

phone. Colonel "Bat" Guano, a monumental cretin given to maundering about "deviated preverts" and the sanctity of the Coca-Cola Company, at first refuses in this crisis to shoot open the coin box of a soft-drink machine for fear of bringing corporate retribution down on his own head (and then receives it anyway, when the mortally wounded machine nearly drowns him in the gushforth of *its* precious bodily fluids).

BIZARRE as all this may sound, it is presented with absolute assurance and a hair-raising nightmare verisimilitude. Even the photography has a looming, surrealistic slickness that suggests an eerie absence of any human agency, and the cast is simply superlative. Sterling Hayden as Ripper is the very model of a manic right-wing general, while Keenan Wynn as Guano, Slim Pickens as a

gopher-faced pilot from Texas ("If this thang [the nuclear attack] turns out to be half as important as Ah thank it just maght be . . ."), and George C. Scott's Turgidson are flawless. (When all is lost and a lethal curtain of radioactivity is enveloping the earth, the momentarily abashed Turgidson decides the time is ripe for repentance. He strikes an attitude of reverence, then invokes Him, bellowing "LORD!" like a drillmaster chewing out a hapless recruit.)

The three remaining principal roles are handled with consummate artistry by the uncanny Peter Sellers, who plays President Muffley, Group Captain Mandrake (Ripper's British aide), and Kubrick's personification of the sickness of our times: Dr. Strangelove, whose name has been anglicized from his native German, and who might be described as a sort of technanthrope. Dark-goggled,

dentured, bewigged, he is wheelchair-ridden and dependent upon a prosthetic right arm. This *ersatz* member goes completely haywire on occasion, bedeviling Strangelove's existence by withholding information from him (each piece of data he wants must be removed forcibly from a black-gloved artificial hand), by betraying him publicly with unbidden Nazi salutes, and finally by attempting to strangle him.

Following a nightmare logic—the only logic relevant to the matter at hand—Kubrick suggests that the rationale whereby most of us allay our dread of an atomic cataclysm (we can depend on our leadership and can control our technology) is no more logical and no less nightmarish than Dr. Strangelove himself. Those who have protested that it can't happen this way are simply begging the question implicit in Kubrick's argument: How else could it happen?



The Smoker by Fernando Krahn

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What Killed Forrestal?

WILLIAM H. HESSLER

JAMES FORRESTAL, by Arnold A. Rogow. Macmillan. \$6.95.

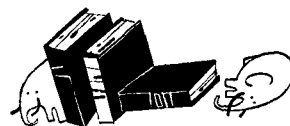
In the nearly two centuries of our history, James Forrestal is the only public figure out of the many who have held cabinet-level offices to take his own life. This suggests to me that the political process in America entails a quite consistent selection of stable, moderately thick-skinned extroverts. If a man didn't relish the give-and-take of politics, or at least feel able to take it in stride, he wouldn't venture into public service. But what it seems to suggest to the author of this arresting biography of James Forrestal is altogether different. His apparent conclusion is that the strain of great public responsibility is a major occupational hazard, and one to which we should give more attention so as not to wind up having great national decisions made by unstable minds.

If we choose to ignore this point and to read the book simply as a biography, it is an engrossing, competently researched, judicious study, filling a considerable gap in the vast literature of biography, memoirs, and history spewed out by the Second World War. It provides some fresh insights on the political infighting that marked the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. It sharpens the focus on the interchanges that gave shape to the armed forces unification bill. It offers some revealing incidents in the endless war between civilians and uniformed officers that rages unobtrusively in the Pentagon. There are glimpses also of the other endless war between "crusading journalists" and those public officials they single out as victims. It provides several authentic illustrations of the ways in which industrial or commercial interests insinuate themselves into the policymaking process.

But as a justification for this volume Rogow has advanced his concern over the intolerable strain to

which high public officials are subjected. It is appropriate, therefore, not only to appraise the book as a biography but to form some judgment of how well or badly the author has made a case for his declaration that "we need to know much more about the tensions and frustrations of high office."

In his opening chapter, "Death of a Hero," Rogow does a workmanlike job of showing how conflicting pressures closed in on Forrestal; how Drew Pearson, Walter Winchell, and others harassed him unjustly; how he was made to feel a failure in the office of which he was a principal architect; and how the Navy's shortsighted, prudish concealment of Forrestal's serious mental illness may have contributed to his suicide. In the course of the



first fifty pages, we are apparently told that it was the torment of responsibility, of irreconcilable demands and pressures, of dishonest public accusations—tribulations characteristic of the Washington scene—that drove Forrestal to frustration, to a sense of persecution, to illness, and to suicide. And the question is raised whether we should not do better by public servants with such stupendous responsibilities.

YET in the seven succeeding chapters, which constitute the biography, Rogow reveals in abundant detail the tangle of inner conflicts that Forrestal brought to Washington in 1940. As a youth, he chafed under the strictures of a domineering mother who wanted him to be a priest, and also those of the Roman Catholic Church. He broke with both, choosing instead the pleasant road that led to Princeton, to in-

vestment banking, to wealth and economic power.

Even at Dillon, Read & Co., where he quickly rose to the presidency, there were frictions, for Forrestal set ambition far ahead of the gregarious living he also liked. And he brought to Wall Street some distinctly New Dealish leanings that set him apart. His marriage did nothing to relieve the tensions of that persistent conflict of ambition and conscience. (He went "back to the office" on the afternoon of his wedding.) He and his wife lived in worlds apart, without separating.

In Washington, there was friction with FDR and his New Deal advisers, and with such equally tense and unyielding figures as Admiral Ernest J. King. Under Truman, Forrestal was a key figure in the cabinet, a power in his own bailiwick, but he disagreed with Truman on a great range of matters. He was not trusted by the President and he knew it. One of the first in high places at Washington to sense the oncoming struggle with the Soviet Union and with Communism, Forrestal waged an ineffectual one-man campaign against both—without, however, becoming a part of the machinery of denunciation then building.

Old business associates made unreasonable demands that he use his influence for their purposes; and each demand posed a new clash of personal loyalties with public conscience. Forrestal opposed the formation of Israel, and earned the ill will of numberless persons. Was it lucid geopolitical thinking that led him to that position? Or was it the fact that he had lived his business life among anti-Semites? Either way, the resulting criticism added to his belief that he was a victim of a conspiracy—a belief that a few irresponsible and vicious columnists did much to confirm.

Forrestal opposed a seventy-group Air Force, clashing with Stuart Symington, then Air Force Secretary. He had his valid reasons; but he had been Secretary of the Navy, and so was labeled a pleader for its special interest. He had moved from investment banking, with its many close ties into big business, to the Pentagon, where big business is forever knocking on doors to seek a bigger