

RIGHTS AND
PERMISSIONS
Paul S. Nathan



TV GOING GOTHIC

Television, which has been extending its boundaries lately in respect to books, is about to launch an afternoon series based on Gothic novels by popular authors. NBC is the network planning to offer this alternative to soap opera. Its initial acquisition is Phyllis A. Whitney's "Spindrift," published last year by Doubleday.

Spindrift is the name of a Newport mansion restored to its former glory by Christy Moreland's mother-in-law. Christy returns to the old house to reclaim her young son and uncover the facts behind her father's "suicide." She soon finds herself fighting not only for her son and her father's reputation but for her own sanity—and life.

The dramatization of this story is to be aired five days a week, half an hour a day, for 13 weeks.

Under the contract negotiated for Miss Whitney by Patricia Myrer of McIntosh & Otis in New York and Candace Lake of Ziegler Associates on the Coast, NBC is paying \$20,000 for the material for two runs. Further runs will cost it substantial additional fees.

"WARNING" FOR FILMS

On a tide of favorable reviews, "The Hamlet Warning" has received two movie offers, one of which has been accepted. The Scribners novel by Leonard Sanders is now under option to Ingo Preminger, producer of "The Salzburg Connection" and "M*A*S*H."

The amount of the option is \$7500, with a pickup price of \$75,000. In addition, under the contract negotiated by Aaron M. Priest, the author is cut in for 5% of the picture's profits and has been invited to write his own screenplay on terms still to be discussed.

Although "The Hamlet Warning"

has been referred to by some reviewers as a first novel, it has in fact been preceded by "The Wooden Horseshoe," published several years ago by Doubleday, and a tongue-in-cheek paperback Western. The new book, most of which takes place in the Dominican Republic in the near future, concerns a threatened nuclear-bomb explosion that would be set off by a no-nonsense peace group determined to scare the world's nuclear powers into destroying their stockpiles.

To date, three foreign publishers have acquired book rights: W. H. Allen in England, Werner Söderström, Finland, and Norstedt & Söner, Sweden. Warner Books has bought U.S. soft-cover rights.

When he isn't writing books, Sanders is giving his opinion of books by others as book review editor of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*.

FIRST PERSON

It takes a certain amount of *chutzpah* to write something called "The Memoirs of Jesus Christ," but Marcus Harrison seems to have carried it off. The novel was published just a year ago in England by Arlington Books, provoking considerable comment, mostly positive. Now Ballantine Books has purchased U.S. rights.

Harrison is a 37-year-old Australian living in London, where he divides his time between writing and photography. In the "Memoirs" he has Jesus, who has taken refuge in a monastery off the Damascus road, telling the story of his life as it really happened. He was, to begin with, the child of Nicodemus by Mary, who had been drugged and ravished. Later, he was called upon by his father to play the role of a militant Messiah in a plan designed to bring Nicodemus the kingship. Jesus went along with this, believing he could defeat Nicodemus's scheme and bring not war but peace to his country. Events conspired against him, however, and led to his defeat.

The author explains away the various miracles on a commonsense basis. He also upends tradition in having Judas betrayed, though unwittingly, by Jesus and dying on the cross meant for the rejected Messiah—while Jesus himself, courtesy of Pilate, goes free.

Harris has finished a second novel, "Theadora," not yet published, and is embarked upon a work of historical fiction, "The Irish Orphan," in which he follows the fortunes of one Máire O'Shei from 1830 to 1870 as she makes her way from Ireland to Australia and thence to America, taking part in the Irish national movements in these countries and falling in love en route with another orphan like herself.

SHORT SUBJECTS: Pocket Books has bought reprint rights to two current

Holt titles: "Julia's Story," an account of his wife's misdiagnosis, medical mistreatment and death, by Fred J. Cook, and Rhoda Lerman's "The Girl That He Marries." The latter is also a selection of three book clubs. . . . "How to Make Meetings Work" by Michael Doyle and David Straus (*Wyden*) has been chosen by the Macmillan Book Clubs as a dual main selection for the Executive Program in January and as an alternate in the Lawyers' Literary Club and the Library of Computer and Information Sciences. The authors have trained more than 10,000 executives in IBM, Xerox, Bank of America and the Social Security Administration. . . . "Betrayal," the revelations of former CIA man Robert Morrow (*Regnery*), has been sold to Warner Books for reprint. A movie version is planned by an independent company called Agape (one assumes this to be the three-syllable form of the word). . . . Featuring a chart by means

of which the reader can evaluate and, if necessary, improve his current diet, "Nutriscore," by Ruth Fremes and Dr. Zak Sabry (*Two Continents/Methuen of Canada*), is being offered by the Psychology Today Book Club. Dr. Sabry, a biochemist, headed a recent Canadian government nutrition survey. . . . With filming of his "Seven-Per-Cent Solution" completed, Nicholas Meyer has been signed through Bob Bookman of ICM to adapt his earlier novel, "Target Practice," for Marvin Worth and Ron DeBlasio at Fox. . . . *Gallery* magazine and *Los Angeles* magazine are both running excerpts from "Sawed-Off Justice" (*Putnam*). Jane Jordan Browne represents the authors, Lynn Franklin and Maury Green. . . . To facilitate the sale of American books to Indian publishers without agents' commissions, Kunuparampil P. Punnoose is featuring a "Rights Available" section in a new *Literary Market Review*. Books with brief descriptions thereof to be included in the *Review* may be sent to Punnoose at B-4/90 Safdarjang Enclave, New Delhi 110016. . . . The techniques set forth by Martin F. Schwartz, Ph.D. in "Stuttering Solved" are to be made available outside the U.S. Publishers in England, France, Germany and Israel are preparing editions of the Lippincott book. . . . Doubleday Book Club has changed the designation of Fred Mustard Stewart's "Six Weeks" (*Arbor House*) from an alternate to a full selection for next March. . . . Rabén & Sjögren has acquired Swedish rights in Alex Haley's "Roots," sight unseen. Elsie Stern of the Reynolds agency obtained an advance of \$6000 for the forthcoming Doubleday title. . . . *This will be the last "Rights and Permissions" for two weeks, during which your reporter will be on vacation. The next column will appear October 18.*