

The JDM BIBLIOPHILE No 12, August 1969

Edited and published by Len and June Moffatt, Box 4456, Downey, California 90241.

Associate Editors: Bill Clark and Ed Cox. This is a non-profit amateur journal devoted to the works--and to the readers--of John D. MacDonald. 25¢ a copy.

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Note: JDMB #11 was incorrectly dated April 1968. Should have been April 1969.

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: October 18, 1969. This means that we hope to publish JDMB #13 sometime before the end of this year--or early next year.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Seek & Swap Department	2
News & Previews	2
Junket - by John D. MacDonald	3
Book Review (BROWN) - by Dave Locke	9
Please Write For Details - by the readers and the editors . .	13

AN ADDITION TO THE JDM MASTER CHECKLIST:

(Thanks to Thomas L. Powers)

Anthology Section, page 30, "Addenda":

BEST SF: 1968, Putnam 1969

ed. by Harry Harrison

"THE ANNEX"

(Reprinted from PLAYBOY May 1968; see page 18 of JDM MC)

Copies of THE JDM MASTER CHECKLIST are still available from the Moffatts @ \$1 per copy

LAST-MINUTE NEWS:

"You'll be pleased to hear that Lippincott is going to publish DARKER THAN AMBER in hardcovers next spring. If all of John's fans rally as we expect they will, we'll then go on with others in the McGee series.

Sincerely,
/s/ Carolyn Blakemore
Editor, New York Office
J. B. Lippincott Company"

The following "diary" or report was written by JDM for his family and his friends. It was not intended for publication, and we want to thank John for his permission to publish it here, so that more of his friends could share the joys and trials of his Junket. -ljm

J
U
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T

by
John
D.

MacDonald

6 March 69

Well, the way it happened, I got a copy of a February 4th letter from our Governor Claude Kirk to one Gordon Harris, the Chief of Public Affairs, sending him a list of fifteen people to be invited to the Apollo 9 launch.

Absolutely no idea how I got on the list. Couple of weeks later the invitation came. Filled out the card and sent it back. Tried to get a reservation over there. Phoned best motel at Cocoa Beach. Nice lady said nothing available for 50 miles in every direction. Got a reservation for two nights at Howard Johnson North in Orlando, an hour and a half from the Cape.

Mission scratched. Head colds. Changed reservations. Left here in late afternoon Sunday March 2nd in Ford wagon, 2 years old, and drove to Orlando. Before leaving, wife suggested bringing along survival kit, containing booze. Told her let's drink in a saloon.

Interstate 4 full of excitement--nothing to do with launch. People going 80 and 90 in old Mustangs. Moon out. Big haze across it in Polk County. Haze from phosphate plants. Stench.

Got off I-4 and bought gas from friendly fellow. Discussed pollution haze across the moon. Fellow said, "It doesn't matter much to me and you, at our age. But it makes you wonder about the kids and the grandbabies". First time I ever thought about being too old to object to pollution. Continued on, slightly depressed.

Great big Howard Johnson's. Jam packed full. Room seemed pleasant enough. Cold night, raw wind. Unloaded. Went to restaurant, asked waitress where we could get a drink. She told us a place up the road, some kind of quaint Bavarian name. Nearby couple overcome with laughter. At us? Why? Went up road. No cars at quaint Bavarian place. Looked dismal anyway. Drove down road in other direction. Found a big Italian restaurant next to shopping center. Seemed to be part of Holiday Inn. Restaurant closed. Parking lot empty. Went into Holiday Inn. Friendly woman said nobody could get a drink on Sunday in Orange County. Dry county. Didn't need a drink that bad. Wanted one, dammit. Felt challenged. Gave up. Went back to Howard Johnson's. Fair food. Thanked waitress for sending us on dry mission. Had another waitress. Chunky young blonde type, kept hovering and smiling and taking too much care. Had a strange routine while we were trying to get out of there. "It was a pleasure to have served you." Also, "I enjoyed serving you". New H. J. promotion? Hope not.

Watched 11 o'clock news in room to make sure the three fellows going up next day. Found heat arrangement, a great big General Electric heat pump thing with a fan which, even on lowest level, sounded like 707 taking off. Bright lights outside came through draperies. Refrigerator in room made dribbling trickling sound every 43 seconds. Sounded like somebody having a drink. Got up. Turned off refrigerator. Turned off heat. Fixed draperies. Very bad night for sleeping.

Got late start next morning. Eight o'clock. Had to head back west on I-4 for 4 exits, exit onto Route 150, go through too much of Orlando. Very unkempt, sorry, ordinary city. But great big billboards on outskirts which say, "Orlando didn't become known as the City Beautiful by being ugly". Strange statement. Who would call it the City Beautiful? And how did it get to be so ugly? And what are the big billboards supposed to prove? Maybe, that it is the logical place for Disneyland South.

Drove over to Cocoa Beach, through Titusville, known to local gourmets as Hepatitisville. Cocoa Beach is a great big multi-lane strip of fast tough traffic running thru every kind of jumbled plastic junk that the age of wheels can create. Finger-lickin' good. Superjet car wash. Golden arches of McDonald hamburgers. Signs, signs, signs, winking flickering blinking, and a lot of space-oriented names on things. Jet-Age Motor Lodge. Rocket Beach Launderette. Stopped in big gas station and got directions to Quality Court Motel. Noted that rear lot line of gas station lined with crunched cars, each crunch an obvious fatality in the recent past. Rust hadn't set in yet.

NASA Protocol Center set up in restaurant next to Quality Court Motel. Left wife in car. Went in. Big room. Hand-lettered signs hanging over desks and tables along walls. Deserted flavor. Five or so people sitting around drinking coffee. Had an after-the-party look. Litter on floor. Seemed surprised to see anybody. It was then 9:45. Nice man was very helpful. Said there was one car left to go out there, a gray sedan with young driver. One other passenger. Young lady, dark hair, pale suit, ultra-vivacious. I said my invitation was for me alone, but had wife out in car. Big array of maybe sixty unused pin-on passes on wall. He picked out an unused pass for a Mrs. Husted, folded the name part under and gave it to me for Dorothy. Told me to go gather her up and hurry back as the car had to leave soon or miss the shot. Asked him "Are cameras and binoculars verboten?" He said, "Oh, yes, you can take cameras and binoculars to the viewing stand area."

Hurried back, got cameras, binoculars, wife, locked car, returned in time to meet young driver and hyper-vivacious young lady coming out door. Four-door gray sedan rode like small truck. Young lady turned out to be PR type. Gave us free pass--no cover charge--to the Carnival Lounge. 2-hour show. Suitable to take the kiddies. Doubt if we'll ever make it.

Young lady tried to nail down who I was. Made no difference my name misspelled on badge. Neither she nor young NASA driver ever heard of McDonald, MacDonald, or McGee. Just as well.

About a 40-minute ride from the Protocol Center to the V.I.P. viewing stands. The Cape is a huge, moist, flat, swampy place. Very overcast day, getting darker as we drove along. Showed passes at guarded entrance. Driver slowed but did not stop. Guards waved us along.

Girl turned half around in front seat, talked and talked and talked. Dropped names of most of Florida political galaxy. Very fast talker. Animated. Lots of expression and gestures. Culled certain facts and inferred others. She'd seen a lot of shots. The delay for the common cold, or exhaustion, whichever it was, cost NASA half a million, but delighted the entrepreneurs along the Cocoa Beach strip. Figured a minimum hundred thousand gross business in food, drink, rooms from the folks who stayed over.

Three viewing areas at the Cape. VIP, Press and Astronaut. She saw one shot from the Astronaut area. No loudspeakers. Very quiet. Wives, kids, astronauts sitting on blankets, tailgates. Subdued. At other areas a lot of noise and excitement and cheering. Said when the shot went well that day, just some tears running down faces of wives of those astronauts who were not aboard. Big sigh. Gather up blankets and kids and drive away.

From a long way off we could see Vehicle Assembly Building. Known as VAB. Grey and black, very plain, no windows to give scale, so doesn't look as huge as it is. Rises up from flats. Always birds around it all day, soaring in the updrafts.

Girl said that among the VIP's on hand for Apollo 9 at Launch Complex 39 would be Jack Benny, Jackie Gleason and Gregory Peck. Girl kept telling driver where to turn once inside Complex 39. Huge parking lots. Got the idea there is a local breed of lady one might call Astrochicks. Get to every launch. Sisters under the skin with the ladies who follow the racecar circuits, bullfighters, skydivers, pro quarterbacks.

Found VIP parking areas, were directed into one by uniformed guards. A dusty walk of about a hundred and fifty yards to VIP viewing area. Three grandstands, maybe ten rows high, forty feet long. Set in staggered fashion. Grassy area extending out maybe a mile and a half in front of stands to some low trees. And about two miles beyond the low trees, Apollo 9 with gantry at left, looking very white against dark skies beyond.

Estimate 1200 in crowd. Lots of people milling around between stands and a row of posts set about 50 feet apart, with two PA horns atop each post. Very good PA system. Man telling us it was 18 minutes to launch, all systems go. Everybody had cameras. Everybody taking pictures of other people in crowd. Space vehicle too far away for anything except telephoto. Lowest benches in the stands pretty empty because of crowd in front, obstructing view of faraway rocket. Lots of crowd noise. A plenitude of miniskirted astrochicks. With goose pimples.

Saw the Governor and his Lady out in open area in front of stand, surrounded six deep. People taking pictures of him. (Buy more Eastman Kodak.) His Lady is putting on weight. Has nice smile. Went up and said, from the side, "Governor?" He turned, and I could not detect the slightest flicker of eye toward my blue badge. "Hello, Mr. MacDonald!" Very quick. Looked him in the eye, shook his hand, thanked him for putting me on list. Said it was his pleasure. Backed away and let others at him. Took his picture.

Saw Gleason. Did not approach him. Did not see Benny. Did not see Peck. Were they there?

Man's voice full of spurious excitement over PA system. People pretty much ignoring it, just listening for how much time left. Over to the right, a long line of Greyhound buses rented by NASA, three abreast, maybe thirty of them. Formed the boundary to the grassy field beyond the PA poles. Told Dorothy that when it got close to launch time, we head for the row of buses. Unobstructed vision. Psychologically correct, because who wants to go stand by a bus out of choice?

As time narrowed, people leapfrogging their way out into the field, setting up tripods with long lenses, then when people moved out in front, picking them up again and moving further out. Formed a kind of semicircle in front of three stands. Furthest fringe maybe a hundred yards from stands. Silly performance. Rocket four miles away. What difference is a hundred yards closer?

Strange flavor of something remembered about the whole thing. Finally came to me. Very like the stands at a state fair between the races. Paper cups, gum wrappers, cameras, people watching people. Announcer's voice ignored. Until, of course, time for the next race.

At four minutes to launch, gathered our gear and strode out to line of buses. Just us and the drivers, and one young lady who, after launch, had the most obvious and visible and disturbing case of the shakes we've ever seen. Could have been ill with some kind of nerve disease. Or terribly excited.

Good place to stand. Could hear countdown information over PA horns. Birds floating and circling. Big buzz of crowd sounds. Steam coming out of rocket at midarea. Impossible to believe men up in the point of that thing. Impossible and implausible. Warm meat up there inside metal. Nervous meat. Bugs in an oil tank.

Big bloom of fire very very bright, a yellow white, spectacular against dreary landscape. From first glimpse of it maybe three full seconds before sound hit us.

Fantastic sound and sound waves. Tangible force and pressure of sound. Dorothy leaned against side of bus to make steadier support for camera. When sounds hit, the line of buses started dancing and jiggling and wobbling on their springs. Had to get out of contact with bus.

Birds totally undone by the sound. Erratic, uncontrolled flight, like trying to fly in three directions at once. More birds up from the swamps, in panic patterns. Big implausible thing lifted very slowly, punched and burned a surprisingly round hole through the overcast. Was in view, they said, 31 seconds. Seemed more like half that. Nothing left but two big drifting puffs of brown-grey dirty smoke. Sound fading. By the time it was quiet enough to hear the PA, the cheery voice was saying the bird was 70 miles down course.

The huge sound was totally unexpected yet surprisingly familiar. Not a ripping sound. Nor sequenced explosions. Nor a roar. Sounded as if it badly needed tuning. Finally identified the sound. Exactly the same sound as when you turn the pilot light on a gas stove too high, or the gas flame of a pipe lighter too high. It is that irregular fluttering sound of irregular combustion plus air flow, dropped about four octaves and hugely amplified. With three dabs of warm meat sitting atop that column of frightful noise.

Once it is gone, it is damned well gone. Race over. Everybody wins a little.

Went between the big buses and lifted ropes and went under and cut back to our parking lot. Young driver showed up. Waited around for the PR lady. She showed up in another car, said she had a ride with long-lost cousins. Car full of astrochicks. Traffic all jammed up. Young driver disconsolate about being caught in jam. Wanted to take shortcut back. We eased out of the lot without getting into the jam. Everybody taking shortcut. Suggested to boy we take long way. He took it, dubiously.

Chatted about the base as we sped along. Thirty-five thousand employees. Average age 26. They keep changing the names of the buildings. Vehicle Assembly Building, now VAB, used to be VEB, Vertical Erection Building. Too many jokes about the name. Became Vehicle Erection Building. Still too many. Now it is Vehicle Assembly Building. Still too many jokes, because everybody explains what it used to be and why they changed it.

Said the briefing film shown the visitors the previous night was like a Disney movie. No, not animated. An animal movie. Showed great shots of the wildlife that lives on the base. Imagine they have to show something, and so highly technical is the space program, that if they tried to explain how mission control is tied into the computer complex on a real-time basis, every layman would be out of his depth in thirty seconds. So they show animals.

Said the car was painted the exact gray of the normal primer coat as an economy measure. Fix up scratches with primer and skip the paint job.

Said that in the morning going to work on the base it is quite a job for the gate guards to check every pass. Everybody in the car holds up his pass in plain sight and the driver slows to maybe 20 miles an hour and the guard waves the car through. Said one morning a friend realized he'd forgotten his pass. Had a blue and white pass. So, when they went through the gate, the friend, who was one of three in the back, held up a pack of Winstons. Got waved through. Hell of a note to have security breached by a spy with the tobacco habit.

So he took us west, then north, then back east again out across the causeway to Cocoa Beach, and when we came to the traffic light at the intersection where the "shortcut" came in, there was the traffic from the Cape, a couple of miles of it, packed three-lane solid behind the red lights.

Had absolutely no desire to hang around Plastic Beach, and the young driver took us right to our car, and waited there to usurp our parking slot. Took off, back out of the junk strip along the east coast, back along Route 520 through open country to Route 50, and into a drizzle that turned into a steady cold rain.

Junket - 6

Talked about impressions. Talked about how the Transporter looked in its parking area at Complex 39. Anything that weighs six million pounds and crawls along on four double-tracked crawlers each ten feet high and forty feet long, and is able to tote the 36-story-high Apollo and its mobile launcher from the assembly building to the launch site should be a breathtaking hunk of equipment. But it looks comical. Like a child's toy expanded to gargantuan ludicrousness. Only possible statement: "Well, it certainly is big, isn't it?"

Remembered sitting on the lowest bench on the first stand for a little while, people watching. Man sitting next to me and, as the cheerleader PA voice was counting us all down from ten minutes to nine to eight, he was writing post cards to friends in a swift, loose, legible script, each card beginning, "Well, here I am at the launching of Apollo 9 and in just a few minutes now..."

Remembered a tall state cop standing and sipping coffee out of a foam-white plastic cup, and keeping a steady eye on the Governor some forty feet away, and on the people around him.

We'd spotted a furniture store in Orlando on Route 50 on the way out of town in the morning and decided to take a look. Maybe something for the new house. Stopped short of it in the rain at a Howard Johnson's for a sandwich. Dining room staffed by very large elderly ladies. The one we got was deaf. Wrong sandwich. Raining hard outside. What the hell. Eat it and get out. Didn't hear her say anything about enjoying serving us.

Wandered through about an acre and a half of the most God-awful gleaming junk furniture the mind can imagine. Ornamentation on everything. Lamps with little shiny things around them that turn in the light or the heat. Desks that turn into dining tables. Everything strangely reminiscent of the very oldest Doris Day movies. Could imagine her in chase scene through all the sample bedrooms, Rock Hudson in leering pursuit. Girlish laughter.

Went back to our Howard's and checked out, drove back to Sarasota through the rain, stopped on Longboat Key, nice big drinks, afterglow of sunset, good food.

Somewhere up above the three little morsels of meat circling us at seventeen and a half thousand miles an hour, speaking astro-talk into their micro-phones, nasal membranes pink and dry. Computers on the ground and aloft racing through their 150 million bits of pertinent data to keep that warm meat safe in an unlikely place.

So it comes down to this, because it is illegal and immoral to end such an account without some imitation profundity:

Nothing is ever like you expect it to be. So the actuality is neither better nor worse than the anticipation.

It is merely different.

- John D. MacDonald

BOOK REVIEW

by DAVE LOCKE

"THE GIRL IN THE PLAIN BROWN WRAPPER"

by John D. MacDonald

(Fawcett Gold Medal 1968 - 75¢)

(being "A Locke at MacDonald")

I've heard a number of comments on this, the latest, Travis McGee story. "Mediocre McGee" and "reads more like one of MacDonald's general novels" were two particular remarks that stuck with me, and, bearing them in mind, I read the book.

The truth is, after nine previous McGee novels, all written pretty tightly to MacDonald's Master Plan of what McGee is like and what he should become as each story progressively delves deeper into his outlook and psychological development, this tenth story of the series presents a deviation from this overall big picture.

If I were asked for a quick summation of my reaction to THE GIRL IN THE PLAIN BROWN WRAPPER, I would venture to say that it reads like one of MacDonald's poorer general novels. It's possible to compare only parts of this book to the style of the rest of the series, and those parts present inferior JDM writing. The middle section of the book, wherein I found the greatest deviation, while containing higher-quality writing, still presents us with writing below JDM's par.

Let's take a look at the story. One of McGee's old therapeutic sex cases has left him a good deal of money and a deathbed request to help her suicide-bent daughter. In an attempt to convince himself that there is really nothing he can do to help, McGee looks into the matter. McGee proves to be a catalyst; upon his arrival, things really start happening.

A girl tries to drug him, instead goes to bed with him, and is murdered the next day. This brings the law upon McGee, and after they're convinced he's not guilty of anything, they ask him for some help in the matter. Things fall pretty much into place after enough facts and clues land at his feet, and four or five pages after the astute reader has spliced everything together into a workable conclusion of what's going on and who's behind it all, then McGee brightens up and everything falls into place for him, too.

This is reaction plotting; the clues come to the protagonist, instead of the reverse, and this in itself is enough of a deviation from the construction of the earlier books in the McGee series to warrant placing it a not-inconsiderable notch below the quality of MacDonald's previous efforts. However, the dissimilarity in plot construction is merely half of the disappointment.

The effect of John D. MacDonald's writing, in the sense that it impresses the reader with its realism, is in my mind remarkably similar to the effect which Frederic Brown created in many of his earlier mystery novels. Both writers have

an unmistakable style; you could not be any more aware of who the author is should his name be printed across every page. Yet, despite the reader's consciousness of this impressive individuality of style, both writers have displayed a talent for making their fiction ring true in the minds of their readers.

They have done this by injecting into their narrative bits and chunks of human frailty and by overplaying those actions which the reader can identify as being a normal part of his own daily routine. The dialog is not polished to the point where you feel the characters are reciting prepared speeches. Most important, they are writing about people that everyone has met, each character is consistent with his own personality, and interest is generated by the fact that people you can identify with are being placed in situations not ordinarily encountered, and are reacting in ways which you can believe.

Both Frederic Brown and John D. MacDonald have written stories which do not contain the proper mixture of mundaneisms. When Brown breaks his stride, he presents such an overwhelming display of trivia and underwhelming display of excitement that he is generally unreadable. His dialog can be so consistently uninteresting that he loses reality, not to mention the reader's interest. Only on your worst day could you encounter dialog and situations as totally dull as those which Brown can depict when his writing shows all of his weaknesses and few of his strengths.

The effect is similar with MacDonald's writing, but never to so extreme a degree that you are bored. MacDonald, too, can lose reality by trying to stack up too high a pile of trivia, but when he causes you to suspend your acceptance of a fictional realism, you may find that what he is trying to depict is not just slightly unrealistic, but wholly ridiculous.

I'd like to point out McGee's practice of "therapeutic sex" as an example of what I mean. If you can't place what this term is referring to, you either haven't read any of the McGee series and have no business reading this review in the first place, or you're a very unastute reader. However, what the term refers to is an overly-frequent foundation for most of McGee's sex life. McGee is a magnet, forever drawing women with Problems. These women have more hangups than you'll find in a closet. They go to McGee, and he takes them off somewhere for a few days. Then he takes them for a few nights and, lo and behold, they come back as Whole Women. While this little bit of fantasy didn't become any more believable as the series wore on and the women wore out McGee, your disbelief was reasonably suspended until you put the book down and thought about it a bit.

In BROWN, however, this situation is mildly ludicrous even while you're reading it. BROWN starts out with McGee mentally recounting how he theraputed the hell out of this woman. The reason MacDonald fails in his treatment of the subject this time is that the writing is much too sketchy in the first few chapters. It seems reasonable to assume that MacDonald took no great pains in either the writing or the plotting of BROWN. He doesn't bother with an effort to convince us that McGee's bedside manner is something worth putting in a bottle and patenting.

The small touches, the human movements and frailties, are all there, presented as an ordinary thing which you, too, could identify with were you a hero. However, they are presented in a manner which requires that you take this sort of thing for granted in order to believe it in the first place. By neglecting

the style and polish that characterize most of MacDonald's more worthwhile efforts, we are left with nothing more to support McGee's highly unlikely sexual powers than a mass of trivia.

The unlikely cannot be supported by the insertion of minor human touches. How his people react is well enough written, but what they are reacting to and how it affects them is not believable, and therefore the scene does not ring true when viewed in its entirety. MacDonald failed to lead up to the situation, and he does not show, in any detail, his characters walking away from it. What he does do is hit the reader in the face with the assumption that McGee has these medicinal qualities, and that's all there is to it, folks. We're hit in the face with it, instead of being gently led into and out of it. It grates.

The center portion of this novel is reminiscent of many semi-hardboiled detective novels I've read, which is to say that it doesn't read much like a Travis McGee story. The keynote is action, and we're left without the elaborate insight into the character of McGee which we have come to expect, and we have come to expect it in greater quantity as the series wears on.

I have heard the interesting rumor (interesting because something of this nature had been formulating in my mind) that over the course of a 12-book series, through progressively deeper insight into his basic makeup and through a regularly increasing but barely detectable overplaying of those traits which are, on the surface, only minor idiosyncracies, the lead character would develop into, or be fully revealed as, a psychotic. I could write ten pages on this idea alone, but for John D. MacDonald's sake I won't. I wouldn't want it on my conscience that he died as the result of a fit of laughter.

However, the idea was entertaining, but after BROWN, it doesn't entertain me to the extent that it did previously. If it were true that this indeed was what MacDonald had been trying to achieve, it would naturally follow that with BROWN he changed his mind and gave up the idea. There is no great insight into the character of McGee here. McGee does no philosophizing on sex, religion, politics and the crazy things that people do, to even a semblance of the degree which he usually does, and even then it is underplayed. In BROWN, when McGee isn't being portrayed as a cardboard character, he comes through as a generally fairly normal human being.

If there's anyone reading this who hasn't read BROWN and does plan to, then this is the time to quit reading this review. I'm going to give away the gimmick and tell you Who Did It, because the way MacDonald deals with the subject of the bad guy's death is something which I intend commenting on.

OK, just you guys and girls who've read the book are with me now, so I'll continue. I'm interested in the reaction of other readers on the matter of MacDonald's treatment of the hanging of Tom Pike. It struck me as a poor example of describing the way people will react in a given situation.

Dave Broon has strung up Tom Pike. Unlikely, but this is a minor quibble. Nudenbarger is shocked when he sees it, and then he and Stanger and McGee all take off after Broon, temporarily ignoring the fact that Pike is hanging by his neck and struggling like hell to do something about it. This, I found even more unlikely. After they've rounded up Broon, they all get to Pike at the same time. McGee is going to get him down, but Stanger bangs his rifle up against McGee's head as a means of discouraging the idea. So then they all just stand there and watch Pike die. After he's dead, Stanger apologizes to McGee, and McGee comments that "I guess it was the quickest way to stop me, Al."

It doesn't mesh. First the law is shocked that a man is being hanged, but then everybody ignores him and rushes off after the guy who strung him up.

McGee is unconcerned that Pike is being hanged, but when he finally goes over to Pike he decides to save him. After he is prevented from doing so, he goes back to being unconcerned.

As I was reading this scene, the feeling that it didn't ring true was ever-present. Afterwards, I put the book down for five or ten minutes and thought about it, then re-read that scene, and then finished the book. In my mind, this was a poorly-written piece about human motivation and reaction. I'd be interested in your opinions.

I'll have to fall back on the old bromide which is often heard from people who are commenting on a below-par story by one of their favorite authors: "It's certainly a lousy book by his standards, but it's still well worth reading."

I have the feeling that perhaps MacDonald is tiring of this series, and I don't predict that the quality of any future McGees will even begin to approach the quality of the earlier books.

Again, the old bromide applies. The fact that I prefer MacDonald's general novels over the McGee series will not prevent me from enjoying future episodes, despite the fact that they may contain some decidedly inferior JDM writing.

He's really that good.

- Dave Locke

We continue to recommend:

THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE

Allen J. Hubin, 3656 Midland, White Bear Lake, Minnesota 55110

THE FAUST COLLECTOR

William J. Clark, 11744 1/2 Gateway, Los Angeles, California 90064

THE MYSTERY LOVER'S NEWSLETTER

Lianne Carlin, P. O. Box 113, Melrose, Massachusetts 02176

THE QUEEN CANON BIBLIOPHILE

Rev. Robert E. Washer, 82 E. Eighth Street, Oneida Castle, N. Y. 13421

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The Readers Write...

...((the editors reply - ljm & jmm))

MISS PAT ERHARDT, Utica, NY: #11 is a great issue. How else, with contributors like Nolan, Nevins and Lachman. I'm unable to read "Please Write For Details" without remembering Bob Washer's words when he started TQCB: "I hope someday my 'Letters' column will be as good..."

((We're sure that all of the loyal readers of EQ will do as much for TQCB as all of you JDM readers have done for JDMB. Science-fiction fans have been communicating in letters and amateur journals for decades. Aided and inspired by mags such as TQCB, TAD and TMLN, there is no reason why mystery story readers should not become as prolific. -ljm))

ALBERT ASHFORTH, Brooklyn, NY: Pete Petersen's poll has forced me to do some hard thinking on the question of which MacDonald novel is the best. I narrowed the list to two books--The Last One Left and A Flash of Green--and eventually ended by putting Last first. My reasons: the overpowering suspense generated by the book (Will Crissy make it? Will she get the bundle and escape unpunished to Switzerland? or, Will law and order prevail? Will she be brought before the bar of justice and pay her debt to society for her misdeeds?). And then there is the compelling portrait of Crissy herself. Memorable for many reasons, but most particularly for the highly believable manner in which she manipulates two men: the self-assured man of the world down on his luck and the naive minister's son. Yes, girls, we men are susceptible to the arts of persuasion, but, as Crissy well knows, they vary from guy to guy.

However, as I hint above, the book has one minor failing: the ending. The bad guy must be caught, and so, following the pattern of too many other books and films, the villain breaks down in the last chapter and confesses all. Don't ask me to suggest a better conclusion. I, as a reader, would not have been happy to see her escape scot-free with the swag to Switzerland, and spend the rest of her life rubbing shoulders with the Burtons, the Nabokovs and the other expatriate writers and film stars. Outside of this one, probably unavoidable snag, I consider Last the best suspense novel I have ever read.

((On the contrary, friend Albert, the ending is consistent with the basic character of Crissy as carefully delineated by JDM throughout the book. To spell it out for you, she has--all her life--been looking for someone to take care of her, ever since her grandmother never showed up to take her out of the orphanage. Her friend the senator fits neatly into this pattern, as does the final scene. Someone is assuming the responsibility for her life--not as she would have chosen, but by this time she isn't too choosy any more. In a way, Crissy is quite a tragic figure. -jmm))

Here, I think, is where A Flash of Green has the edge. No good guys, no bad guys. JW disqualifies himself for GG status by allowing himself to be bought. At the end, he is bloodied and jobless but unbowed. And the ending, which is completely unwrite, is impossible for the reader to anticipate until he is there. (For JW above, read Jimmy Wing.) ((Oh? The Good Guys must be lily-pure All The Way Through, like some brand or other of detergent? My, my! -jmm))

I am, it seems, one of the few correspondents who cannot get excited about the casting of the McGee film. For one thing, I cannot see how any filmmaker, however talented, can hope to capture the flavor of these books in a movie. For another, I have my own private, well-defined conception of what McGee is like. No matter who plays the part, Rod Taylor, Rod Culp, Rod Hudson, Rod Mitchum or Jackie Gleason, he is going to be an affront to my own personal, private interpretation of the words of the books. These illusions I prefer to keep intact and inviolate. ((Gentian violate? -jmm))

While on the subject, I would like to answer those readers who, in the last few issues, have taken exception to McGee's portable soapbox. I consider the soapbox an important part of the novels, because the opinions delivered therefrom lend depth and believability to McGee's character. I do not think that JDM wants to paint McGee as an enviable character. He's a great guy, to be sure: good drinker, talker, ladies' man, good with his hands, completely honest. I would like to meet McGee, but I do not think

I would like to be him. McGee's criticisms of the square world (delivered, of course, from the soapbox) have a certain wistfulness about them. He seems to be wishing he could marry one of the birds, have kids, take out a mortgage, buy mutual funds and tons of life insurance, join the PTA and Diners Club, etc. ((He DOES? -jmm)) This aspect of McGee's personality is handed artfully and therefore obliquely, but is what makes the character interesting and consistent from book to book.

BILL CRIDER, Austin, Texas: Some of your readers might be interested to know that the collecting of John D. MacDonald's books can pay dividends in cash. I have just won a \$25 Honorable Mention award in the University of Texas book collecting contest for my collection of Mr. MacDonald's novels. I was in the running for the big (\$100) prize, but didn't make it, maybe because I still don't have WEEP FOR ME.

In addition to the novels mentioned by Mr. Nevins, Phillips has also published THE SHIVERING CHORUS GIRLS and THE INHERITORS. (I know that JDMB is only for material about John D. MacDonald, but I just can't control myself.)

By the way, I am getting ready to do, in a year or so, a Ph.D. thesis on Hammett, Chandler, and the other Macdonald (Ross). Right now, things are only in the talking stage, but I have found a professor to direct the work. If anyone wants to scream "foul", or to offer helpful suggestions, now is the time. I realize that some of your readers may want the academic world to keep its grubby hands off writers like these, and to them I apologize in advance. ((Sounds fascinating -jmm))

((We don't mind using a little of our space in JDMB for info on writers other than JDM, Bill. We're sure that info such as yours is of interest to most of our readers, and takes little space. We also feel that this magazine has reached the stage where many readers are as interested in learning about each other as they are in learning more about JDM and his writings. -ljm))

FRANCIS M. NEVINS, Lawton, Okla: Perhaps I ought to make one slight amendment to my piece on JDM's Images of the Inhuman. When I referred to Allen Ginsberg, I was thinking of the angry Ginsberg of the mid-1950's and HOWL, not of his present Hare Krishna or Universal Love period. I doubt if there are very many other JDM fans who also dip into Ginsberg now and then, but if there are any, this caveat may reassure them.

Apparently, Bill Wilson and I are each having trouble getting through to the other: I think that, read in context, my letter in JDMB 10 makes it clear that I have no desire to "put the blast" on John Dickson Carr. Ah well, let's drink to "to each his own" and suspend the nitpicking. Incidentally, the hardboiled parody Bill referred to is Davis Dresser's (Brett Halliday's) "I'm Tough", from Mike Shayne's Mystery Magazine, and was reprinted in Best Detective Stories of the Year, edited by Halliday (Dutton, 1962).

Is there any chance of either you or Ed Cox securing for me copies of those Los Angeles Times articles on Gardner that Ed mentioned? They would come in very handy if and when I clear my desk enough to tackle a piece on Perry Mason in the Sixties that I've long had in mind.

((Edco? -ljm))

ROBERT TURNER, Hollywood, Calif: Thanks for the 11th edition; as usual, highly enjoyable. But I would like to differ with Marvin Lachman on one point in his JDM IN PERSPECTIVE. He states that in 1946, John's debut in the pulp field came at the end of an era, since at that time Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, Erle Stanley Gardner and Cornell Woolrich were no longer writing for the market, and "most of the pulp magazines were on their last legs". Not quite.

In the first place, Hammett, Chandler and Gardner had not been writing for the pulps for many years prior to '46. Woolrich, I believe, did do some things for the pulps after '46. The first three disappeared from their pages because they were writing much more profitably for hard and soft cover books, having their stuff adapted for motion pictures, and later, television. Though few, if any, of their successors became

later "household names" many of them were highly talented. What I'm getting at is the undoubtedly unintended slur that if you wrote for the pulps after '46, you were probably not much.

In glancing through a few of my '46 to '51 pulps (most of them Popular Publication mags, the best house of that time) I see on the contents pages, along with John D. MacDonald, many other fine writers of that pulp era who later went on to publish in the slicks, hard and soft cover books, and wrote for motion pictures or TV. Frederick C. Davis is one, W. T. Ballard, Day Keene, William Brandon, Louis L'Amour, Donn Mullally (one of the most successful TV writers in Hollywood), Francis K. Allan, G. T. Fleming Roberts, William Campbell Gault, Dorothy Dunn, T. T. Flynn, Philip Ketchum, Donald Barr Chidsey, Jonathan Craig (later a Gold Medal regular), Talmage Powell, Lawrence Treat, Frederic Brown, Richard Deming, Fletcher Flora, Charles Larson (later a prolific TV writer and currently producer of the FBI Show), Miriam Allen deFord, D. L. Champion, Bruno Fischer, Frank Kane--are merely a handful of examples. None of these people were hacks; they were honest, serious craftsmen, who turned out for their pulp markets some of the finest crime-mystery-suspense writing of that or any other era.

As a matter of fact, most of the pulp writing after '46 was of better quality than that produced during the 30's. Again, I'm speaking particularly of the Popular Publication crime pulps, DIME DETECTIVE, DETECTIVE TALES, DIME MYSTERY, BLACK MASK, etc. Editors such as Ken White, Rogers Terrell, Mike Tilden, Harry Widmer and Al Norton rarely bought any sloppy work. Though the post-'46 stories probably didn't contain some of the superficial glitter and slickness that puts over some of the contemporary crime fiction, you always knew what the plot was about, the people were real and believable, and there were damned few, if any, loose plot threads dangling at the end.

The post-'46 pulps at Popular were, for the most part, edited by the same men who were at the helm from '40 to '46, and published a lot of the same contributors who made their names in the earlier years. The point here being that I'll go out on a limb and venture to guess that John MacDonald spent many hours reading and studying the slant of these magazines before he began to write for them.

The pulps died in the early '50's, not because of bad writing, nor lack of contributors such as Hammett, Chandler, Gardner, et al, but because of rising printing and paper and delivery costs, and the advent of original paperbacks such as the Gold Medal line, and of course, television. The early original paperback mystery novels didn't take the place of the pulps; they stole many of their writers and were one of the contributing factors to the death of the pulps. Who wanted to pay 25¢ for an unwieldy magazine containing half a dozen short stories and a couple of novelettes when they could get a complete novel (and a lot more sexy writing) for the same price?

This is, of course, not a blast at Mr. Lachman. I'm merely trying to correct a wrong impression he unwittingly has given. Or possibly I'm just a little too touchy about so much of the fine writing that appeared in the pulps from '40 to about '53, that has been generally overlooked. Many of John's stories were gems of that era.

Fortunately for some of the better pulp writers, they were not left high and dry with the demise of the pulps. About 1953 they began to appear in a pocket-sized magazine that was able, for several years, to compete successfully with the paperback books. It gave the reader the same kind of stark, realistic, sometimes savage and often sexy copy in short story and novelette form. The stories were all new--no reprints--and many of them were by the biggest names in the mystery field: John Ross Macdonald (and I believe John D. appeared in the mag a couple of times), Mickey Spillane, Richard Prather, Evan Hunter, (I believe his 87th Precinct characters originated here, in shorter form) Floyd Mahannah, Hal Ellson, W. R. Burnett, Charles Beaumont, Richard Wormser, De Forbes, David Alexander, Brett Halliday, Gil Brewer, Henry Kane, Robert Patrick Wilmot, Harold Q. Masur, Charles Einstein, to name but a few. In addition to well-known mystery writers, novelists of national reputation, not usually associated with the crime-type story, also appeared in MANHUNT, just a couple being Erskine Caldwell and Charles Jackson. A number of original Malone stories by Craig Rice also appeared in this magazine. For two or three years, MANHUNT had the largest circulation of any detective magazine. It gave fast reports and paid the highest rates. Yet today, you seldom hear about it. For about three years

it was a publishing "classic". Unfortunately, after that, a new publisher and a succession of new editors took over. Payments for material became slower and slower and finally stopped altogether. In the last issues, a number of reprints were used, and they weren't paid for, either.

The magazine finally succumbed in a long, slow, lingering death. But I think the earlier issues, at least, should be remembered and investigated by fans and collectors who are interested in some of the best crime short fiction ever written in this country. It is not EQMM stuff, nor AHMM. It's in a class all by itself.

CHUCK TOOLE, New York, NY: Since the last of February, I've been working at New York Hospital in the Emergency Room on weekends (God! but it's interesting, and God! but it's exhausting) and recently talked with Jack Lemmon, who brought his wife in with a mild disorder. Naturally, they "rush" these people through and give them as much privacy as possible, but the hospital does require certain information, and I found time to ask:

"Are you familiar with the name JDM?"

"Oh, yes, I'm going to do a film on one of his books."

"When in the hell are you going to film The Girl Etc.?"

"Well, that's a tough one to do, and we want to do it right."

He is somehow different from the way he appears on screen--the "little boy" quality is replaced with sophistication. It was fun.

LARRY TAUBER, Memphis, Tenn: I enjoyed JDMB #11. By the time you read this, "The Girl, The Gold Watch, and Everything" may be under production. Gordon Carroll is producing for Jack Lemmon's Jalem Productions. CBS's Cinema Center Films for National General Films release will be the end product. No cast list has been released. Whatever happened to that film "Kona Coast"? I know JDM had something to do with it, but I haven't seen it on TV nor in the theaters.

I'm glad to see so many JDM paperback reprints. Granted, some aren't his best works, but it's nice to see them anyway.

DAVE STEWART, Phoenix, Ariz: Kona Coast, based on a story by JDM; produced and directed by Lamont Johnson; screenplay by Gil Ralston; starring Richard Boone, Vera Miles, Joan Blondell and Steve Ihnat; released in May, 1968 by Warner Bros. Seven Arts; running time, ninety-three minutes; rated "M".

This movie played in Phoenix June 12-18, 1968, at the Indian Drive-In Theater (with "Firecreek", starring James Stewart and Henry Fonda, second) and at the Loew's Hayden West Theater (with "The Double Man", starring Yul Brynner, second). It returned for two weeks, March 12-25, 1969 as a second to "Bullitt" (starring Steve McQueen) at the Cinema I Theater (where I saw it).

A "Hawaiian-based mystery," it was advertised in the newspapers thus: "IT'S WHERE IT'S AT...The turned-on world of Hawaii's Kona Coast had trapped them all in its psychedelic undercurrents...the beach bums...the surf riders...and the girl known as Dee Dee."

Unfortunately, I don't know on which JDM story the movie is based. The only clues are the locale (which may originally have been Florida, for all I know) and the hero's name: Sam Moran, AKA Big Sam Moran. Perhaps you can supply this info.

Incidentally, it's a rotten movie, so padded and hoked-up that, apart from half a dozen sharp lines of dialogue, nothing in the movie reminded me of JDM--certainly not the disjointed plot, the laughable climax, the distaff characters who bear no discernible relation to the action, the slimy and unfocused psychedelic sequences, and on and on. Needless to say, I'm looking forward to reading JDM's story to luxuriate in the contrast.

((Confucius say: Disjointed plot much easier for frying, no? -jmm))

((As we understand it, John did a story or treatment for TV which, instead of becoming a TV play would up as the movie, "Kona Coast". The original locale was Florida, and there were undoubtedly many other changes from the original JDM script. As far as we know, it was not based on any of his published work. -ljm))

DORA SIEGEL, Chicago, Ill: I have composed a poem as my contribution for JDMB #12.

Of all the JDM books I own
 There's one I consider a treasure
 I would never give it as a loan
 Re-reading it gives me such pleasure.

JDM writes a few words and you know
 The character of his man
 And the way that he will grow
 According to the JDM plan.

I have owned this book
 For a few years--
 Every time I take a re-look
 I shed a few tears.

I have other JDMs--even Trav
 The First--which is his best--
 His Tigers--his Last--you can have
 Them--and all the rest
 If you can't guess the name
 It's a dirty shame
 And you have only yourself to blame
 It's THE ONLY GIRL IN THE GAME!!

I hope the above poem amuses you.

((Though your scansion is confusing
 We found your verse amusing
 And your commentary, Dora,
 May bring both barbs and flora
 We mean brickbats and bouquets
 That our readers tend to hurl--
 We hope that you will vital-
 Ly defend your fav'rite title
 With reasons why it's better than
 JDM's others (does this scan?)
 And that your poesy is not
 The only game in the girl! -ljm))

ANDY ZERBE, Montgomery, Ala: Your JDM Master Checklist appears to be about as definite as it is possible to get. I have one minor addition to it though. THE DECEIVERS went through at least two Dell editions. I had a copy of the 2nd edition once, and I do not think it was listed as a Dell First Edition. Until about 1960 Fawcett did list the number of editions a book had gone through. Wish they and Popular Library had continued this helpful practice.

Have read a few of JDM stories from the pulps lately. Easily understandable why he does not want many of these reprinted. They are simply bad.

Have picked up several more JDM firsts. A MAN OF AFFAIRS, DEAD LOW TIDE, and A BULLET FOR CINDERELLA. Hope to pick up a few more next time I go to Atlanta. Seems to be mainly a matter of hunting for them every time I visit a bookstore. Would especially like to pick up some of the Popular Library firsts, but this doesn't seem too likely. They do not seem to show up around here.

BOB GRISSOM, Memphis, Tenn: Have you seen John's comment on the cover of Fawcett's publication of Malcolm Braly's "On The Yard"? It reads "subtle and savage". ((Yes -ljm&jmm))

If you have seen it, you noticed that the publishers placed it above Truman Capote's and Time Magazine's commentaries. This may not have been a conscious effort on the publisher's part, but I think it is worth noting.

HARRY WARNER, Jr., Hagerstown, MD: Let's see if this scheme keeps me out of your letter column. You'll note the date above: the deadline for your next issue. The way postal service has degenerated, the only thing I need fear is that you might receive this letter before June 16 in 1970 and confuse it with your June 16, 1970 deadline for the 16 JDMB, and run it after all.

I saw Cape Fear over a Washington television station a few months back, and was considerably impressed. The final minutes struck me as cliché in nature, and I'm anxious to read the novel on which it was based, to see if MacDonald ended up in a less standardized manner. Curiously, Touch of Evil, which you mention in JDMB #11 has been televised twice in the past two or three months on stations available to my antenna. I didn't think quite as much of it as an unassuming but brilliant little film I saw last week, Murder by Contract, whose literary basis I couldn't find when the credits were shown. The central character talks too much, but I was quite pleased by the way the film drives relentlessly through events without side excursions, subplots, or extraneous glimpses into the private lives of the unimportant characters. I got the impression that this is the way a JDM novel should be put on the screen.

The Marvin Lachman article would have been quite appropriate as yet another feature of the JDM Master Checklist. It's an excellent brief evaluation. What's left for JDM? Lachman's question might be answered with a suggestion that would probably horrify most of the JDM fans: a really long, long novel. I know such a thing would run counter to the sort of story-telling that JDM has always achieved. But I'd still like to read about the evolving life and developing character of one of the good-nasty people MacDonald has told about so frequently in stories which concentrate only on the culminating event in the life, with flashbacks or recollections to sketch out what happened in the past. Maybe a very long novel wouldn't be the Great American Novel, but I suspect that it would create a literary stir that might cause people in high places to pay more respectful attention to the JDM fiction that already exists.

I was quite impressed by MacDonald's fondness for A Key To The Suite. This is a novel I've just recently read. As an old science-fiction fan, I couldn't keep my mind altogether free of irrelevant excursions into how the book would have gone if this had been a science-fiction convention where the events happened; but I found it among the very best JDM, even more photographically accurate than most of his books for its reproduction of how executives behave around one another. ((But--but--Harry--a science fiction convention is another kettle of fish altogether! The only thing the two conventions have in common is the word "convention". -jmm))

A fan thinks that "cult" is semantically unloaded? Surely you've heard about The Cult? And seen its publications? I'm sure that the fannish organization has created emotions so intense that the entire American public has been subconsciously conditioned into thinking "cult" a word which means something quite alarming. ((Oh, come now, Harry, you don't have to go into fan references to find that "cult" is semantically negative. Ever hear of Aimee Semple McPherson, or others of her ilk? -jmm))

Maybe I could qualify as a member of First Fandom if that group forms a special section for Mary Worth Fandom. If I don't have my Marys mixed up ((you don't -jmm)) Mary Worth began life as Apple Mary, and I have quite vivid memories of the first year or two of that incarnation. She really did sell apples from a little cart in the street (this was so long ago that people bought apples one at a time) in order to raise a little crippled boy ((her grandson, Denny +jmm)) who, as I recall, gradually aged into puberty as the years went on, while Apple Mary continued to look just about as middleaged as ever. As for Nick Carter, I'm pretty sure I remember a long row of books devoted to him among the shelves and shelves of Street & Smith paperbacks that were sold in a tiny local store which dealt mainly in music, when I was very small. These paperbacks were going out of print, or already gone at that time, as I recall, offering even greater quantities of titles devoted to Frank Merriwell, Frank Merriwell Jr., and I believe yet another relative, possibly a nephew or a brother.

I'm curious about The Legend of Joe Lee. Everyone seems to list it among JDM's science fiction stories, as witness the reference to it in this issue of the Bibliophile and Judith Merrill's inclusion of it in her annual science fiction anthology. But it

isn't, by any definition known to me. There's nothing in it to suggest that the kid's auto had been provided with some new invention, as far as I can recall from my reading of it. The ending is strictly in the old Weird Tales tradition, even unto the bits of paint which someone finds as evidence that the supernatural has intruded, just as so many Lovecraft stories end with some tiny bit of evidence to disprove that everything had a natural explanation.

I'm happy that you've continued the JDMB now that the master checklist is out. I'd feared that the checklist had come to symbolize for you some kind of culmination that would leave you without enough energy to work on the periodical. If you can get more material like the little essays by Nevins, Lachman and Nolan, you should stir up enough discussion to keep you going forever.

((Sorry, Harry old buddy, but your scheme didn't work. True, your letter did arrive after June 16, 1969 AD, just when I was starting to think about putting PWFD together. In fact, it sort of got me off the dime and on the stick, so to speak. You see, it just didn't arrive Late Enough, and for that matter we could very well date this issue as June or July, 1970, considering that we misdated the previous issue as April, 1968...))

Anyway, why should a mystery story fanzine be deprived of Warner epistles when s-f fandom fanzines have been enjoying them for years?

The movie Cape

Fear did end somewhat differently than the novel, as you'll see.

As many of our readers are also science-fiction fans, we take this opportunity to recommend ALL OUR YESTERDAYS (An Informal History of S-F Fandom in the Forties) by Harry Warner, Jr. Advent:Publishers, PO Box 9228, Chicago, Ill. 60690, \$7.50. We mention this not just because Harry is an old friend (whom we've never met in person; we'll have to do something about that real soon now...) and that we're mentioned six times in the book, but because it is one of the best-organized histories we have ever had the pleasure to read, complete with an index for very easy reference. The introduction is by Wilson (Bob) Tucker, who, like Harry, is a long-time s-f fan. Tucker is also well known as a professional writer in both the s-f and detective fiction fields. Although the book's primary purpose is to cover s-f fandom in the forties, it does give the pre-forties background and in some instances extends into the fifties, in order to properly complete the information on some of the subjects. Like we say, it is well organized. Harry plans to do a second volume covering the fifties, and claims that he'll let someone else take over for the sixties--but we hope that he lives to such a ripe old age that he can continue the history for many decades to come.

Both Harry and Advent are to be congratulated on the fine job they have done on ALL OUR YESTERDAYS. (I found one or two errors in connection with my own s-f fan activities, but I'll do my nitpicking elsewhere, Harry; they were not gross errors by any means.) The price may seem high, but bear in mind that this is a limited edition for the simple reason that anybody's history of a special-interest group (even if the "group" is spread around the world and has been hobbying since the thirties) isn't likely to become a best-seller among non-science-fiction buffs.

It could be of interest to JDMB readers who are not science-fiction buffs because mystery fandom could very well follow in the footsteps of s-f fandom. From s-f fandom's history, we could learn not only what can be done to increase the pleasure of our hobby, but what shouldn't be done in order to avoid the pitfalls and foolish hassles that could arise if and when mystery-story fandom ever becomes more "organized".

JIM GAUDET, Cambridge, Mass: No. The JDM Master Checklist is not just a curiosity item, to be glanced at and thrown aside. I have, on five distinct occasions, become thoroughly engrossed in its contents. To be sure, a large part of the charm lies in the JDM biography. There is, however, a strange fascination in reading the entries, themselves. Is it seeing the names of long-vanished magazines? Is it seeing

publication dates that begin barely a year before my birth? Is it being presented with the summary of a man's printed declarations, a man whom I have never met (and probably never will)--and yet, feel a genuine empathy with him? There's a reason, I'm sure, but darned if I know what it is. In fact, this may well be why JDM's writings fascinate me the way they do. If I truly understood their appeal, I would soon be attracted to something more complex.

Complex. Yes, that must be the key to this little mystery. The works are as complex as the man; and none of us ever really understand anyone. This is probably as close as I'll come to a solution: to JDM and JDMB, alike. Oh, this applies to the Bibliophile, too. Not content to seek out the real JDM from his writings, I've found myself trying to construct the man from what everybody else sees in him. Thus, the many letters, or excerpts from them, that appear in the JDMB become especially interesting--and especially confusing. After all, if all those letter writers are as in the dark as I am, then we're just pushing each other further from the mark! Wha??:! Yes, I really am confused...and thoroughly fascinated.

Anyway, and finally, I do enjoy your efforts. No matter how depressed and disappointed I become about life, and things, it's rather reassuring to know that someone, out there, shares a common interest with me. (All together now: Sob, Sob, HONK.)

BELLA FREUND, 29 Moore St., Apt. 17E, Brooklyn, NY 11206: I was just rereading your #11, and decided to try to make my voice heard along with the others who want more of JDM's short stories reprinted. (Among my disabilities is that I have lost my voice--so you'll have to holler for me!) THE END OF THE TIGER makes me want to cry for more--and more. And I've never been a lover of short stories! So there!

Anyhow, my "want list" is no longer so l-o-n-g. Now, in order to finish my collection, I need only:

Murder For The Bride

Weep For Me

The Lethal Sex

The Key to the Suite

I Could Go On Singing

I get around very seldom--can't travel by train, and secondhand stores are just too far for me to get to. So please appeal to your readers to have pity on a disabled lady and help me find these few books.

#11 was just as thrilling and exciting for me as all your other numbers. I really enjoy this intellectualizing by your correspondents. They're cute--all of them.

((Bella, your letter arrived a little too late to get into our Seek & Swap Dept. We hope that this will do as well--and that our other readers will be able to help you with your "want list". -ljm & jmm))

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