

## Holmes Alexander Kennedy as Firebug

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, like any other convicted arsonist, is likely to be suspected whenever an unexplained fire breaks out.

Kennedy, it goes without saying, is not an ordinary firebug. He isn't a juvenile delinquent who plays with matchboxes, or a slinking criminal with a Molotov cocktail. His sort of arson is much more refined, and the gang of incendiaries with whom he runs are upper-crust hoodlums.

Bob Kennedy is a book-burner. It would be tiresome to re-document the old story of how he and his sister-in-law attempted, and partially succeeded, in suppressing William Manchester's "The Death of a President."

They also tried to put the torch to lesser biographical accounts of the New Frontier's First Family.

And more recently columnist Drew Pearson exposed the Kennedy family, torch in hand, trying to destroy a book named "Kennedy Campaigning" which told how Ted Kennedy's way to the U.S. Senate was greased with lucre.

As for the gang of upper-crust bookburners, they were the subject of a conversation not long ago when I had lunch with Allen Drury in Washington. I do not equate myself with this

celebrated friend except that both of us have first-hand experience with the arsonists who try to incinerate conservative-oriented books by ignoring their existence, burying them in the



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back pages of the journals of review, or assigning them to hostile reviewers. Drury is a Pulitzer Prize novelist and a world figure as a man of accomplishment, but the N. Y. Times and the Saturday Review have been snooting him for his opinion's sake ever since he got away with lampooning the Liberals in "Advise and Consent."

Drury's forthcoming novel, "Preserve and Protect," harks back to my subject here which

is Robert Kennedy and associated arsonists.

Allen tells me that the central villain of his new book is a rabble-rousing, riot-inciting politician whom some pre-publication readers have identified as a takeoff of Bob Kennedy. Among the pre-publication readers was Norman Cousins, a certified member of what Allen calls "the Liberal Ring," and the presiding power at the Saturday Review and McCall's magazine.

The McCall's editorial staff examined some samples from "Preserve and Protect" before it was finished, and paid \$50,000 for the serial rights. But when Cousins saw the page-proofs, he intervened—the book was rejected for serialization.

It's not unheard of, by any means, for the top echelon of a well-to-do magazine to discard purchased material that has been staff-accepted. There are legitimate reasons for this practice, and the publishing firm is not accountable to outsiders. Nonetheless, the circumstances of this non-publication are peculiar. It can hardly be that Drury's novel about presidential politics has become "dated" in this presidential election year. Or that, if the character really does resemble Bob Kennedy, the book has suddenly acquired a loss of reader-interest. Or that, amid so much running evidence of book-burning, news-management and related offenses of the credibility-gap, the write-off of a large sum wouldn't give the guilty appearance of suppression.

Surely, there is reasonable cause to ask—Was McCall's reimbursed? Or otherwise influenced to cancel what might be taken as a damaging caricature of an ambitious politician?

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