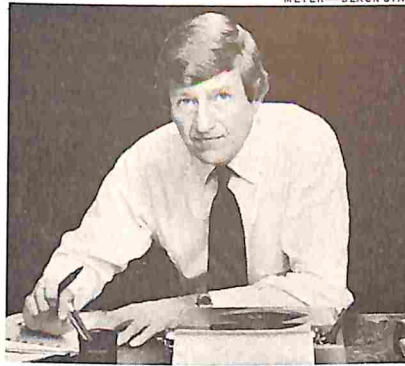


# A Letter from the Publisher

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*

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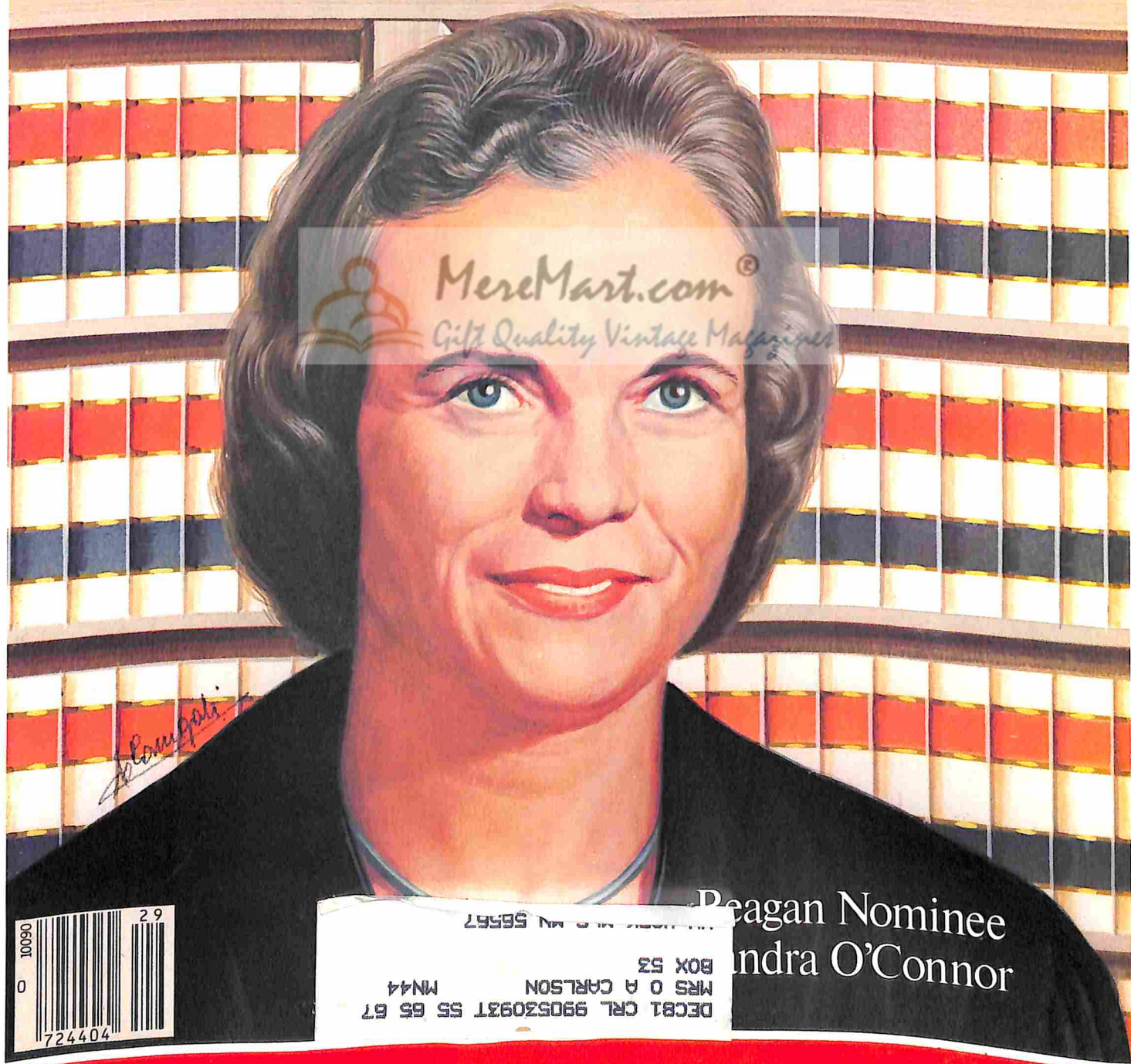
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