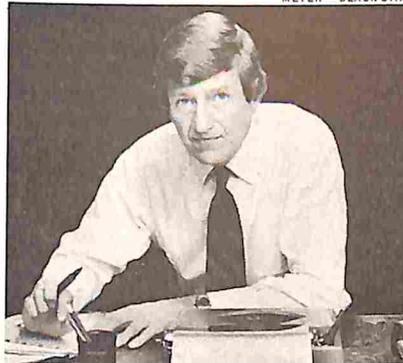


A Letter from the Publisher

Occasionally, the difficult nature of an unusual story demands a special approach by the journalists who cover it. For this week's report on the controversy over human rights in Argentina, Caribbean Bureau Chief William McWhirter was assigned for three weeks to Argentina, where he conducted more than 70 interviews with businessmen, newspaper editors, sociologists, rabbis and government officials. Says McWhirter: "Almost no one passing through Buenos Aires would think there was anything wrong there—the streets are peaceful, the restaurants full, and the tango clubs are still jammed until dawn. It is amazing how ordinary and normal some societies appear even when they are going through events that are, in fact, all but tearing them apart."

McWhirter, who joined TIME after graduating from Princeton University in 1963, is a seasoned observer of social upheavals. He was stationed in Saigon during the last days of the American involvement in Viet Nam and reported on Iran from the overthrow of the Shah until the arrival of Ayatollah Khomeini. Before moving to Miami to take charge of TIME's new Caribbean bureau last fall, he served for 3½ years as bureau chief in Johannesburg, a base from which he covered the



McWhirter in an infrequent stint at a desk

painful birth of Zimbabwe as a nation. While he traced the subtle web of oppression in Argentine life, McWhirter's most poignant revelations came from Jewish émigrés who survived Nazi concentration camps only to have relatives join "the disappeared ones," the term for those who vanish into the prisons and torture chambers of the state security police. Says McWhirter: "As they relived the storm warnings of their own trauma in Nazi Germany, it was again brought home to me how deeply the issue has wounded and divided the Jews of Argentina. They left from our conversations exhausted and emotionally drained. I, too, went away haunted by the experience."

The story was researched by Heyden White and written by Associate Editor George Russell, who was Buenos Aires bureau chief for two years before returning last March to New York as a writer. Russell, who was able to draw on his own firsthand experiences, sees no early end to Argentina's problems. Says he: "Military dictatorships are never very happy, and Argentina is a sad and troubled country. I fear it's going to remain sad and troubled for quite some time." McWhirter saw nothing to contradict that judgment.

John A. Meyers

Index

Cover: Illustration by Eraldo Carugati.



8
Cover: It was a happy break with hoary precedent, and most of America cheered as Ronald Reagan chose Arizona Judge Sandra Day O'Connor to become first sister to the brethren of the Supreme Court. See NATION.



48
Economy & Business
Du Pont and Conoco on the verge of the biggest merger in U.S. corporate history.
▶ Europeans complain about the high interest rates caused by Reaganomics.
▶ Volkswagen's new Volks *populi*.



30
British Riots: Night after night, police fight off mobs of black and white youths rioting in a dozen cities. Margaret Thatcher's critics charge that Conservative economic policies are part of the trouble. See WORLD.

20
Nation
Reagan readies for a summit. ▶ Democrats say the G.O.P. tax bill favors the rich.
▶ Mass transit's troubles get worse.

33
World
In Israel, Begin stitches together a coalition. ▶ A crack-down on Iranian leftists. ▶ Argentina's ghosts.

45
Science
In a historic feat, a 217-lb. plane and a 122-lb. pilot fly over the English Channel powered only by the rays of the sun.

57
Education
For a fee, school finders give parents and pupils a helping hand in choosing the private school that is right for them.

60
Sexes
The fables are turned in a new feminist version of classic fairy tales—this time the princess rescues and the prince swoons.

65
Music
A lost Mozart symphony premieres at the White House.
▶ In Moscow, a rock opera triumphantly takes the stage.

68
Cinema
Good news for Disney fans: a new film and, in New York, a retrospective show going back to Mickey himself.

70
Law
The estate of Edgar Rice Burroughs defends the honor of Tarzan against a frisky, flashy film starring Bo Derek.

72
Medicine
A California medical center suspends heart surgery and kidney transplants amid charges of high mortality rates.

75
Show Business
Seen too many turkeys lately? Well, the shelves of the movie studios are stocked with really, really bad films.

76
Essay
Niceness may be simply swell in real life, but let writers beware: too much of it is the bane of fiction and drama.

4 Letters
43 Religion
46 People
58 Theater
60 Milestones
66 Dance
73 Books

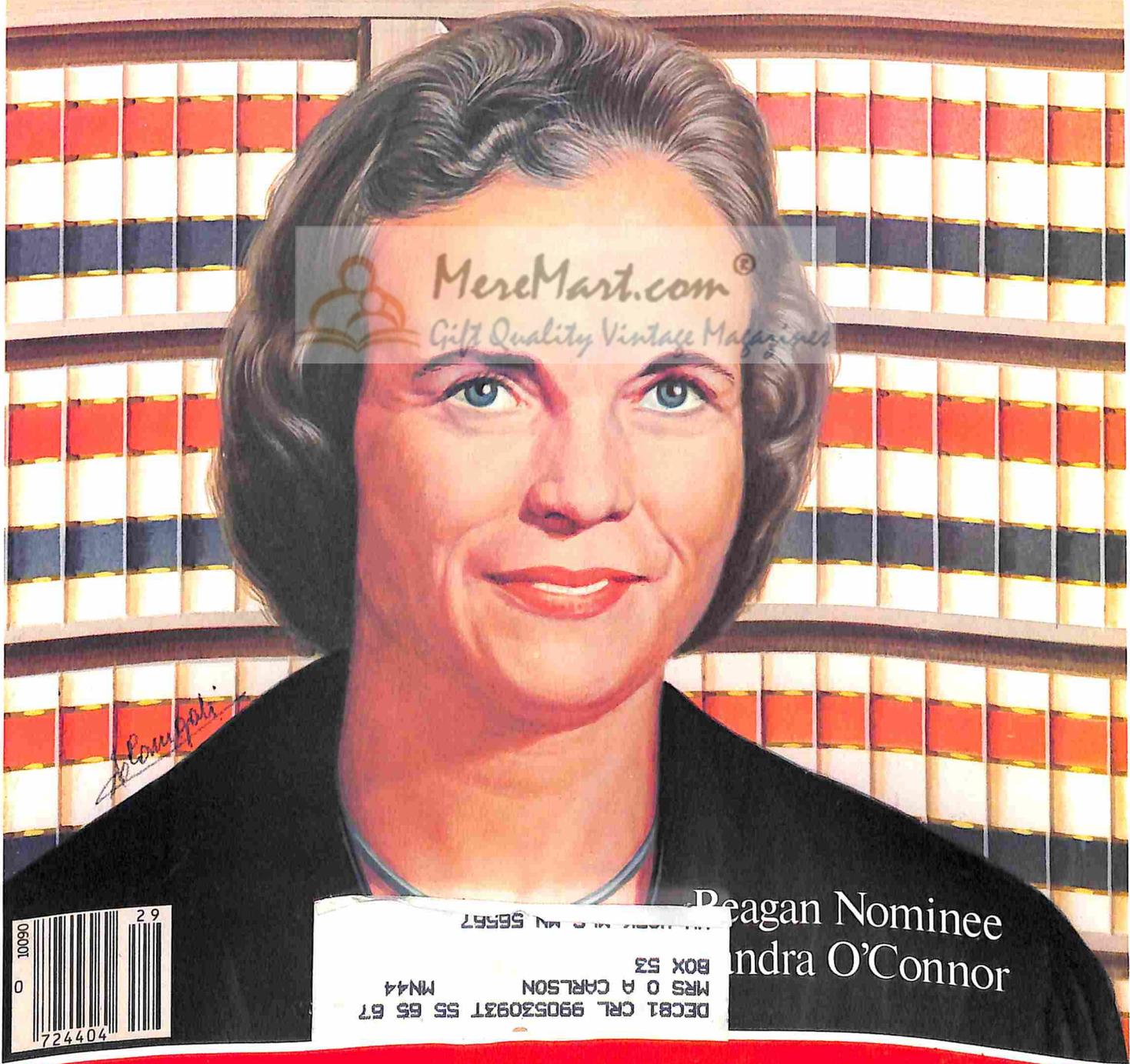
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