



How do I like thrillers? Let me count the ways. I like them with a hero who is clever, cool and versatile, with a plot that twists and turns in unexpected byways. I like them tough. I like them gimmicky. I like them set in exotic places. But most of all, I like them literate.

My book for the day is THEIR MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE, an espionage thriller by Tom Ardies that starts quietly but ominously in the village of Alamos in a remote part of Mexico. Imagine for a moment that the year is 1972. Imagine too that a certain foreign power decides to put its own man in the White House. The President is too ill to run again. The Vice President has lost the respect of the voters and every other possible candidate has met with a mortal or serious accident. A rich and attractive industrialist, David Marshall, is the most promising candidate and as the story opens, Charlie Sparrow, a Time-writer-turned-spy has turned up in Alamos, where Marshall is vacationing, and no one seems interested in anything beyond tequila and a sun tan.

Before very long Charlie finds himself trying to outsmart an enemy he cannot identify while dealing with a quaint but lethal assortment of bodyguards, abductees, double agents, and the Candidate's beautiful daughter. It all sorts out in the end, but not before Charlie loses the girl and a good deal of his cool.

In the old days, when I used to write advertising copy, I would have called this a rattling good yarn. Now all I'll say is that Charlie Sparrow is going to find himself a comfortable niche on the shelf along with Mike Hammer and James Bond and that THEIR MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE satisfied all my requirements for a first-class thriller.

L.L. Day
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

THEIR MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE (\$5.95), by Tom Ardies, is published by Doubleday & Company, Inc., 277 Park Avenue, New York 10017. Copies may be obtained from your own bookseller or any Doubleday Book Shop, one of which is located at 190 Post Street, San Francisco, California 94108.

Saturday Review

Cover story, page 48

Can We Bust the Highway Trust?

by Denis Hayes

Cover photo: Conjunction of the San Bernardino, Pasadena, Golden State, and Hollywood freeways by D. Gorton



IDEAS

19 Prague, Spring '71
by Horace Sutton

EDITORIAL

22 California's Isla Vista: "From Anathema to Dialogue"

BOOKS

25 Born Free But Not Liberated, an essay by Glendy Culligan, who finds feminist literature increasingly persuasive

25 Index of Books Reviewed

28 Book Forum: Letters from Readers

ENVIRONMENT

47 The Skeleton in the Garage
by John Lear

48 Can We Bust the Highway Trust?
by Denis Hayes

54 Earth Watch by Sally Lindsay

56 A New Goal for Science
by Max Tishler

58 The Negative Animal
by Paul R. Ehrlich and John P. Holdren

CARTOONISTS: Robert Censoni, Joseph Farris, Ed Fisher, Herbert Goldberger, Henry Martin, Al Ross, John Ruge, Bob Schochet, Val Valentini, W. Von Riegen

THE ARTS

MOVIES

12 Hollis Alpert appraises "Walkabout" and "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich."

DANCE

42 Walter Terry cites a pair of superstars.

TRAVEL

44 David Butwin marks twain.

COLUMNS

5 Goodman Ace: Top of My Head

6 Herbert R. Mayes: London Letters

16 Cleveland Amory: Trade Winds

43 Robert Lewis Shayon: TV-Radio

GAMES

26 Literary Crypt

29 Your Literary I.O.

61 Wit Twister

70 Kingsley Double-Croctic No. 198

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by DENIS HAYES



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