERY BOOK MAGAZINE during the late Forties published at least one superb sample of each end of the spectrum.

In "Murder in Mind" (Winter 1947-48), a lethargic and laconic county detective named Burt Stanleyson solves the murder of a rich woman in the woods during deer-hunting season. There's only one suspect, but his method is plausibly complex, and Stanleyson's deductions, though unfair to the reader, are based on a mass of detailed physical observations of the sort so dear to Jacques Barzun. This is one of the meatiest short-shorts you're likely to find anywhere.

"A Corpse in His Dreams" (February 1949) is, on the other hand, an extremely lengthy tale, and to those who know their JDM, one of his most fascinating, since it's an early and excellent example of his skill at keeping the reader's attention absorbed in tangled relationships and saving the criminous interest for the end.

The central character is a figure who appears in a staggering number of late 1940's mysteries, the mentally disturbed combat veteran with fears of past or future blood on his hands. Young Matthew Otis, football hero of his New England home town of Cranesbay, was driving home from a dance with his fiancee along a treacherous road on a windy night. He had been drinking. The car went off the road and Alicia Crane was killed.

For the next nine years--through World War II and the Chinese civil war that followed--Alicia has haunted Matt's dreams. He returns to Cranesbay in an attempt to exorcise the girl, and becomes entangled in a big-business intrigue. Ruthless nouveau riche Roy Bedford wants to take over the once-prosperous Furnivall Pneumatic Tool Company, and the two Furnivall sisters who are all that's left of the family are backed against the wall. Evan Cleveland, an old high school buddy of Matt's and secretly in love with Patience Furnivall, brings Matt into the picture, a Matt who is not too unhappy at this delay in his self-imposed confrontation with a ghost.

Only in the sixth of the story's seven chapters do all the elements begin to come together, the catalyst being a murderous four-wheeled booby trap which is as absurd as any killing-device in Woolrich but which JDM describes circumstantially enough that one is almost convinced. The final pages are all fast action and violence in the best tradition of the pulp tale-spinners. Film buffs may suspect from the sequence where Patience forces Matt to drive up the same road where Alicia died that JDM had seen and remembered the climactic skiing scene in Hitchcock's 1954 Spellbound.

It's an exceptional writer who can do a consistently good job at whatever length of story he sets his mind to, from five pages to five hundred. But--as if readers of this journal needed convincing--that's the kind of writer, even in the Forties, that JDM has always been.

- Francis M. Nevins, Jr.

On The Invention Of VILLAINY

(speculations by a mystery fan)

"...why are villains almost always more interesting than heroes? -jmm"

The role of the mystery writer as an artist and an observer is well-documented. His role as an inventor is not. It should be. The Problem of the Interesting Villain, or PIV as it is called by students of the Creative Process, comes about because of the nature of the prerequisite to the writing of any mystery or thriller. This prerequisite is the invention of the crime.

Inventing and planning the fictional dirty work is what it takes to get the writer of the story over his first hurdle. Having accomplished this, he can then outline the hero's-eye view of the plot, i.e., the same dirty work run backwards. But first must come the invention; and the necessary agency for putting that invention into practice is the villain. The PIV thus follows inevitably from the nature of the undertaking. It will, at any rate, if the writer of the story doesn't succeed in making the hero even smarter and more resourceful than the scoundrel. In this last, fortunately, JDM succeeds.

Fictional villainy is but one of the many varieties of invention. It is one, oddly enough, that appears to receive far less recognition than it deserves. This unfortunate situation must be set straight. Inventions in general fall into two major legal categories; the patentable and the unpatentable. By the statutes of all industrial nations, the patentable category of inventions is confined to the machines, products and processes of industry. The issued patents are open to the public; in return for so breaking the bonds of secrecy, the patentee gets a 17-year "exclusive". A complete set of U. S. patents takes up just under a mile of bookshelves. They make dull reading.

In the unpatentable or non-statutory category, the inventions are a different breed of dog. They are concerned with matters that range far beyond hardware and soap: politics, war, business, finance, mathematics, jokes, the rules of games, and crime. Any one of these inventions may be more difficult and clever than the jet engine of Sir Frank Whittle, and of more economic effect, too. But a non-statutory invention cannot be patented. Its inventor's only hope of reward is to practice it in secret--or to make it so difficult to understand that it is secret in effect.

Now we will cite one non-statutory subclass that is the most difficult and unrewarding of all: fictional villainy. It cannot be patented, nor can it be kept secret, nor may it be hard to understand. The mystery writer must first conceive an original and meritorious invention in the field of villainy, and then <u>give it away</u>, his only reward the royalties on the book. Let us hope that this is reward enough, for few individuals have the necessary aptitude to invent what mystery writers invent.

We cannot, perhaps, appreciate properly the ingenuity required to devise a usable and satisfactory scheme of scoundrelism until we consider (briefly) a few of the great inventions of the past in the non-statutory category. Here belong Mendel's Law, logarithms, nuclear fission, the Securities Act of 1933, and the rules of chess, bridge and poker. Methods of doing business are classically unpatentable. There appears to be no record of what forgotten talents invented short selling; puts, calls and straddles; futures trading, or the standard procedure for selling Canadian mining stocks to Americans.

The names of a few of the more specialized innovators are on public record, but only because they weren't quite good enough: Hall and Williams of the Westec Corporation (duly noted by JDM); C. Ponzi, S. Insull, I. Kreuger, A. DeAngelis, B. S. Estes, B. J. Cage. In the field of economics, one of the really great inventions is inflation. The emperors of ancient Rome used it to pay off their debts cheap; and later, B. Mussolini and others have used it similarly with equal success. Its inventor is, alas, unknown.

In professional crime, the names of inventors Ben Marks and of Hazel and Abbott survive in Professor David Maurer's account of the Big Con. The new concepts they contributed to the world were not only unobvious and ingenious, they were profound. It seems

too bad that such contributions could not be patented. A Government grant of some temporary benefit--such as 17 years' immunity from jail--would be a small price to pay for a full, authoritative and timely public disclosure of exactly how such inventions worked. I can even visualize one of the patents. The first page would have a drawing of a flow chart with boxes labeled "Roper". "Insideman", "Mark", "Bank", "Boodle", "Fixer", and so on. The title would be, naturally, METHOD FOR TRANSFERRING MONEY.

Someone may wonder, at this point, if the ability to invent mystery plots implies some sort of criminal skill. An unworthy thought. There is a novel extant about three retired mystery writers who engage in the business of planning and directing the performance of real crimes. It is not a very good story because it is not convincing; such characters would lack the real qualifications. It is even slightly offensive. Real criminals are not noted for being inventive, nor is there too much similarity between fictional dirty work and the real thing. Proof of the difference is the notably good behavior of mystery writers in private life--better, indeed, than the behavior of the public at large.

A couple of notable inventions in fictional villainy: (1) in Mary Roberts Rinehart's "The Bat", the device of the villain masquerading as the Detective (so good that it could never be used again); (2) JDM's Meyer getting a sheaf of fake confirmations from a friendly broker for McGee to use to con the rich villain into disastrous speculation. Note that the latter is counter-villainy. To the unimaginative, these may seem unlikely schemes. For fiction, there have been none better.

Unlike the higher-grade pieces of real-life skullduggery, a fictional crime must be simple enough to be quickly comprehended by the reader. Many forms of actual scoundrelism are not that simple, and it is this very incomprehensibility* that has insured their long-term success. It is a sophisticated form of secrecy. Maurer's account of the intricate Big Con game, "The Rag", is no easier to grasp on the first reading than is the basic idea of differential calculus. No easier, say, than following the instructions for performing the Miser's Dream in an elementary text on magic. It takes skull practice, which is out of place in fiction. You cannot ask the reader to stop and study something. It breaks the pace, without which the story is not a proper story.

But this requirement for simplicity, or at least comprehensibility, does not make the mystery writer's job easier. Rather the contrary. The best of inventions are in fact simple; the more skilfully the art is practiced, the easier it looks.

Fictional villainy, of course, need not be set out to the last detail. A complete scenario of the crime would, it seems, be out of place. Nor must it be capable of successful performance is put into actual practice. In real life, there is room for only so many innovations, no matter what those who advertise Progress would have you believe. In magic, the number of tricks invented outnumbers those performed by a hundred to one; but this does not make the act of invention any easier.

No, whatever the peculiar requirements of fictional villainy may be, they do not make it easy to invent. Nor does the fact of mandatory disclosure without legal protection make the mystery writer's lot happier. Anyone who thinks that the invention of new, unexpected, fiction-suitable skullduggery might not be so hard to do, need only try it.

- Lawrence Fleming

*Application of the Principle of Incomprehensibility is, of course, the mainstay of most civilized institutions.

HARD TOUCH

by BILL WILSON

"FAIR TRIALS"

In the early McGee stories, it was emphasized that Travis was out to exact retribution and recompense for those who had been victimized by the dishonest, but who, for various legal and judicial reasons could not obtain justice through the conventional means. Also, in my first column, I commented on the evolution of justice (in the interests of spece I condensed thousands of years into a few paragraphs) and bemoaned the fact that the concept of justice seemed to be getting out of focus.

In the past few years, we are hearing more and more about "fair" trials, but fair for whom? When a person has been victimized by criminal means and someone has been accused of the crime, it is the duty of the authorities to determine if the accusation is valid, and if so, to bring the person to trial to determine his innocence or guilt as established, in open court, by the testimony and evidence so produced in the court. In the event that the area of hostility towards the accused is so great as to constitute pre-trial prejudice, then a change of venue is in order.

Often, this hostility is engendered by sensational press coverage or by editorial comment or clamor to the extent that anyone who would be accused of the crime would have a nearly impossible task of obtaining an impartial hearing in the community concerned. However, we are seeing a new tactic, whereby the defense is whipping up pre-trial comment of a controversial nature in an attempt to establish an aura of disputation to the extent that it will be claimed that it is impossible to obtain a fair trial anywhere because the case has become well-known in every community.

One of the first renowned moves in this direction was the murder of President Kennedy. Within a matter of hours after the apprehension of Lee Harvey Oswald, certain legal minds had expressed the opinion that the defense should be based upon the concept that it would be impossible for Oswald to obtain a fair trial anywhere in the United States, with the corollary that he would be set free!

Jack Ruby consistently maintained that the reasons he shot Oswald were that he felt that Oswald might get off with the killing for that reason, plus that he wanted to spare Mrs. Kennedy the ordeal of a trial. And, in connection with Jack Ruby, the fair trial concept was raised on his behalf because millions of people had witnessed the murder of Oswald on television.

But what about the original concept of justice for the victim? Or do we just say to hell with him; after all, he is dead, or had his head bashed in, or is crippled physically and/or financially, but that is his tough luck?

Those who have had only superficial contact with the workings of the judicial system are prone to agonize overmuch on the part of the accused. Our judicial system is inclined to be overly protective of the accused. Especially if he is a member of a criminal organization, or has money, or is involved in a sensational case. The chances are that in any of these circumstances, even if convicted, he may never serve a day in any penal servitude. Right after the conviction, an appeal is filed, and bail is requested pending appeal. Then the stalling starts; delay for this, that and another reason. Then, if the appeal is unfavorable, appeal to a higher court or a different jurisdiction, and so on the the Supreme Court, all of which can take years, during which time the convicted person walks around free.

On the other hand, if the accused is of limited means or the case is a routine one, he can get a fast shuffle with his attorney working a deal with the prosecution to "cop a plea". In one of my previous efforts, I mentioned in passing the case where a defense attorney approached me out of court and solicited my opinion as to the guilt of his client. I also noted that this case involved a search, and yet this attorney stipulated my testimony. I certainly would not want this man to represent me for any kind of a charge. Any time there is a search involved, an attorney owes it to his client to

examine that search minutely in open court. Regardless of the integrity or reputation of the officers involved, there is always the chance that they may have made a mistake.

Probably the classic example of legal maneuvering was the Chessman case. Here was a man who, through sheer ingenuity, kept appeal after appeal going for some eleven years, yet not one appeal had any real merit to it. He wrote some rather forgettable books about his situation, and there were people arguing that because he had literary talent he should be pardoned!

Prominent people became involved in the controversy, and yet it was apparent that they knew nothing at all about the merits of the case, and that they had become emotionally involved in what they considered to be a "noble cause" and didn't realize that they were being manipulated by a shrewd criminal psychopath. One really nice person who suffers from an "enlarged bleeding heart" nearly ruined his career by becoming too concerned with the case.

The test of the case was when Associate Justice William O. Douglas (probably the most liberal of all the Justices) could find no merit upon which to base a hearing before the Supreme Court. Finally, the last appeal was turned down by Judge Chambers of the Ninth District Court of Appeals, who summarized the decision (in this nearly exact quote) "We give the defense "A" for effort, but they are trying to put water in a well where there never was any water in the first place. Nothing in the appeals in any way challenges or negates the testimony of the witnesses or the testimony of the victims as to the awful things which happened to them. The judgment is hereby affirmed."

I was teaching Criminology at the time of the Chessman appeals, and became interested in the case. I obtained all of the official material I could about the case, plus engaging in private correspondence with some officers I knew. The entire story was not only a shocker, but left no doubt as to Chessman's guilt. Some of the magazine stories published concerning the case made me wonder about either the reliability or the integrity of the writers, and some of the public pronouncements of one attorney were astounding, to say the least.

During my sojourn in England, I had the opportunity to work with the English police and to observe the workings of the judicial system there, and I was quite impressed. First of all, when one is arrested, he gets a speedy hearing, and, if admitted to bail, the bail must be a real pledge of property or securities or money placed in trust. Then the trial is conducted in an atmosphere of stylized manner and decorum. Finally, if convicted, the review and appeal is automatically considered, and briefs must be delivered in a specified time. Delays are all but unheard of, and new trials are rare (the exceptions being where vital new evidence is disclosed), and finally, an appeal for mercy is considered.

However, the big difference I noted was this: in our courts, judicial notice is taken of procedural errors and these can form the basis for a new trial, regardless of whether they had any effect upon the validity of the evidence or testimony. In England, the whole concern is whether or not the accused is innocent or guilty. I remember one case in which the charge was made that the arresting officer had used undue force in making the arrest. The judge decided that this had no bearing upon the presumption of innocence or guilt of the accused, but reminded the barrister for the accused that he had the right to charge the officer with assault as a separate matter, apart from the trial under consideration.

Also, in England, the decision of the jury does not have to be unanimous, thus eliminating the hung jury of one or two holdouts, and finally, while the accused does not have to testify against himself, under certain conditions he can be required to testify as to certain matters before the court.

Finally, I often wonder about the jury system. How does one determine what a jury of peers is? Would a panel of three judges be more effective? At least it would cut down on the theatrics. Finally, the trial should be fair to <u>both</u> victim and accused.

- Bill Wilson

Please Write For Details

FRANCIS M. (MIKE) NEVINS, St. Louis, MO: I have a bone to pick with Bill Wilson. No, not just a bone, a whole brontosaurus skeleton. Suppose someone submitted to JDMB a paragraph that ran as follows:

> John D. MacDonald wrote hundreds of stories for the pulps from the early 1930's till the late Forties. In 1950 he published his first novel, The Brass Cookie, and introduced us to the boatbum-detective Travis MacGee who has starred in all of his novels since. MacGee operates out of his houseboat, the Broken Flush, which he keeps docked in sunny California when he is not at work using deductive reasoning on murders that have stymied the police. The MacGee books are OK but I prefer the police-procedural series about the Florida cop, Lou Archer, which JDM writes under the pseudonym of Ross McDonald.

You would doubtless borrow JDM's famous rubber stamp, mark the submission appropriately and return to sender, probably with postage due. Right? ((An admirable bit of alternate-world hypothesis. Have you ever considered writing science fiction? -jmm))

Yet, when the subject is not JDM but the law, you print the commentary of Bill Wilson, which is just as full of eye-popping factual howlers as that JDM paragraph. May I take a few moments to set the record straight? ((Please do. I always said that fanpublishing was an education in itself. - jmm))

(a) Wilson attacks the libertarian decisions of the Warren and other courts on the ground that "most" of them were "the split decision of five against four". First of all, he's wrong on the facts. Gideon v. Wainwright was unanimous; Mapp v. Ohio was 6-3; In re Gault was 7-2. Of all the major Supreme Court decisions on defendants' rights, only Escobedo v. Illinois and Miranda v. Arizona were 5-4. Secondly, even if all of these decisions had been unanimous, Wilson would still attack them on the same ground, simply substituting the number nine for five in his polemic, so that his outrage at the alleged antics of five justices is misleading to say the least.

(b) Wilson expresses severe displeasure at the fact that a judicial decision "is what five men say the law is on a given day". This is something like being angry at the rain for falling downward. A judicial decision has always been what a majority or more of the court says it is. It was Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, hardly a radical libertarian, who said: "We are under a Constitution, but the Constitution is what the judges say it is."

(c) Wilson is particularly upset that the Miranda decision "was made retroactive". He can cheer up; it wasn't. In a case decided very shortly after Miranda, the Supreme Court held that Miranda applies only to trials that began after the date of the Miranda decision. Johnson v. New Jersey, 384 U.S. 719 (1966).

(d) Wilson claims that a court that does make a decision retroactive somehow violates the Constitutional prohibition against ex post facto laws. The truth is that way back in 1798, in Calder v. Bull, the Supreme Court held that the ex post facto clause means only that Congress cannot pass a criminal law retroactively. And of course the ex post facto clause applies only to Congress, not to changes brought about by judicial decision. Ross v. Oregon, 227 U.S. 150 (1913).

(e) Wilson hasn't the first idea in the world of the meaning of terms like stare decisis and precedent. No precedent, in any area of law, is ever an absolute. Courts have been overruling their own prior decisions for hundreds of years. In 1955, for example, the Illinois Supreme Court, in overruling an earlier decision, made the following remarks: "In determining whether this case is a binding precedent, this court has the power and the duty under the doctrine of stare decisis to re-examine the authorities and legal concepts invoked in that opinion... for the doctrine of stare decisis is a salutary but not an inflexible rule furthering the practical administration of justice." Bradley v. Fox, 7 Ill. 2d 106, 129 N.E. 2d 699 (1955) (emphasis added).

(f) Wilson to the contrary notwithstanding, the accused does not go free when the policeman commits a procedural error. All that happens is that the evidence illegally obtained by the police--a coerced confession, an object seized in an unlawful search, etc.--is suppressed, i.e., is not allowed to be entered into evidence by the prosecutor. If sufficient legally obtained evidence remains, the defendant will be convicted.

(g) Wilson is outraged that after a trial court has found a defendant guilty, an appellate court can rule that he isn't. In fact, all the appellate court does is to reverse an erroneous conviction. The prosecutor still has the option to re-try the defendant if he thinks enough legally valid evidence remains for a conviction.

(h) Wilson's final sentence shows that he can't distinguish between the admissibility of evidence, the verdict of guilty or not guilty, and the sentencing process, but I don't have the patience to sort out his confusions any further. Any decent book introducing law to the layman should clarify these matters.

Nor will I bother to attack Wilson's comments on police brutality and related subjects. Our differences on these points are much more a function of our differing social philosophies than are our differences on legal matters. I will only point out that large numbers of attorneys, judges and others who have dealt professionally with the police--including, I would gather from his novels, JDM himself--are totally in disagreement with Wilson's view.

DAVE STEWART, Phoenix, AZ: Greetings again. You may not be able to use this without personally checking it out, but.... Recommended (by me) reading (for you and your subscribers): VOLITION, published by Jesse Knight at 413 W. Thayer, Bismarck, ND 58501. Pays not, but is unedited, and a literary forum: esthetics, poetry, criticism, short stories, etc. Libertarian viewpoint. Directly duplicates contributor's copy, if typed and mailed to him flat.

J. PRINCE, New York, NY: Those who have access to the Washington Post Book World will be interested in a good review of "Cry Hard, Cry Fast" by John D. MacDonald, by Clarence Petersen in the July 18, 1971 issue.

The short story "The Homesick Buick" which John D. MacDonald wrote in 1950 is a popular story and has appeared in a number of anthologies. Those who have missed it can now read it in a new book called "Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Stories To Stay Awake By", published this year by Random House. The book contains a total of 35 stories and is pleasant reading worth dipping into.

WILLIAM F. SMITH, Rochester, NY: No. 16 was quite interesting. The cover by Jeff Cochran, illustrating THE GIRL, THE GOLD WATCH AND EVERYTHING (one of my JDM favorites) is very, very good.

I have read SEVEN. It is not exactly my cup of tea.

STAN WOOLSTON, 12832 Westlake Street, Garden Grove, CA 92640: Bill Wilson's HARD TOUCH is very good--and something that could be quoted by columnists and used as "authority" for Letters to the Editors. Hum--it might be interesting for me to try this: write to a few papers around Orange County quoting some of this, to remind people that police are too humans and not pigs. (The term is stupid, even if it was used to refer to the few sadistic swine that probably do exist around the world in any group where force is needed.)

I'm reminded of groups who seek violence as a way to "overcome" the "establishment" so THEIR group can be it. Like most ideas of anarchy, there is the matter of when to stop: anarchy, if started extensively, might end up with counter-anarchy if some of them got in power. ((That sounds like a contradiction in terms. -jmm)) But emotions and thought are not necessarily compatible; in fact, mostly when a person thinks with less intelligence it is coupled with strong emotion--and vice versa. (If you hate or fear, the mind may not settle down enough to cogitate.)

So every heading Bill Wilson presents could be used as an examination of local police conditions, or that of the Sheriff's office, and political aspects spelled out by a whole series of Letters to the Editors. Or it might be used as a clue for interviewing local folk in police department and out for articles in zines, etc.

Lawrence Fleming seems to be pointing out that an author needs no critic. Maybe so--but I do not deplore comments on any author in a publication or newspaper just because it would be disliked by authors. If it is from someone who has the habit of being critical as a sort of punishment of the author for writing when all he can do is criticize, I'd say it is impossible to argue with a fool anyway. Newspapers are

written for the public, which does not mean for thinking people, necessarily; emotions seem more important in all sections even in news, in quite a few newspapers. Ideally, both should be included (but there is a separation of the person in pain or fear from reason, to at least a certain degree--and that seems to be pertinent here too.)

Gail Van Achtoven: this seems to introduce a comment I have of your review of The House Guests: A few days ago I opened a book to the introduction and it said something like this:. "Introduction: For readers only--not for critics. In the past, critics seem to criticize my introductions more than the book, while readers want to know why I published a certain title, where the idea came from, and so on. So I have decided to write a special section for these readers--but not for the critics." ((This might work well for critics who criticize a book without reading it. -jmm)) Actually, I should not even have used semiquotes to this as I may have added other elements not written there, but the idea is there--critics seem to cut at some authors more for their introductions than for interior things. I am one of those people who read introductions--and sometimes decide to buy a book on the strength of it. But often it is an appendage, and, like the blurbs written for many paperbacks, cannot be considered really tooopertinent. I suspend belief when I read such things, myself.

In recent years with treatment of "wild animals" by friendly ways that show they are not basically wild but made wild by fear and doubt at the intention of that most crafty of creatures, man, and with training of sideshow or circus animals by friendship instead of whip, I think there is a real indication that the angry and emotion-ridden "owner" of an animal can transmit his particular form of madness to his animal companions. So can the mad parent transmit it to kids. If "society is mad"--as I've heard--it is because of the suggestibility factor in all us living things; we have to get along with what we do not necessarily understand and so are apt to act mad to be normal.

Bill Clark's review of A CATALOGUE OF CRIME may not be fully favorable, but on the strength of it I'll probably get the book. But first I'll read through the book I got on the British police system (not to be confused with the Scottish system, which evidently has many different approaches and procedures). I've other books on the subject of U. S. training of police too, and maybe I'll be more at home with some of the mysteries when I read it.

I imagine what the U.S. may need more than anything else is a central training school or at least standardized laws with police taught the best methods, whether for a small town police station or a big city like Los Angeles with many substations, etc. And the sheriffs of the country should also have training there with some attention given to insuring the man in charge is more than just a votegetter. The law situation is mixed up, in various ways, with politics and money anyway--such as having "marshals" and sheriffs in charge of handling prisoners in some areas. And in some places there is conflict as to who should react to a call for help when county and city areas are close and no arrangement is made. (Though it may be that mainly I'm thinking of overlapping fire stations in this regard.)

R. GORDON KELLY, Ardmore, PA: JDMB #16 was welcome but, for this reader at least, proved disappointing in comparison with earlier issues. The relative thinness of the issue and the querulous tone of Lawrence Fleming's polemic seem to symbolize a diminished enthusiasm. (I hope that events prove me a poor prophet.) What Mr. Fleming sought to accomplish eludes me. Whether authors enjoy seeing their work discussed is surely irrelevant. And while some critical essays are no doubt directed in part at an author and represent attempts to influence the direction of his work, we can, I think, trust most writers to look after their best interests. Moreover, the material in JDMB argues that the primary function of the enterprise is to identify an audience--a peculiarly intense one, to be sure--and to establish the basis for a sharing of insights, rather than to tell JDM his business. It is true that the principal functions of criticism--description and evaluation--have been pretty well jumbled, given the degree to which "good plot" and "realistic characters" (and their functional equivalents) have tended to dominate discussions of JDM's books; but this hardly calls for taking an ax to the critic.

We might, more properly, call for discussions of such overlooked aspects of JDM's work as the ways in which some of his ideas have been modified during his career and

and the possible circumstances of these changes. There has also been too little said about the characteristic preoccupations that link JDM with, and separate him from, other practitioners in the field. Both Ross MacDonald and JDM, for example, seem drawn to examine frequently the unanticipated consequences of acts, whether of violence or merely of indiscretion, that occur when an individual temporarily loses control under certain kinds of pressure.

Or consider the frequency of the motif which appears most starkly in JDM's THE EXECUTIONERS: a stable, satisfying professional life and successful marriage are suddenly disrupted by the menacing insinuations of a sadistic, convicted rapist seeking the vengeance for the testimony that sent him up. Sam Bowden, the lawyer hero, not only watches his secure life begin to crumble around him, but recognizes that his acceptance of his success has been dangerously naive and that the various agencies responsible for ordering and protecting his world are powerless in these circumstances to do so. The threat is resolved, indeed can be resolved, only in an explosively violent conclusion that pits Bowden against his tormentor. Bowden's snap shot which mortally wounds Cady seems as accidental, however, as the chance encounter which years before temporarily linked Bowden and Cady--or so it had seemed at the time.

Bowden's world is restored with Cady's death, but the terms in which he understands his life have been significantly altered. In a very real way, the world he sees is a new one, more frightening than the old which had no place for evil; but, given the events of the story, his altered view is more "realistic" than his earlier stance and more likely to contribute to his survival.

To the extent that this motif of precariousness appears throughout the canon (witness McGee's comments to the effect that when things are going well it is wise to become suspicious and cautious--They are planning something), we may legitimately begin to speak of and to describe the world that JDM presents in his books--of its dimensions, logic, order, morality and so forth. The "Quotebook" confirms that the raw material for such an undertaking is abundantly available.

JON L. BREEN, Redondo Beach, CA: Thanks for another great issue of JDMB. I also enjoyed the supplement very much but wish it had had an index to the abbreviated titles. (I know we hardcore JDM fans are supposed to recognize the titles by their abbreviations, but I can't always, and any reader with just a beginner's interest in JDM would find the lack of the full titles even more off-putting. This is a minor criticism, however.)

Mrs. Stevenson's comment on Ross Macdonald is baffling. Why Agatha Christie and Perry Mason? Macdonald could only be compared with Christie and Gardner on the skill and care of his plotting, and certainly that would be a complimentary comparison. In any other regard, I fail to see the resemblance. It surprises me that a reader of John D. MacDonald could not also see the value of Ross Macdonald, although I can understand partisans of the one somehow resenting the other's success, if you follow me. Personally, I can't decide whether MacDonald or Macdonald is the greater--usually I would give the nod to whichever writer I've read the most recently. (I also like Philip MacDonald, but he unquestionably runs third.)

Would you (or any of your readers) care to send me a list of their ten favorite detective novels and/or twelve favorite writers in the field? I'm conducting a poll for The Armchair Detective and want as big a response as possible.

Mrs. HARRIET N. STEVENSON, West Linn, OR: On a rainy day in October, and I mean RAINY, I went to the bookstore in Oswego to look for A TAN AND SANDY SILENCE. No luck. So I came home and cuddled up with JDMB and a beer. This #16 JDMB was about four-beers long and very interesting. ((You should have been able to find TAN by now. Is that "four-beers" anything like forbears? -jmm))

In PWFD, Harry Warner Jr. said he disagreed with me about movies made from books; that GONE WITH THE WIND was not the only reasonable facsimile of a book. Mr. Warner is right. I haven't seen that many movies nor read that many books. Hereafter I'll try to keep my fingers under control on the typewriter keys lest they run away from my brain. THE MALTESE FALCON I've seen in its ad-infested version on TV. I went to the Lake Oswego Theater to see IPCRESS FILE. I had to reread the book to be sure there was any connection. So I drop it.

Reading PWFD is like having the contributors sitting in my living room talking. It's like the best of the TV talk shows, principally Cavett and Frost...and I mean the VERY best of theirs...like the other night when Cavett let the New York police and the investigators have their say; except that it was interrupted by umpteen commercials.

It was still raining when I finished JDMB 16. I wondered where I had picked up all these opinions...was it Haycraft? Ellery Queen? No. It was Raymond Chandler. I reread RAYMOND CHANDLER SPEAKING. I bought it in 1964 on a sale table. The editors are Dorothy Gardiner and Kathrine Sorley Walker. (Copyright 1962 by Helga Greene Literary Agency.) It is mostly Raymond Chandler's letters, with a few excerpts from his writing.

The letters that amused me the most were to unknowns. One was to a man in a Veterans' Hospital who wanted to learn to write short stories. The other was sent to a man who had made a study of Phillip Marlowe. After three pages Chandler told the writer that he (the writer) knew more about Marlowe than Chandler did.

About cats, Chandler makes no apologies. He and his wife had a cat named TAKI. She was almost 20 years old when they had to take her to the Vet for the long goodbye. Chandler said he never liked people that didn't like cats. (No reflection on you, June; your nose knows.) ((Dammitohell, I never said I don't like cats. I do. It's just that we don't have any because of my hayfever. I take my antihistamines before we go to visit cat-owning friends (or friend-owning cats), and get along fine. Gail Van Achtoven has a black cat name of Beauty who likes my lap to knead and drool on. -jmm))

Chandler also said he was suspicious of people who didn't like mystery stories. He said he liked Josephine Tey and Michael Innes. He read John Ross Macdonald and suspected it was a pseudonym, as it is.

June: Are you going to tell us about Bouchercon II? How did you go to the Ball? As a FLASH OF GREEN? ((See Leo Rand's article on Bouchercon II, this issue. Unfortunately, there was no costume ball. Maybe some other year, when the Bouchercon really gets going. -jmm))

DAN GOODMAN, Los Angeles, CA: Elaboration of a point in my loc in JDMB 15: the best guide to acquiring phony identification suitable for use in the US is a book titled IF I HAD IT TO DO OVER AGAIN, Robert S. Gallagher, Dutton, 1969. It's a study of people who have changed identities.

One applies for a social security card under a false name; once this is acquired, it will serve as identification for use in acquiring driver's licenses and such.

Things I've observed: Nevada marriage licenses can be gotten without showing identification. So can California voter's registration.

For travel across frontiers in Western Europe (including Yugoslavia, probably including parts of Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia), you need a pass port or a national identity card from an appropriate country. Getting a US passport requires a birth certificate or other proof that one is a citizen; I presume other countries have similar safeguards.

I've been told that US passports are cheap in Amsterdam, and go for about a thousand dollars in India. Israeli and South African passports are less valuable; too many countries restrict entry by holders of such passports. (Since few countries bar both Israelis and South Africans, it might be wise to supply oneself with both Israeli and South African credentials.) These are genuine passports, separated from careless owners; I don't know anything about the market in forged documents.

If one wishes to cross frontiers without having documents or luggage inspected too closely, trains are probably the best form of transportation. Hiking can also be good. Busses and private cars are more likely to be stopped than trains and hikers. Hitch-hikers are viewed with suspicion; but most hitch-hikers who get into trouble with border officials and other law-enforcement people do so because of uncoolness (like hitching on highways where it's banned).

Expect delays at best, and probably at least a cursory search, if there's a Turkish stamp in your passport. Turkey must have other industries besides the growing of opium and marijuana; but customs officials of other countries don't believe it.

There seems to be only one drug worth smuggling from the US to Europe. It's available here from veterinary supply houses; so are a fair number of other drugs about which

questions are asked if one is obtaining them for human use, I gather.

On the gun discussion: Edith Sitwell's father is supposed to have invented a gun for hunting wasps. There must be any number of similar oddities, some of them lethal.

I've seen rare guns in museums--rare because they were impractical. Like the cannon in the Tower of London, adaptable for shooting round or square cannonballs. And unworkable combinations of pistols with other weapons. Presumably people actually get killed with such devices from time to time.

HARRY WARNER, Jr., Hagerstown, MD: It was good to meet you and June after all these years. But the reaction is getting mixed with a feeling of guilt because the new issue of The JDM Bibliophile was awaiting me when I got back to Hagerstown and a month later I've still not written a loc on it.

The QUOTEBOOK surprise was the most impressive thing in that envelope as far as novelty and ingenuity are concerned. Most of these quotes are too long to find their way into the Bartlett and Mencken volumes of famous quotations, but some of them deserve inclusion in any anthology of famous remarks. One thing I feel a trifle uncertain about in the absence of a preface, is whether everything contained in this publication is guaranteed to represent the way JDM really feels about things. ((Why should it? -jmm)) I don't know how often he puts into the mouth of characters philosphy that he definitely disagrees with, or how many of the items in this Quotebook are taken from dialogue and how many from the omniscient author's contribution to the novels. But the quotes are consistent with one another in general outlook on life and mankind, and I imagine that most of them are good, if oversimplified, expoundings of the writer's own beliefs, or at least of his own beliefs as of the time he was writing these stories.

In the Bibliophile itself, Bill Wilson's column continues to fascinate and to produce nods of agreement, even though nobody can see those nods through rarely-washed windows and curtains. I suspect that policemen feel quite strongly about lawyers for another reason: some attorneys for the defense in criminal cases will do their utmost to make the policemen look careless or incompetent, even if the line of questioning has only the faintest relevance to the defense.

A typical instance: a bunch of kids go joyriding, lose control of the car, smash it through a store display window or into a traffic control signal, and scatter before anyone can catch them. One of them is identified by witnesses as the driver, goes on trial, and the attorney begins grilling the policeman about whether he took fingerprints from the steering wheel and the gearshift lever to prove it was his client that was the driver instead of one of the other kids, who aren't on trial. The insinuation is there, even though the policeman will know perfectly well that a half-dozen persons must have been driving the vehicle and no prints would show, most of the jurors will understand this perfectly, but there may be just one juror naive enough to discredit the policeman's entire testimony because he believes that the failure to take prints in symptomatic of poor police work.

Bill also speaks of the police stereotypes. I wonder if the disappearance of Naked City from syndicated television occurred because the police in it were real persons, quite close to the nature of real policemen, not the superhuman or mechanical or otherwise impossible police that appear on most television series? Perry Mason, for instance, is still being rerun interminably on Washington and Baltimore stations, even though its district attorney and detective characters don't have much to do with reality.

I can't go along with Lawrence Fleming's contention about criticism of professional writers. Objection the first: if the reader pays for the stuff he reads, he has the same right to object as he has to take his criticism of his auto to the dealer or Ralph Nader. Second objection: no professional writer is forced to read the criticism unless it's written by his editor, publisher, or agent. If he is sensitive to criticism from the people whose writing he needn't read, he has no more need to read it than he has to watch television programs he dislikes. Thirdly, professional writers do solicit and offer opinions of other professionals on their work. It happens out in public in science fiction through fanzines and at conventions, but it also occurs in universities where professional writers are lecturers and in literary publications where professional writers are reviewers, and many other places.

In a sense, I'm a professional writer. I've earned my living from what I write for the past 28 years. I've never experienced the antipathy to criticism that Lawrence attributes to professional writers. When the criticism is harsh, sometimes I agree with it, and sometimes I feel peeved for the next half-hour, but I don't feel that there has been any breaching of etiquette or damage to my psyche. I realize that there are professional writers who are extremely touchy about criticism but I've never comprehended how anything written about their published work can hurt them nearly as much as inability to sell the writings that never got published or failure of a book that got published to sell enough copies to pay for itself.

The news about the death of Manfred B. Lee hadn't reached me until I read this issue. I've never been an all-out Ellery Queen enthusiast, but I've felt that the stories didn't receive the acclaim they deserve among the all-out mystery and suspense fans. And don't they deserve a special niche for their prominence in the earliest history of paperback publishing? I believe that there were more Queen titles in the early releases of Pocket Books, which started the publishing revolution, than any other mystery writer.

This is disgusting. I was going to finish this letter with a summary of an interesting paragraph or two in Jack Vizzard's "See No Evil" about Cape Fear. Now I can't find the page I need. It had to do with censorship of a rape scene, and led me to think that the movie might have been stronger if it hadn't been for the infamous code of decency. ((Perhaps we should have written that as "censorship of a **** scene". -jmm)) Maybe I should revise my whole way of life to include the right to make notes in the margins and turn down page corners in non-fiction books that don't contain indexes. Well, the whole book is worth reading, even though nothing else in it has reference to JDM's books. I think it's available in paperback, and it's being remaindered in its hardcover edition by the mail order firms like Marboro.

I hope you have a splendid time at the Bouchercon. I'll drown my sorrows at missing it in the World Series.

ROBERT E. BRINEY, Salem, Mass.: The JDMB 16 arrived this morning, and naturally took precedence over the rest of the mail. The pink cover was a surprise, but the reassuring blue of the rest of the issue made up for it... ((The cover was not pink but red, as in the "red world". -jmm))

One of the first things I noticed, while thumbing at random through the issue prior to reading it systematically, was June's comment on page 22, repeating the oft-heard assertion that Clarke's book 2001 was written after the movie was made. Clarke himself has said (in a Trumpet lettercolumn, among other places) that this is not so. The book was written two years before the film was completed. Thus the film was Kubrick's version of the book, rather than the book being Clarke's explanation of the film. ((I stand corrected. I only wish that you could also set the record straight wherever I got my information. -jmm))

At least, Clarke cannot be accused of having written a "novelization" of a movie. That is an art-form which continues to puzzle me--the novelizations must be commercially successful, or there wouldn't be so many of them (Michael Avallone apparently makes his living writing them!), but they have no other discernible virtues. I've seen only two that I thought were worth reading in their own right(s): Leiber's Tarzan novel and Theodore Sturgeon's THE RARE BREED (an unusual and worthwhile Western whose relationship to the blah screenplay is fortunately quite tenuous). Someday, if I ever succumb to an irresistible urge, I will disinter my copy of I COULD GO ON SINGING and actually read it.

Enjoyed the JOHN D. MacDONALD QUOTEBOOK very much. Now we have a convenient place to look up all those remembered statements. Only one cavil: not nearly enough Rotsler drawings.

I am probably in a small and lonesome minority on this point, but I must record the fact that I didn't enjoy S*E*V*E*N very much. Too many unpleasant people and too much overt moralizing.

Harry Warner's idea of sf and mystery conventions back-to-back is interesting, but I fear unworkable. There is a limit to people's time and stamina, and the four solid days of the annual sf affair manage pretty well to exhaust both commodities. ((Amen! Also, Oink! -jmm))

JIM SANDOE, Boulder, CO: Thank you for sending me the letters in response to my curiosity about library holdings of JDM's books. Thanks, too, to Mrs. Harriet N. Stevenson, West Linn, Oregon, who reports one title, the Coppolino book, but fears there may be others mixed with other Macdonalds in the Lake Oswego public library.

R. Gordon Kelly transcribes 15 titles from the Union Library of Pennsylvania which reports holdings for the state's libraries, public and academic; and Jon L. Breen, whose letter wukk presumably be printed elsewhere in JDMB 17, one library (Cal State Dominguez Hills) which has all but one, speaking presumably for his special interest in JDM and his powers of persuasion. Redondo Beach Public Library with 11 titles including some paperbacks that have been bound speaks well for an interested librarian. But the Torrance Public Library (like the University of Colorado Libraries) have admitted only hardcovered editions.

Some public libraries (in particular) have uncatalogued collections of paperbacks to be taken and returned (or swopped) without a formal library charge. JDM is represented by a number of books in the Estes Park (Colo.) public library in its collection of this fluid sort.

I fancy that very few libraries without some special persuasion either watch for or buy original paperbacks or, indeed, are aware of them. Fifty years ago libraries were presumably not buying Nick Carter any more than they were buying Cap'n Billy's Whiz-Bang.

Academic libraries too often begin buying a writer's work retrospectively after they've bought the first two or three studies of his work. It was the public libraries, not the university libraries, who bought Dashiell Hammett on publication, and those copies were soon worn out, and discarded or sold in tatters. University libraries seem not to buy new fiction save by established authors. Then they must buy what they missed in the antiquarian (or, more luckily, in the second-hand) market.

Anyone needing to work on the works of JDM had much better find his books in the supermarket or the drugstore, and be wary of lending them casually.

These welcome letters confirmed my own observation of books and libraries, the inclination to avoid paperbacks and an amazing ignorance of paperback originals. There is also the librarian who, seizing a new paperback with delight for his (or her) own reading, forgets that the library won't have either the time or the stoop to see it without help.

JEFF SMITH, Baltimore, MD: Again, I've read five MacDonald books since my last letter (must be the magic number): A BULLET FOR CINDERELLA, DARKER THAN AMBER, DEATH TRAP, THE DECEIVERS and DEADLY WELCOME, of which I preferred the last--although it started out so slowly I wondered if I was going to get beyond the first couple chapters. AMBER was my first McGee book (and the reason I started with it was that I only had that and THE LAST ONE LEFT in the house when I felt like reading a MacDonald, and I wanted a one-sitting book) and I wasn't overly impressed. I enjoyed it, but I've preferred most of the singles I've read to it. And I very much like the non-suspense/mystery types like THE DECEIVERS, although I was furious when I reached the end and discovered that MacDonald had forgotten to write the last paragraph. So I wrote my own, and since I like happy endings...

I think the movie version of AMBER was in Baltimore for a week, on a triple feature with TARZAN'S DEADLY SILENCE and TICK...TICK...TICK. Since the theater was in the slum section I didn't see the movie. I would like to point out that it is very difficult to make a movie faithful to a book. You can demonstrate this to yourself by, the next time you read a novel, trying to visualize each scene cinematically. Many of the most important sections of the book are sheer nonsense when viewed as the exterior movie camera would. The best one can hope for is a film true to the spirit of the book, which does the same thing in its different way. Apparently, the AMBER film failed in this.

I see paperback distribution from an unusual angle, as I work in one of the Walden bookstores which are scattered across the country. We are independent, whereas most of the drugstores and newsstands and the like are serviced by a wholesale distributor. We work directly with the publishers. As a consequence, for instance, there is generally a row of 10 or 12 JDM books in our mystery section, whereas the drugstores carry the two or three recently reissued by Fawcett.

I vastly prefer this method to any other, and, while we don't always get books as fast as we'd like (new Fawcetts are generally in the drugstores a week before we get them) we have a pretty good system. It has its share of flaws, but we manage pretty well. Our home office orders new books without having to worry about anything, and then we take care of non-sellers and reorders and such. We can order books and authors that people ask for, and not have to worry about whether a wholesaler feels up to taking care of us.

Incidentally, our current JDM bestseller is NIGHTMARE IN PINK. I can't figure out why, but that is outselling everything else of his we have in stock. THE EXECUTIONERS is running second, and that I can understand; if I were scanning the racks looking for a book to read, any book to read, I'd be attracted to that. It looks good. But why NIGHTMARE IN PINK?

S*E*V*E*N sold well at first for us, because all the MacDonald fans bought it since it was new. But now that the initial surge is over, the remaining copies sit like dead weight while the novels continue to sell. Short stories are nowhere near as popular as novels. And series books generally do better than singles; particularly when the author is primarily a series writer. Thus, while MacDonald singles sell because McGee is just a small portion of JDM's output, the non-series books by Aarons and Hamilton and such are almost completely ignored.

L. FLEMING, Pasadena, CA: Sub-basement note on sounds of shots. A mere ex-target-shooter can only learn from a Gun Editor, or, even more importantly, from a policeman who has Been There, i.e., Bill Wilson.

A Last Item. How about this business of people hitting difficult targets just by pointing a pistol, not using the sights? Exhibition shooters did (or do), according to the literature, astounding things. Ed McGivern threw dimes into the air and bonked them unerringly with bullets from his .38 revolver. The late Ad Toepperwein, it is written, hit little blocks of wood in mid-air, thrown like trap targets, with a .22 rifle, thousands of them without a miss. I personally saw an exhibition shooter about 12 years ago hit thrown potatoes in mid-air, at a range of around 25 feet, with a .22 rifle held in one hand.

To anyone accustomed to using the Patridge sights on the bull of an NRA target, such stuff is clearly impossible. I have even asked questions about it, of pistol shooters who held the Master classification. All they said was that they didn't know, and then changed the subject, such as by saying Hello to someone else and walking away.

There is an entertaining living-room experiment that bears on the possibility of developing this kind of skill. You take a flashlight of the kind that has a sharp beam, such as a Ray-O-Vac "Sportsman", and shove the little dingus ahead one click so that the light will light when you press the button. Then you sort of hold it in your lap and point it at something. Don't sight along it; don't even look at it. Just hold it in a way that you sort of feel is in the right direction. When you feel right about it, press the button and see where the spot of light hits. Across a room, it is usually within a foot or two on the first few tries, and one improves with practice.

Not, however, to the extent of being able to hit a potato at 10 yards. Is that stuff real, may one ask? McGivern and Toepperwein and many others, in the days of old-time exhibition shooting, had plenty of witnesses. Perhaps they used shot cartridges or other gimmicks; I don't know. Informed opinion is invited.

It may not be right to criticize JDM's "apologia" in THE HOUSE GUESTS. He wrote the book several years ago, when very many people still believed that animals were just some sort of automatons, put here solely for selfish use by Homo Sapiens. Although this sort of belief is now dying out fast, it is still extant. Nobody has taken an opinion poll.

Anyone who likes animals and undertakes to write about them is, I fear, under a powerful temptation to try to convert some of the holdouts; Try to understand: we and they are all members of the same Club. A few years back, the temptation was stronger. And who knows but that someone may have been converted?

Cats have a convenient size and set of tribal customs that makes them appropriate for House Guests (not to ignore dogs and others, but space is limited); and so it soon

becomes very evident that they have strong personalities and characters, all different. The observation of which is very right down the alley of any professional novelist. Historically, writers have liked cats. As everyone should, and a good thing too.

No adverse criticism of THE HOUSE GUESTS should be permitted, not even by the President of the Cat Fancier's Association, the President of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, or the President of the U. S. ((One gathers the impression that you just don't like criticism at all! -jmm))

FRED BLOSSER, Star City, WVa: Poul Anderson is quite right about MacDonald's ability to depict evil graphically and realistically. And tied in with that, I think, is the author's equally awesome gift for making violent death something less than the painless romantic experience portrayed in most movies and tv shows. I'm thinking especially of the way Christy murders Shaymen in BORDER TOWN GIRL (crushes his hand, breaks his jaw, and finally finishes him off by stepping on his throat and crushing the windpipe) and Boone's demise in BRIGHT ORANGE FOR THE SHROUD. Right off the boat onto--wham--the sharp nub of the mangrove root. And no striving for gory effects, no Spillane-ish blood and guts. As though JDM were saying that it's okay to daydream about being a Travis McGee--but in real life you'd better be prepared to accept any and all consequences.

I didn't much care for S*E*V*E*N. I'd much rather have seen a collection of MacDonald's pulp work. A TAN AND SANDY SILENCE runs Stark's SLAYGROUND a close race for the catchiest title of the year--I'll be eager to see if the book is as good.

I dunno. I think I'm fast coming to the conclusion that MacDonald is as much a master in portraying the whole range of late-20th Century culture as Faulkner was in depicting the South and Steinbeck with the Okies and the migratory workers during the Depression. He's good.

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News & Previews

Continued from Page 14:

John will be submitting a novel to Doubleday in April. He has been working on it since last summer. The "working title" is OPPS. This comes from a sign beside the Tamiami Trail a few years ago, just past a small, shabby roadside restaurant which had about two miles of badly printed signs leading up to it. The final sign read: "OPPS! YOU MISSED IT!" But he hasn't decided on the final title yet, and he doesn't want to talk about the book at this time. Intriguing, yes?

-oOo-

John has been asked by the University of Indiana to take over a one-week workshop in the novel in late June, ending July 3. He has not yet decided whether to do it, but if you live in the vicinity of the University, you might check it out locally.

-oOo-

Our thanks to Phyllis White Langer of Fawcett, and to John D., hisownself, for all of our news and previews this time.

Len & June

WESTERCON XXV

The 25th Annual West Coast Science Fantasy Conference

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Recommended Reading:

THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE ($1 per copy)
Allen J. Hubin, 3656 Midland, White Bear Lake, MN 55110

DAST MAGAZINE (Mostly in Swedish; DAST stands for Detective Agents Science-fiction Thriller.)
Iwan Hedman, Flodins vag 5, S 152 00, Strangnas, SWEDEN

Author Index to DOC SAVAGE MAGAZINE ($3.50) an index of all the authors and stories that appeared in DSM
William J. Clark, 11744½ Gateway Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90064

THE FAUST COLLECTOR (50¢ per copy)
William J. Clark (see above)

THE FRANK GRUBER INDEX ($1.50)
William J. Clark (see above)

THE MYSTERY READER'S NEWSLETTER (6 for $3, US & Canada; $3.50 overseas, surface mail)
Lianne Carlin, PO Box 113, Melrose, MA 02176

THE ELLERY QUEEN REVIEW (4 for $3.50)
Rev. Robert E. Washer, 82 E. 8th Street, Oneida Castle, NY 13421

THE ROHMER REVIEW (3 for $2)
Robert E. Briney, 245 Lafayette Street, Apt. 3G, Salem, MA 01970

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Please nominate up to five in each category. Nominees must have appeared for the first time during the year of 1971. In the base of a book, use copyright date; in the case of a magazine, use cover date; in the case of a dramatic presentation, first performance. Dramatic presentations may be movies, plays or television productions. In the case of a television series, only individual episodes may be nominated.

Deadline for receipt of nominations is 15 April 1972.

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