

Author exposes prison weaknesses, myths

Kind and Usual Punishment by Jessica Mitford
The Lincoln Telephone Directory lists the Nebraska State Penitentiary as one of Lincoln's "Points of Interest." Jessica Mitford, in *Kind and Usual Punishment* is more than interested in prisons, she's angry about them.

Ten years ago Mitford joined the group of elite muckrakers with her expose of the funeral business in *The American Way of Death*. Fortunately for the American public she has continued that tradition in this book on prisons.

She begins with the relationship between guard and prisoner and a short account of a voluntary stay in prison in which she participated.

Mitford casts a critical eye on crime statistics, denouncing them as a game which the FBI plays with the American public. She states that "at least three quarters of American prisoners could not have been incarcerated fifty years ago, since the acts for which they were convicted were then not criminal violations."

Mitford points out that indeterminate sentences, which remove the exact duration of punishment from the whims of a judge to civilians, has resulted in longer sentences and is used by many prisons as a threat to prisoners waiting for parole.

The two best chapters in the book deal with the use of prisoners by pharmaceutical companies to test new drugs and the "Prison Business." In the first

chapter Mitford details the abuse which prisoners suffer at the hands of science.

They get the opportunity to be the "volunteers" for new drugs of which more than 90 per cent never get into medical practice because of the drug's toxicity. She draws an analogy between the doctors tried at Nuremberg and some of the scientists in

chapter Mitford details the abuse which prisoners suffer at the hands of science. She begins a sound argument for abolition of prisons, but somewhere near the conclusion she seems to change her mind and opts for some institutional control of those who are violently dangerous.

Mitford is a good muckraker. She has done an immense amount of research and everything is noted so her findings can be checked. In her interviews with prison officials she has the knack of drawing them into saying things which are both illuminating and damning.

She is blunt and satirical; a behaviorist stated that if he could have had Oswald when he was young a "major tragedy of this generation could have been averted." Mitford notes that the behaviorist is speaking of Lee Harvey Oswald not "Russell G. Oswald, the New York commissioner of Corrections who ordered the troops into Attica, as a result of which 43 perished by gunfire."

Mitford is not selective in her attacks. They hit liberals and conservatives alike. She is habitually distrustful, and if the evidence is scanty or non-existent she'll be sure to point it out. She also manages, despite the short length of the book, to study prisons in remarkable depth.

Mitford's book probably will emerge as a leading work on penal problems but not on solutions, for hers are weak. It's a shame, for in the last analysis only solutions count.

bruce nelson ex libra

America, one of whom was quoted as saying: "Criminals in our penitentiaries are fine experimental material—and much cheaper than chimpanzees."

The second chapter is concerned with the industries and goods which prisons are involved in producing. This chapter is a financial breakdown of where the money goes in prisons and how it is used. Prisons have a higher profit realization than any business or industry in the United States.

Yet every year many prisoners plead for more money. Mitford concludes that the majority of the money benefits those running the prisons, not the prisoners.

Mitford ends her book by discussing whether there

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Album 'real gem,' features top artists

Moon Germs Joe Farrell

With jazz albums, one usually can predict the quality of what lies in the grooves by looking over the collective artists for favorites and stand-out musicians. *Moon Germs*, with Joe Farrell on flute and soprano sax, Herbie Hancock on electric piano, Stan Clarke on bass and Jack DeJohnette on drums, is an obvious winner.

But something more happens on this album that can't quite be deduced from the personnel, and it turns *Moon Germs* into one of the best albums to come out all year.

The songs, two by Farrell, one by Clarke and one by Chick Corea are monsters and give each man a chance to explore just what he can do.

bill kolhaase
stick it in your ear

The opening cut, *Great Gorge*, is a prime example. It opens with Farrell stating the theme in tones that only Joe could get from his soprano. Underneath him, Hancock, Clarke and DeJohnette are playing as if funk was something they kept in their back pocket.

Suddenly, the tide changes, and it's Farrell playing at rip-tide strength. Then Hancock plucks us from the sea and propels us to the farthest reaches of space at blitzing speed.

Clarke has tuned in and the two battle for cosmic supremacy until Herbie kicks in the modulator, transcending time and space in dimensions never dreamed of.

Hancock flies out of the range of hearing, and we are left with DeJohnette slashing his way down until he brings us back to earth. Farrell has had it there all the time, and the great odyssey dissolves back into the theme.

Obviously I'm excited about this album. It's an album that generates a lot of excitement and much more. Not picking this one up is a major mistake.

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is a genuine masterpiece of staggering proportions." —Edward Behr, *Newsweek*

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