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—Photo by Nicholas Sauleha.  
— JAMES KIRKWOOD  
— Tracking a Trial.

## KIRKWOOD FACE, TOPIC CONTRAST

Look of a Kind Man Vs.  
'American Grotesque'

By DON LEE KEITH  
There is something about James Kirkwood—perhaps it's the tilt of his eyebrows, or maybe the angle of his mouth—that makes his a compassionate face. That is, he looks like a kind man.

And even when he frowns, which is seldom, he still exudes this image. It is an image which does not change, even after you've known him several years, so it is obviously a truthful extension of the author's real personality.

There are topics of conversation which don't contribute significantly to happy thoughts, however, and the subject of the Clay-Shaw trial is one of them.

In town to promote his new book, "American Grotesque," which was published Monday by Simon and Schuster, Kirkwood relaxed last week in his room at the Bourbon-Orleans Ramada

Hotel and discussed his writing of the big book (675 pages) which recounts the New Orleans trial of Clay Shaw for conspiracy to assassinate President John F. Kennedy.

**TRIPLE FEATURE TWICE**  
"Once the 40 days of trial were over," the author said, "and after sitting through the whole thing, then I had to get right down to writing the book. It was like seeing a triple feature at the movie, then having a coke, and going right back into the triple feature again."

"When I finally finished the manuscript, it was 1,582 typewritten pages. I took it in to my editor and plopped it down on his desk. He asked me how many copies of the manuscript were there, and I said, 'That's it. One.' We had to cut it down to 1,200 pages, and it's still a long book."

• What has been District Attor-

ney Jim Garrison's reaction to the Kirkwood book?

**COCKTAIL GOSSIP**  
"Well, I've heard that Jim has told some people that my book is simply New Orleans cocktail party gossip. Certainly, that's the most charitable thing for him to say. I don't exactly put him up for any awards."

And what does Kirkwood think of Garrison's new book, "Heritage of Stone?"

"Oh, it's simply New Orleans cocktail party gossip," he said, laughing. "No, seriously, I think he's always promising to tell his own story in specifics, but somehow, he just never gets around to it. He uses the word 'they'—an awful lot. Now Joyce Carol Oates wrote a book called 'Them.' Garrison's should be called 'They.'"

**WIDELY REVIEWED**  
Kirkwood, who is the author of two previous novels and a Broadway play, believes that since both his and Garrison's books are being issued at about the same time, they'll both be more widely reviewed. "If there is a lot of attention, then there may be repercussions about mine, and if not, then I suppose everything will run smoothly."

Meanwhile, he's glad to be returning to East Hampton, N.Y., where he's working on a new novel. "It's like a dessert, getting back into fiction. You know, while I was writing 'American Grotesque,' I felt as if I had a lead belt on. I was very much aware of my responsibility. When I was preparing to write the book, covering the trial and conducting the interviews (there were about 30) I was nervous at first. But I found that once you get an interview subject talking, then they just don't stop. I think they'll tell a stranger a lot more than they would tell a friend. I did all the interviews with a tape recorder, except the one with Garrison."

Kirkwood said that when he left New Orleans after the trial, he felt resentful about the city. "But now, I find that I have a wild affection for New Orleans. I'm not pessimistic like I once was. The city is still a bit bizarre and grotesque, but somehow, I really love it. I really do."