

prodigiously dissatisfied after the 20th Century with His or Her inability to come to our aid in times of terrible historic stress, but then, none of these liberals out there ever seem to recognize that the Devil may be just as powerful as God, and you can't lay blame on the first party who is probably doing the best He or She can do under these dreadfully parlous circumstances.

TX EXIS Showing the powers of the Evil One (as the Devil is referred to in *The Castle in the Forest*) as he and other evil spirits wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls—Hitler's especially—would be one of the chief preoccupations of the novel, and Mailer was perfectly willing to believe that organ transplants were a demonic activity. He was making good progress on the novel, losing only a few months to assemble *The Spooky Art*. In between performances of "Zelda, Scott and Ernest" in the fall of 2002, he and Norris had driven across Germany to Vienna, accompanied by their Austrian friends, Hans and Freidl Janitschek, stopping to see the Dachau concentration ^{camp}, Hitler's Berchtesgaden retreat, and locales in Upper Austria where he had lived as a boy, which would be the main setting of the novel. N

Several weeks after they returned, Norris ^{learned} ~~went for a check-up~~, and found that her cancer had returned. The birthday party was canceled. The new tumors were removed surgically, and a port was implanted in her abdomen. A strong drug was dripped into the port and she rolled over and over in her bed so that it would bathe her intestines. This went on for several weeks and exhausted her. Her sons and friends helped her, but her husband, she said, "pretty much left me to myself." N

EXIS EXTR Cancer had always been Norman's metaphor for evil, and now here was his wife, suffused with it. Was it his fault? Had he given it to me? It weighed on him,

tormented him, and caused him to stay away from me. He moved into the bedroom down the hall, which hurt me at first, but the luxury of having my own bathroom and my own TV compensated.

Her weight dropped to 103, and for a time she had to wear a colostomy bag. She joked about it, telling her friends that she was going to "design a 'Bag Bag,' in all different colors and fabrics, so people could wear them outside their clothing," instead of hiding them. Mailer helped by doing some of the cooking, ~~but he was too far removed from the family's finances to aid there.~~

He was having chest pains, but refused to see his doctor in Boston, and began "popping nitroglycerine tablets like they were candy." Gaynell was still in a slough of despond, especially when she realized that she would not be returning to Arkansas. Aurora Huston came for a week, as did Christina Pabst, a friend from Actors Studio, and the children ^{helped} ~~filled~~ whenever they could. Finally, the Mailers decided to hire ~~someone, and settled on~~ a waiter from a local restaurant, Dwayne Raymond, who ^{was} they found to be both congenial and bright. He would work as cook, personal assistant, and a bit later, typist and researcher. Raymond would also become one of Norris' [✓] confidantes. He worked for the family until Mailer died four years later.

The reception given to *The Spooky Art* was surprisingly warm, given the fact that it is an omnium-gatherum containing little original writing. Some slack, perhaps, was given to the old lion on his 80th ^{eightieth} birthday. There was some debate about how skillfully Mailer had cobbled together cuttings from over two hundred different sources, but most reviewers found the book to be a thoughtful analysis of the psychological aspects of the writing life. Michiko Kakutani, again reviewing the book before almost everyone else, praised the sections on craft—^{point of view} ~~point of view~~

choices and the struggle to create a style[!]—and Mailer's "keenly perceptive" comments on the weaknesses of his own books, but overall she found the book to be "startlingly" uneven. She compared it to the blather of a "garrulous raconteur" next to you on a long bus ride, sometimes compelling but also benumbing in his "self-absorption, his defensiveness, his capacity for wacky mumbo jumbo." Her summation: "Such ridiculous, self-indulgent nattering is just the sort of thing that won Mr. Mailer a reputation as a 'criminally egomaniacal' writer in his heyday, and distracted attention from his better work." For Kakutani, self-effacement stands near the summit of writerly virtue.

TX M Mailer, characteristically, was of two minds about the merits of detachment. Kakutani quotes approvingly his negative stance on the question: "Writers aren't taken seriously anymore, and a large part of the blame must go to the writers of my generation, most certainly including myself. We haven't written the books that should have been written. We've spent too much time exploring ourselves. We haven't done the imaginative work that could have helped define America, and as a result, our average citizen does not grow in self-understanding."

Other reviews found merit in Mailer's self-splunking. Both James Campbell and Ron Rosenbaum (*New York Observer*) found introspection to be one of the collection's virtues. Echoing the judgments of Harold Bloom and Alfred Kazin, Campbell says that readers go to Mailer's books chiefly "for his alertness to 'every intimation about himself,' which he has expressed with greater vivacity than any contemporary." Rosenbaum says that in *Advertisements for Myself* Mailer "broke ground for every memoirist who's put pen to paper since," and lauds him for "finding a way[!]—in *Armies of the Night* to write about the personal and the metaphysical, the personal and the ideological, and even the personal and the *theological*." Whenever Kakutani



Enough
Kakutani

~~cast a backward glance over Mailer's work, she moved briskly when she came to *Armies*. In this~~
~~review, she limits herself to calling it, rather blandly, "ground-breaking journalism." One might~~
~~ask if she was cognizant of a point made by Kazin in his review of *Armies*; (Whitman was just as~~
 "outrageous an egoist and actor as Mailer." Like Whitman, Mailer had bouts of narcissism, but
 then got bored with himself. Then the cycle repeated. The salutary effect of this alternation,
 which runs through Mailer's work from the late 1950s on, is often overlooked. His self-
 promotion and his self-effacement, his blather and his brilliance, cannot be separated. As Walter
 Goodman, ^{Years earlier in his} ~~a colleague of Ms. Kakutani's~~, said of Mailer, "At his most engaging, he manages to
 be off the wall and on the mark at the same time."

Mailer wrote another letter to the publisher of the ^{New York} ~~Times~~, with copies to Kakutani and
 fourteen other *Times* writers and editors, complaining about her consistently early reviews and
 asking for a meeting with her. He also pointed out that she was in error in her review when she
 said that dates for items in the book were not supplied, since the main text is followed by ten
 closely printed pages of source notes. The *Times* acknowledged this error in its corrections
 column, but Kakutani ^{did not reply} ~~neither acknowledged her mistake nor replied~~ to Mailer's request for a
 meeting. A few weeks later, he said in an interview that he had a female literary enemy at the
Times who he described as "a posterior aperture." He would continue to up the ante.

In the same interview, he named his other enemy: President George W. Bush. ~~As the~~
~~world knew~~, the invasion of Iraq was imminent, and Mailer was stoked up in opposition in a way
 not seen in the previous decade, a period when "I really didn't have anything to say about
 America." His uncertainties disappeared with the 9/11 attacks. The nation's guilt over what he
 called "economic gluttony," and its growing imperial ambitions had been smoldering for years;

the 9/11 attacks lit the flame. Mailer put aside the Hitler novel, and began giving speeches and interviews and writing a series of anti-war, anti-Bush essays. "I know I'm going to have to pay for it," he said, ^{and using a typical Mailer analogy adding} "but if you don't use freedom of speech, it's like an unused dick. It tends to dwindle."

Invited to address the Commonwealth Club of California, Mailer carefully prepared a speech, ^{in which} and told his sister the occasion was a great opportunity. He drew on some of the rhetoric of *Cannibals and Christians* for his address, titled "Only in America," and also displayed the same empathy for the poor described in *The Gospel*. ^{According to the son} He opened with an indictment of the "manic money-grab" of the 1990s, something that God did not approve of, he surmised.

For certain, Jesus did not. You weren't supposed to pile up a mountain of moolah. You were obligated to spend your life in altruistic acts. That was one half of the good American psyche. The other half, pure American, was, as always: beat everybody. One can offer a cruel, but conceivably accurate remark: To be a mainstream American is to live as an oxymoron.

Despite the contrived evidence of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, and lack of proof of his collusion with Osama bin Laden, the fears generated by 9/11 were powerful enough for Bush to declare war against evil, a word he used "as a narcotic for that part of the American public which feels most distressed," Mailer said. Saddam Hussein was an excuse, Mailer argued, for establishing an overwhelming American military presence in the oil-rich Middle East, an essential first step in the inevitable struggle for world dominance. "Flag conservatives truly believe America is not only fit to run the world, but we must. Without a commitment to Empire, the country will go down the drain." Mailer was not alone in his

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analysis. Vidal wrote his own ^{short} ~~little~~ book on American imperialism, and numerous foreign affairs commentators issued the same warnings. Mailer quoted one of them, Paul Brookman, who said that after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1992, a document came out of the Defense Department that "envisioned the United States as 'a Colossus astride the world, imposing its will and keeping world peace though military and economic power.'"

With a few refinements, "Only in America," was reprinted in the ~~NYRB~~ ^{New York Review of Books} at the end of March and, combined with excerpts from his interview with Dotson Rader on 9/11 and another interview on the dangers of empire from *American Conservative*, appeared as a 111-page paperback in April 2003. *Why Are We at War?* was reviewed along with Vidal's collection of essays *Dreaming War: Blood For Oil and the Cheney-Bush Junta*, which came out a few months earlier. ^{Both books} and makes many of the same arguments. Both were well-received, at least on the left-liberal side, and Mailer's made the paperback best seller list. After witnessing the President's triumphant arrival via Navy jet on the deck of an aircraft carrier where he announced, prematurely, the end of major combat operations in Iraq, Mailer shifted from a geopolitical to a psycho-political stance in his attacks on Bush.

In his *NYRB* essay titled "The White Man Unburdened" (nod to "The White Negro"), Mailer points to white male insecurity as one of the buttresses of Bush's war. A successful effort in Iraq would provide "psychic rejuvenation" to those white males who were "spiritually wounded" by 9/11, he wrote. White males had been taking "a daily drubbing over the last thirty years. For better or worse, the women's movement has had its breakthrough successes and the old, easy white male ego has withered in the glare." Rooting for white sports heroes was no longer the same, unless you were a fan of tennis, ice hockey, skiing and a few other sports.

"Black genius now prevailed" in football, basketball, boxing and a lot of baseball, "and the Hispanics were coming up fast; even the Asians were beginning to make their mark." But white American could still root for "an extraordinarily good, if essentially untested, group of armed forces, a skilled, disciplined, well-motivated military." The military could prove to be "quintessential morale-builders to a core element of American life"—the average American male who "had very little to nourish his morale since the job market had gone bad." If watching your favorite sports teams was not what it used to be, then tune in to the war—"sanitized but terrific." Mailer's invective had not been as good since he went after L.B.J.

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 — contain
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 ever

"I'm still trying to keep on working on a big novel," he wrote in August 2003. "The worse thing about Bush at times—from my point of view—is how much time he consumes writing about him and his gang." Giving interviews, writing op-ed essays and letters to the editor kept Mailer occupied through much of 2003. He and Norris also did a third benefit for the Provincetown Theater, a staged reading of excerpts from *Long Day's Journey into Night* at the Provincetown Town Hall. Mailer was James Tyrone, an actor famous for playing the leading role in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, an adaptation of Dumas' novel. He enjoyed being the overbearing father who spoke with "a touch of the very edge of an Irish accent." He was joined by Norris as Tyrone's wife, Mary, a morphine addict, with Stephen and John Buffalo as the Tyrone brothers, Jamie and Edmund, and Kate as the maid Cathleen. The one-night performance on August 15 went off flawlessly—although Stephen, an accomplished actor, had some boisterous disagreements with his father about the way Mailer cut the play—and the Mailers raised another slug of money for the theater. Norris resigned as artistic director after the performance in order to

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work on *Cheap Diamonds*, the sequel to *Windchill Summer*, in which her heroine moves to New York City and begins a modeling career. (N)

Another project was a collection of approximately ^{one hundred} 100 captioned head drawings, "droons," which were interspersed with poems from his 1962 collection, *Deaths for the Ladies*, and a few new ones. Mailer kept ^{his assistant, Dwayne} Raymond busy for three months printing out various page layouts and cover designs for the softbound volume of 276 pages, titled *Modest Gifts: Poems and Drawings*. The cover consisted of the title and a five-stroke sketch of Norris' ^S features which also could be seen as birds in flight. Mailer often studied the formation flying of a flock of pigeons swooping around his house and over the harbor. He remarked more than once that its movements were so acrobatically precise that the pigeons must be inhabited by the spirits of departed Army Air Force pilots. He insisted that there be no publicity campaign for the collection, published on October 23, and it was hardly noticed. (N) (N)

Mailer also agreed to a series of conversations with Lennon about his theological ideas and beliefs, and ^{during} ~~over~~ the last half of 2003, they taped three of them. His only proviso was that he not be given questions beforehand so that his answers could be spontaneous. "Improvisational," he said, "is still my favorite word." The interviews would continue every few months until mid-2005 when they had exhausted the subject. Mailer thought it might be a good book to appear after he "got on the bus," the euphemism used by family and friends to refer to his ^{death} ~~demise~~. But he would change his mind as boarding time neared.

In September, George Plimpton died, ^{and} Mailer spoke at the memorial at St. John the Divine in Manhattan. Philip Roth also attended. ^{and} He later transferred his memory of Mailer's eulogy to a character in his novel, *Exit Ghost*. (N)

Guy's eighty now, both knees shot, walks with two canes, can't take a stride of more than six inches alone, but he refuses help going up to the pulpit, won't even use one of the canes. Climbs this tall pulpit all by himself. Everybody pulling for him step by step. The conquistador is here and the high drama begins. The Twilight of the Gods. He surveys the assemblage. Looks down the length of the nave and out to Amsterdam Avenue and across the U.S. to the Pacific. Reminds me of Father Mapple in *Moby-Dick*. I expected him to begin "Shipmates!" and preach upon the lesson Jonah teaches. But no, he too speaks very simply about George. This is no longer Mailer in quest of a quarrel, yet his thumbprint is on every word. He speaks about a friendship with George that flourished only in recent years—¹_m tells us how the two of them and their wives had traveled together to wherever they were performing a play they'd written together, and of how close the two couples had become, and I'm thinking, Well, it's been a long time coming, America, but there on the pulpit is Norman Mailer speaking as a husband in praise of coupledness. Fundamentalists creep, you have met your match.

After the service, Mailer headed for the men's room. "Urination had become one of my preoccupations," he said. As he was cranking along on his canes he saw Roth, with whom he'd had "an edgy relationship for thirty of forty years." Roth asked him where he was going in such a hurry. Mailer told him, and added, "Let me warn you, when you get to my age, you're going to be looking around for telephone booths in which you can relieve yourself." That time had already arrived, Roth informed him. "Well, Phil," he said, "you always were precocious." It was the only time they had ever laughed together, Mailer said. He attributed the warm moment to

Plimpton's spirit. He had liked George enormously, admiring the way he moved with ease through such a range of projects and pursuits while managing to edit a leading literary quarterly for a half-century. After the memorial he wondered aloud about how much time he still had, considering all his ailments, if someone with George's vigor could ^{die} go at 76.

Every year, the Mailers spent less time in New York and more in Provincetown, and the children, grandchildren and friends visited there in all seasons, not just the summer as in earlier years. By the summer of 2003 five of Mailer's children had married (Susan, Danielle, Betsy, Kate and Stephen), and produced eight grandchildren. They all visited regularly, as did Al and Barbara, her son Peter, and other members of the family. The increase in visits was prompted to some extent by the fact that Mailer was 80 and had a weakening heart. Susan recalled her father during this period:

He was in dire need of care, felt lonely, but was too proud to acknowledge it. During that period he made more phone calls than he ever had, he who hated speaking on the phone! He actually asked us to visit him, two or three times, when he called us in Chile. As I write this I'm sad Marco and I didn't visit more often. Those last four years, his overall mood changed, he had more time for his children, and especially, was more in need of us, something he'd kept well hidden before. We, his older children, have commented among us how he finally became the gentle, accessible dad we had wanted in our childhood. He told me many times during this period that he now enjoyed being with his kids and having family dinners almost more than anything else.

~~Did Mailer society always meet in P-town?
Only 2004-2007? Or did NM + Norms open
their house to the Mailer Society only 2004-2007?~~

(founded in 2003)

The Mailers also opened their home to his friends in the Norman Mailer Society, which

and met ~~every fall~~ in Provincetown from 2004-2007. The Mailers invited the keynote speaker for

lunch every year. Neil Abercrombie, a Democratic congressman from Hawaii (now governor of ~~that state~~), spoke in 2004. He had written his Ph.D. thesis on Mailer, and they had been friends

for decades. Ed Doctorow, who was one of the editors of *An American Dream*, was the 2005

speaker, and William Kennedy spoke in 2006. Mailer thought it would be gauche to listen to

speeches and panels about him and his work, so he had never attended any of the conference

events, ~~save~~ ^{but hosted} the closing party. Kennedy had met Mailer in 1968 when he was editing *Maidstone*,

and written a warm review of *Beyond the Law*. They saw each other many times in the '80s ⁱⁿ at

P.E.N. meetings, fundraisers at the New York Public Library, and at the Actors Studio. Mailer

introduced him to Paul Newman who wanted to play Francis Phelan in the film version of

Kennedy's Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel *Ironweed*, but Jack Nicholson had already had sewn up

the role. Newman was a bit too cerebral for the role, Kennedy said, "and he didn't look like a

bum. Jack had a magical way of transforming himself into the slouch of a bum." Nicholson was

nominated for an Oscar for his portrayal, which Mailer admired. The ~~two couples~~ ^{Kennedy and Mailers} enjoyed each

other's company.

For his keynote, Kennedy wrote a half-comic, half-serious dialogue among him, his uncle

"Billy," an unnamed interviewer and Mailer. When he learned that the Mailers didn't plan to be

at the luncheon where he would read it, he quickly cajoled them into attending. Mailer said it

would be like Huck Finn listening to the eulogies at his own funeral, but Kennedy told him he

would regret missing the jokes. The Mailers came and laughed as hard as everyone else ~~did~~ at

Kennedy's piece, "Norman Mailer as Occasional Commentator in a Self-Interview and Memoir."

↓
Toward the end of the dialogue, Mailer notes that American novelists have failed to do the imaginative work of defining America, and Kennedy responds, using Mailer's published words:

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Kennedy: I soon realized I wasn't up to the task and throttled down to the individual, for instance in a novel about a pool hustler very like my favorite uncle. I called him Billy Phelan and he comes to a crisis during a political kidnapping when he refuses to be an informer. If I may, I'd like to invite Billy into this conversation, buy him a drink. Will you have a drink, Billy?

EXITDI
Billy Phelan: The last time I refused a drink I didn't understand the question.

Interviewer: I think we should get back to the serious novel.

Norman: The serious novel begins from a fixed philosophical point—the desire to discover reality—and it goes to search for that reality in society, or else must embark on a trip up the upper Amazon of the inner eye.

Kennedy: What I take home from that remark is that the novel's choices are scope versus self. Norman also says Hemingway and Faulkner both gave up scope.

Norman: their vision was partial, determinedly so; they saw that as the first condition for trying to be great—that one must not try to save. Not souls, and not the nation. The desire for majesty was the bitch that licked at the literary loins of Hemingway and Faulkner: The country could be damned. Let it take care of itself.

Kennedy: I remember a critic panning a self-absorbed novelist and saying rather neatly that literature wasn't about the self, but what came home to the self through

experience. Norman has written extensively about the *self*, about *writing*, about the self, and *against* writing about the self. Norman seems to have written about every choice a human being can make. [...]

EXTDIL

Interviewer: Norman has Hitler as a character in his new novel. No narcissism there.

the State University of New York
the Hitler novel

A year later, at the Institute for Writers at SUNY-Albany, Mailer read from *The Castle in the Forest*, and engaged in a dialogue with the audience. During the visit, the Kennedys hosted a reception for Mailer, as described in Lennon's "Mailer Log"

Kennedy was a great host and hosted a cocktail party at his city house, the Albany row house where Legs Diamond was shot in 1931. NM talked about the problems of writing the sequel to *Castle*, the largest being the vast amount of material to be covered. He wants to write about Hitler as a struggling student-artist in Vienna, about his affair with his cousin and her mysterious death, about the events after the 1932 seizure of power when Hitler, and of course the war, the concentration camps and his suicide in the bunker. He offered one possibility for handling all this and more: move to Russia and Rasputin, using Dieter's time there as a way of being able to avoid chronicling every major milestone in Hitler's life. He explained that he thought of doing something like this with Montague in the unwritten sequel to *Harlot's Ghost*.

EXTFL

the story

for a time

EXTS

TXF Mailer was reading biographies of Grigory Efimovich Rasputin, Czarina Alexandra's confidante, and had become fascinated with the divisions in his psyche. Asked what the good-evil split was in the Mad Monk, he said, "Fifty-fifty, and that is why he is so interesting to me."

TX Dick and Doris Kearns Goodwin were also regular visitors to Provincetown. Whenever either of the Mailers had to go to Boston for medical work, they invariably stayed at the Goodwin's home in Concord, 20 miles outside of Boston. The Goodwins are dinner conversationalists of some repute, and the Mailers loved Dick's memories of the Kennedy White House, Castro and Che Guevara, and Doris's tales of interviewing L.B.J. at his Texas ranch in his final years. Mailer's opinion of Johnson improved after reading her book, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, based on her extensive interviews with the former president. Mailer relished her account of how L.B.J. carried on long conversations with "delicate Kennedyites" while sitting on the toilet.

Goodwin said she loved talking to Mailer. "I felt he respected women. One time he gave me the nicest compliment in the world. He said, 'You're not the smartest person I ever met; you're not the nicest person I ever met, but you're the smartest nicest person I ever met.' I thought it was great." She likes to tell the story of one memorable visit. In the morning when they sat down for breakfast, Mailer informed his hosts that there was a problem with the toilet in the guest suite. When ^{Doris} Goodwin asked what it was, he said, "The water level is high, and when you get old, your balls hang low." If she wanted him to return, she'd have to get it adjusted. The story always brought laughter, even when she told it at Mailer's funeral in Provincetown. "He genuinely liked women," she said. "And he was also a sensual guy. You felt a physical strain that came from him." As for his numerous affairs,

All these women he had the affairs with still care. I think the answer is, perhaps serially, the fact that he loved them. You can't fake that. Women know if you're just using them and I think he never did. He had to fall for someone to be really interested in them. Maybe I'm being too overly positive toward him, but my guess would be it's one thing to have a whole series of love affairs, whether it's three days or sixty years, versus just using women for sex. I don't think he did that; at least that would not be the man I knew. He might have done that earlier. He just loved women and that's what is so bad about the rap he got from some of the writing that he did. I felt to the contrary that he totally respected my opinions and feelings on things. He would ask me, often at dinner, what I thought about this or that. There was never a sense of, a moment of, condescension.

Team of Rivals
 Maller was a fan of Goodwin's new book about Lincoln, and talked about it with
 Lennon, *as he wrote in his "Maller Log."*

EXTF

NM and NCM have both read Doris' book about Lincoln, *Team of Rivals*. He told me how much he likes the language, written and spoken, of the time. When I asked if he liked Abe's homespun metaphors, he said no, not particularly. It is the high rhetoric of statesmanship and congressional debate, the speeches and passionate letters about abolitionism that he enjoys. This made me remember that many years ago I asked him what he thought of the Elizabethan Age, with its cast of daring, dashing players: Essex, Raleigh, Marlowe and so on. He said that he much preferred the Victorian Age with ladies in layers of petticoats and corsets, and men in vests and cravats, and went on with glee about the efforts needed to

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undress and possess the beauties of that time. NM relishes formal (if humorous) rhetoric, long, rolling, Melvillean sentences. He also admires Carlyle and has been compared to him, as well as to Spengler, Emerson, Edmund Burke. This love of slightly pompous, slightly humorous, somewhat ponderous prose is just one side of his linguistic identity, but it is perhaps the dominant one.

YYY

In 2004 and early 2005, working in Provincetown, he made steady progress on *The Castle in the Forest*. He had no desire to travel, but he needed the speaking fees to supplement the monthly payments from Random House. Norris was not strong enough to travel with him, and so either one of his sons or Lennon accompanied him to gigs at the University of South Florida, Southern Illinois University, the 92nd Street Y in New York, Harvard, Weber State University, and Wilkes University. At this last school, he accepted the position of Chair of the Advisory Board for a new graduate creative writing program, met with students and had discussions with the director, Bonnie Culver, about the program. He was still fuming about Bush and the Iraq War, now in its second year, and wrote a number of additional pieces on American arrogance and greed. Three of them, one each in *Playboy*, *New York* and *Stop Smiling*, were conversations with John Buffalo, who came up with the idea of enlarging them into a book that would look at a range of topics: politics, sex, God, boxing, morality, poker, George Bush and the war.

John Buffalo and Michael accompanied their father to Toronto where he was a boxing consultant on the film *Cinderella Man*, based on the career of James Braddock, the heavyweight champ in the mid-1930s. Before the trip Mailer read up on Braddock, played by Russell Crowe,

and watched old footage of his fights. Ron Howard, the film's ^{Director} producer, listened to his analysis of Braddock's bout with Max Baer, whom he defeated for the championship in June 1935 at Madison Square Garden. A 10-1 underdog, Braddock won in a unanimous decision. "Baer got spoiled," Mailer said, "he wasn't used to getting hit." For the film, Crowe trained hard for a year in Australia, boxing and weight-lifting, to get ready for the role. He and Mailer, according to Michael, got along well. After completing one scene, Crowe was sweating and took off a black fleece vest ^{that} which had the name of Crowe's training camp on it. He gave it to Mailer, who brought it home. He wore it with dark sweatpants and Uggs, Australian sheepskin boots with fleece on the inside that were comfortable and required no socks — one less time-waster, he remarked — and yet magically muffled foot odor.

~~Mailer was well paid — \$100,000 — for his advice on the boxing sequences, but his name was not in the credits. When Raymond mentioned this to him, he said that it didn't matter as long as it was on the check. Asked what he contributed to the film, he said he thought he provided some nuances, although the film was edited in such a way as to make the fight scenes all "slam-bang, blood and socko punches." Mailer liked Crowe, who reminded him of Brando. "He's suspicious and mercurial, but genuine," he said. For the next three years, he wore the vest that Crowe gave him nearly every day, parting with it reluctantly for washing~~

^{uncredited} ~~He was paid \$100,000 for his advice.~~ The money came at a good time, but it was a stopgap. Mailer was still locked in what he called "the bowels of cash flow," and needed a new paying project every few months. In the fall of 2004, he agreed to appear with his Stephen on an episode of "The Gilmore Girls," a long-running comedy series about a single mother and her daughter living in Connecticut. Stephen was cast as a reporter, and his father played "Norman Mailer." A few years earlier, he and

This reads like a commercial

Stephen appeared in the pilot for a series called "Street Time," directed by his friend Richard Stratton. Mailer was "Saul (Two Canes) Cahan," a Jewish mobster just released from 27 years in prison who has to report regularly to his parole officer, played by Stephen. One cast member said that Mailer was convincing because "he has a certain rough kind of look about him—his voice, his mannerisms." Mailer loved playing an old wise guy, and slipped into the role easily. He would put on his sunglasses, look you up and down slowly, and say in a leathery voice, "Who the fug are you?"

Financial relief arrived in the spring of 2005 when the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas-Austin agreed to purchase Mailer's archive. The deal was brokered by Glenn Horowitz, a New York rare book dealer who described himself as a "combination of a scholar and grifter," Horowitz got \$2.5 million for Mailer's papers to be paid over six years. The delivered archive contained 500 cubic feet of material, including manuscripts and personal papers from Mailer's childhood through the early 2000s, and approximately 45,000 letters. It is the largest author collection in the Center's extensive holdings. Mailer became friendly with the center's long-time director, Tom Staley, and made two trips to Austin in connection with the transfer. In addition to the price, Mailer said he liked the idea of his papers being in Texas because of his wartime service with the 112th RCT.

As the deal sending his papers to the Ransom Center was nearing completion, the Mailers were visited by had a visitor, John Hemingway, grandson of Ernest Hemingway, and son of Gregory, whom Mailer had met on several occasions. John Hemingway wanted to talk about a book he was writing about his family. Mailer had given a blurb to Valerie Hemingway, John's step-mother, for her book, *Running with the Bulls: My Years with the Hemingways*, calling it "one of the best

~~books on Hemingway that I have read."~~ ^{Papa's} Valerie had been Ernest's secretary, and later had been ~~married to Gregory for 20 years.~~ Mailer and John got along famously, and the wine flowed that evening. In a letter to Anne Barry about the evening, he said, "The sad truth is I'm still at my best when half loaded." He said he over-served himself with Grappa, a very strong Italian brandy that they drank "in honor of Hemingway."

I said to Norris the next day, "If you ever see me go near Grappa again, just pick up the nearest heavy object and knock me out with it because the effect will be the same and at least it will save my digestion from having to deal with Senor Grappa again." Anyway, my sense of the ridiculous as you can see remains firm and complete. Only an eighty-two year old would tell drinking stories about his own drinking.

He ended his letter ~~to Barry,~~ by noting that after nearly five years of work, he had completed 700 pages of *The Castle in the Forest*. He had interrupted work on it several times, but he also wrote much more slowly than in the past. "I used to pride myself on the white heat of my first drafts," he said. But now they took more time as he trimmed and polished. "I work them over in return for losing that early speed and smoke and flash and dash. The moment a sentence disappoints me slightly I start looking at what's wrong with it." He was ~~also working~~ ^{continuing to work} with John on ~~The Big~~ ^{the collection,} Empty ^{also} and continuing the theology interviews ^{with Lennon}.

During his first visit to the University of Texas in late April 2005, Mailer met Douglas Brinkley, a prolific young historian and editor. ^{Brinkley} He wrote a story in the *New York Times* about the sale of Mailer's papers and followed up a few months later with a long profile in *Rolling Stone*. Brinkley used the occasion of Mailer's April speech at the University attacking Bush and the

Iraq War ^{to write his} — a “steppingstone to taking over the rest of the world” — ^{as the launching pad for a} as the launching pad for a brisk overview of Mailer’s career. The day after Mailer’s speech they went to lunch and Mailer ~~went at Bush again, criticizing his use of American English. “He has dumbed himself down,” he told Brinkley.~~ ^{yet again} After disposing of Bush, Mailer talked about literature. He said that Kerouac’s *On the Road* was a classic that “captured something hard about late adolescence ^{the thing} the thing about being free enough to travel and take your adventures where they come.” And he talked about his old anti-war comrade, ^{the} the late Allen Ginsberg. In 1979, Mailer was at a National Arts Club event where Ginsberg was the speaker. “He was a little nutty,” Mailer said. “You never knew when Allen the Hun would take over.”

A discussion followed of Kakutani’s review of *The Gospel According to the Son*, which led Mailer to ~~call her, in a moment of metaphorical ineptitude, “a one-woman kamikaze.”~~ Except for calling the *Times* critic “a posterior aperture,” Mailer ~~had previously confined himself to writing letters to the publisher of her paper. But his 15-year burn over her harsh reviews (and the putative damage to his book sales), coupled with his own never-to-be-quenched impetuosity, led to the emergence of Norman the Hun; The Beast was back:~~ “She disdains white male writers, and I’m her number one favorite target. One of her cheap tricks is to bring out your review two weeks in advance of publication.” ^{Say of her that} And, he continues, she can’t be fired because “she’s a threefer.” Brinkley asked him to clarify. “Asiatic, feminist and, ah, what’s the third? Well, let’s just call her a twofer. They get two for one. She is a token. And deep down, she probably knows it.” Brinkley was amazed. “Why make a quasi-racist remark about the most powerful book critic in America?” Mailer says that one benefit of being over 80 is that “you can say what you think.”

Kakutani and the *Times* made no comment. But Esther Wu, the president of the Asian American Journalists Association, wrote a letter of protest to Jann Wenner, publisher and editor of *Rolling Stone*. She noted that "Asiatic" and "Oriental" were offensive terms to describe Asians and Asian Americans, and lambasted Mailer for referring to Kakutani as a "two-fer" on the grounds that it "diminishes the accomplishments of all women and journalists of color." The tabloids jumped into the dispute, and Mailer obliged them, telling the *New York Daily News* that Wu's letter was "an excellent example of high-octane political correctness." Wu countered by saying, "Perhaps if Mr. Mailer were a little more politically correct, he would not be making such racist remarks. Mailer foolishly persisted, and tried to shift the argument to Kakutani's early and "heinously bad" reviews of his books, and Wu came back hard on his "character assassination." He might have folded his tents at this point, but he continued, telling "Page Six" at the *New York Post* that he felt compelled to remark that "political correctness is toxic to American freedom."

To friends at dinner over the Fourth of July weekend, Mailer said that he had "walked right into it" with his remarks, and acknowledged that his words were poorly chosen. At the time, he said, he awoken in the middle of the night writhing in anger at himself, and Kakutani. He wanted her to wake up at three a.m., just as he had, saying "Kill, kill, kill!" He said this with some humor in his voice, but the depth of his feeling was clear. Mailer was a good hater. He said that Steve Erlanger, the *Times* Cultural Editor, had given him a commitment that Kakutani would not rush her next review of one of his books into print, but he still intended to keep the pressure on. She may be a power unto herself, but "the *Times* must choose," he said, "between reining her in and pissing off Norman Mailer."

Erlanger

OK? This is one place where some point of view is appropriate.

He decided to begin compiling Kakutani's reviews of other white male authors, looking for a pattern. Asked if he would include reviews of some younger writers—[✓]Dave Eggers [✓]and David Foster Wallace, for example, he said, "WR," or waiting room. In his mind, their literary stature remained to be determined. Over the next several months, he assembled "The Kakutani File," a collection of 39 ~~Kakutani~~ ^{Cormac} reviews of books by 10 writers (Bellow, DeLillo, Doctorow, Irving, Mailer, McCarthy, Roth, Stone, Updike and Wolfe) over a 12-year period, 1994-2006. By his count, 22 of the reviews had been published four or more days before the books' publication days, and ten were 15-30 days early. ^{fifteen to thirty} His books got the worst reviews, with Wolfe, Stone, Irving and Updike doing somewhat better, and Bellow, DeLillo, McCarthy and Roth getting ^{the best} better reviews. There was no correlation between the warmth of the review and the date of a book's publication—[✓]early reviews were just as likely to be negative as later ones. But it was clear that Kakutani did like to be out there first. Mailer was uncertain if he should use this survey, and how.

After a regular heart test on July 13 at Mass General Hospital, Mailer was told he needed an operation. His response: "After I finish the novel." He detested the thought of dying on the operating table and believed that his status in the Hereafter might be enhanced if he was lucid and sharp when he got on the bus. Asked why one's state of mind at death was so important, he said, "[I]t's our point of departure, our angle of flight, if you will."

I think at the moment we die, we are the sum of all the good and bad we've done, all the courage and cowardice we've exercised. And so, for example, if we die

with a desire to be reborn, I think it means a great deal to God. If you will, it's like reaching into a litter to select a pup, and there's one who catches our eye because he wants us. He is the one we choose to take home. Using that crude analogy, I would say it's important to be ready. After all, that is the one situation we can't simulate, can't preempt.

After a month of nagging by Norris and the family, he agreed to ~~by~~ pass surgery, and it was scheduled for September 8, 2005. The decision to have the operation, he said, made him "automatically five years older" because his ongoing efforts "to stave off old age" were now moot.

John Buffalo was around for most of the summer and he and his father finished work on *The Big Empty*, and turned in the manuscript to Nation Books for publication in February 2006. John challenged his father in some of their exchanges, gently but firmly, and this gave the book a ^{some} modicum of narrative tension as they worked their way through issues of dissent, politics, and the psychology of boxing and poker. ~~Norris wanted to take some photographs of father and son for possible use on the cover, but Mailer had had some dental work done in late August and wasn't ready for the camera yet, as noted in the "Mailer Log".~~

~~He has a new set of uppers that don't fit and he is gumming his food with gusto. He looks like an old Irish stevedore out for fish and chowder on Friday night. On the night of September 2, he got a piece of pot roast in his throat and Marco Colodro had to give him the Heimlich Maneuver. It popped out. The incident made him recall Fig Gwaltney's death by choking, he told me. Fig, he said, was a flammable mixture of boldness and caution, and was regularly angry with his wife's overweening caution, which might have led to the choking.~~

The whole clan sat on the deck the next morning and talked about Bush and the suffering caused by Katrina and whether it would help or hurt the Democrats. NM was, as usual, quite pessimistic, feeling that the citizenry would not really hearken to the plight of poor blacks, or be willing to criticize the President. The feeling that we are in a watershed period was palpable though. Apparently, NCM sent \$500 to the Red Cross for the victims and NM doesn't like the Red Cross. A couple of others criticized it too. NM gave a humorous rant in a brogue like James Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey*. Then NM and NCM did their usual funny *faux* fight for us with NCM saying what I have heard her say 50 times: "We never fight when others aren't around; Norman just likes to put on a show." With a big toothless laugh showing his eyeteeth, he agreed. Laughter all around.

(IX) Before the surgery, he had written three-fourths of *The Castle in the Forest*, enough, he said, for it to be published if he died. In the month before the operation, he wrote about ^{a hundred} 100 pages of notes outlining the so-called "emergency ending." If he didn't make it through surgery, ^{he hoped his notes} they could be appended to what he had completed. He wanted the novel to end shortly after the death of Hitler's father in 1903, with some additional material on Russia and the dislocations ^{World War} there during WWI. He had already written about the 1896 coronation of Czar Nicholas II at some length, which moved the narrative away from the Hitler family for several chapters. This was done in preparation for Rasputin becoming a major figure in the next volume of what he hoped would be a series of three novels. He said that Rasputin had considerable presence and was loved by many for his healing powers. Indeed, Rasputin is the perfect Mailer character: charismatic and drunken, soulful and carnal, a demonic-saintly figure who moved easily from Gypsy debauch to ^{Czar's} the Tsar's court.

✗
 Mailer had been taking two nitro tablets a day, and his recognition that he could not keep increasing the dosage was one more reason to agree to the operation. But he still had reservations. "Having my blood pumped out of me and sloshing around in a machine, running through loops of plastic is an unhappy prospect," he said. The plastic, he ^{believed} continued, might be the reason that Tom Wolfe and Larry McMurtry had become depressed after by-pass surgery. Told that surgery depression passes after a time, he said, "Yes, but when you're 83 you don't want to lose six months; it's not worth it."

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 ✗
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 Initially, Mailer was told that he was having a single by-pass operation, but his coronary arteries were more clogged than supposed and he ended up having a quadruple. ^{by Mailer's bypass} The operation was successful and the doctor reported that he had the heart of a 40-year-old. After two weeks in the ICU, he was moved to a rehabilitation facility on Cape Cod. From there he was able to talk to people ^{by} on the telephone. Speaking in a hoarse, excited voice, he said that a tremendous number of new ideas had come to him, especially about spiritual matters. "I'd like to talk about them now," he said, "but talking gets me too excited. I'd only be scraping the rim of the can." The experience had brought him closer to Norris, he said, and he was troubled by how much she worried about him. Two days later, he said that he had gotten into too many bad habits. "I feel like Scrooge, all my previous life revealed in a flash, along with a desire to change." In October, he went home. His favorite journey used to be the sight of the Brooklyn Bridge after dinner in Manhattan, but now it was "the sight of Provincetown as one rides up over the last rise and there is the Pilgrim Monument in all its subtle presence." ~~From the top of the rise he could also see, to the left, the harbor fronted by closed-up beach houses and tourist cabins, and beyond them fishing beats at Macmillan Pier, and to the right salt marshes and lagoons and the high, peaked sand dunes partly covered with cord-grass, pitch pine and scrub oak.~~ The vista always gave him a

So why the quad bypass supposed note two

(N)

lift. Still short of breath, he had to suck on some sort of plastic device—which he loathed—to test his wind. He was counting on the salt air to strengthen his breathing and energize his psyche.

He told friends visiting him in mid-October that while recovering in the hospital, he got into conversations with the staff, especially the nurses. He liked one Irish-American nurse in particular because she didn't keep telling him he was looking better. She said that his recovery was "on the slow side." He told her that he had been married to Norris for 30 years, and the nurse replied that it was probably high time for a "treaty" with his wife, or as she explained it, an agreement to avoid certain sore subjects so and making life less antagonistic. "When we fight," he said, "it gets personal right away." Norris liked the idea of not discussing certain matters. For example, if he would not make any comments about Women's Lib, then she would not challenge his literary judgments. At some point they "signed" such a pact. As he was discussing the treaty with friends, he said, "Look at me, proud, semi-helpless and opinionated." And then he laughed. His self-depictions were often sardonic.

While he was still in rehab, he learned that the National Book Foundation would award him the 2005 Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters on November 16. He said it was coming at the appropriate time, that is, after Bellow, Roth and Updike, who in his mind were less controversial. His acceptance speech would be the first thing he would write after he had recovered. For the rest of the year, he intended to rest and read, and did not expect to get back to *The Castle in the Forest* until the new year.

Recovery was slow. He spent a lot of time on the deck napping and watching the pigeons and gulls maneuver over the low tide flats. He read a piece in the *Atlantic* by Bernard-Henri Lévy the French writer and public intellectual, who had spent a year travelling around the country, following the footsteps of Tocqueville, who spent two years in America in the 1830s.

after his surgery
what? according to above

United States

↙ Shortly before he returned to France, Lévy visited Provincetown and interviewed Mailer. In the profile, he made several errors, the most important of which was calling Mailer "the most secular of American novelists." When this and other errors were pointed out to Mailer, he was unfazed. (N)
 ✓ It wasn't important, he said, and "Lévy did catch something about me: that I have my mind on eternity." The old Mailer would have snapped out a letter to the editor pointing out his long-standing theological interests, a friend said. Mailer waved it off. "I'm thinking of eternity," he repeated.

But a few weeks later he felt strong enough to give a reading from his work at the Mailer Society conference, along with Norris, Stephen and John. He was pleased that Judith attended, the conference, her first visit to Provincetown. And on November 11, he and Norris celebrated 25 years of marriage with a dinner with John Buffalo at Front Street, one of their favorite Provincetown restaurants. His breathing had improved somewhat, and he began talking about getting back to work. On November 16, he went to New York to receive the National Book Award medal from Toni Morrison and give a short speech on the decline of interest in serious novels. "Rarely are good novels good page-turners," he said. (N)

① Jason Epstein had retired and
 His new editor, David Ebershoff, came to Provincetown around this time to discuss in the forest Castle. Random House wanted him to extend it at least to 1903, bringing Hitler up to his late teens. Ebershoff recalled that Mailer wanted to see the book published, but showed "a little bit of uneasiness about whether he could finish. He didn't say that, but I sensed it." Mailer had long planned to do what Ebershoff wanted, but said to him with false indignation, "You realize what you've just told me is going to give me nine to twelve more months of work?" Ebershoff laughed and said, "Yeah, I do." A more delicate issue was the Russian section.

Handwritten notes on right margin:
 You said about the book he planned to end in 1903.

Ebershoff and others who had read the manuscript found the long description of the courtship of Nicholas and Alexandra, and other events leading up to Nicholas's coronation, to be problematic. The narrator, a fallen angel named Dieter, or D.T., leaves young Hitler and spends 100 book pages fomenting confusion in the imperial Russian court. Norris, Lucid and others compared the Russian excursion to the bloated Uruguayan episode in *Harlot's Ghost*. Mailer seemed to be repeating his mistake. Ebershoff said, "I didn't feel he had digested his material as well," and he seemed to be relying on only "a few sources, rather than a library of sources." It was true, Ebershoff also found it to be "incredibly digressive." He made this point to Mailer in Provincetown and, in early 2006, in New York, Gina Centrello, the president and publisher of Random House, agreed on the need to cut back the Russian section. At one meeting with Mailer, she and Ebershoff listed all the qualities of the novel that they admired. Then they told him that there was a section that needed "a little work," which she explained, was "a publisher's euphemism for, 'This section needs to be cut.'"
 (N) (N)

EXTS
 EXT
 I barely got the sentence out before Norman jumped in, "You don't like the Nicholas II section, do you? I know the critics will hate it," he said.

EXT
 I nodded sheepishly.

"If I delete it, the book will be more of a page-turner," said Norman.

Feeling encouraged, I responded, "That's right, Norman, it would be much more of a page-turner."

EXTL

Then, with a twinkle in his blue eyes, he announced, "Gina, I hate page-turners."

EXTL

Mailer did trim the section, including many of the love notes exchanged between Nicholas and Alexandra during their courtship. But when he turned in the final manuscript in the spring of 2006, the bulk of the Russian material was still there. He thought it was critical to show how Dieter, a leading minion of the Evil One, created the disaster after the coronation at Khodynskoye Pole, a meadow where celebrating peasants were gathered to receive gifts from the Tsar. Over 1,300 people were trampled to death, which destroyed the festivities. Ebershoff recalled that Centrello still felt strongly that the entire Russian material had to go. She joined him for a final editorial meeting with Mailer. "We went to see him in Brooklyn Heights, for lunch," Ebershoff recalled,

EXTL

and we were talking about the book's publication, but also the Russian section in particular. He said that he had been hearing this, obviously, from me and from you and Norris, and it's been going on for a while, and he knew what we were saying had some merit. And right at the table he said, "I know what I'm going to do. I'll dare the reader to skip over it. I'll just tell them just turn to page X," and he said, "Make sure the copy editor figures out what the page numbers will be, and Adolph Hitler's story will pick up again right there." It was brilliant. I saw that he immediately understood what he was doing, not only in terms of the narrative, but the way people might talk about it, and that it could be controversial, and some

✓ Adolf's father, Alois,

people would love it because it's kind of a wink. Other people would be infuriated. I thought it was so clever.

He also extended the novel to 1905, two years after the death of Alois, making it a 477-page book, a relatively modest length for him. Publication was set for January 31, 2007, his 84th birthday. He dedicated it to his grandchildren, his grandniece, and his godchildren.

TXR
TXF
TXF
The Big Empty was published on January 24, and while not reviewed widely, it received

generally warm notices with a few complaints about some of the conversations being recycled. It also got kudos for the range of topics covered, and the easy back-and-forth between father and son.

One of the themes undergirding their conversations is the comparisons, elicited by John, between the post-World-War-Two Zeitgeist and that of the period after 9/11. Mailer contrasts the altruism of the earlier generation who created the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe with the greed of global capitalists who are blind to "the real spirit of Jesus." John rarely disagrees with his father, except about marijuana, but nudges him deftly to expatiate on various matters, including the merits of civil protest.

Another theme woven through the dialogues is a contrast he made in his 2004 Nieman Fellows lecture at Harvard, titled "Myth Versus Hypothesis." The lecture is a careful demolition of the premises for the Iraq War, and the myths that sustained it. President Bush and Vice President Cheney enunciated the myths: "We must war against the invisible kingdom of Satan," now manifested in Islamic monsters opposed to all that America, God's favored nation, holds sacred. Therefore, "Good will overcome a dark enemy." Opposed to the simplisms of American

post-¹/_N World War II

exceptionalism is the art of hypothesis employed by novelists: "A good novel," Mailer says, is "an attack on the nature of reality," a reality that is always changing: "The honor, the value, of a serious novel rests on the assumption that the explanations our culture has given us on profound questions are not profound. Working on a novel, one feels oneself getting closer to new questions, better ones, questions that are harder to answer." There is no ^{assertion that} ~~question of~~ novelists ~~actually capturing~~ reality completely—^m "unless you are Charles Dickens and are writing *A Christmas Carol*." Novelists *approach* reality; certainties are few and surmises abound. He placed the lecture near the beginning of *The Big Empty*, and the dialectic it endorses sets the tone for the conversations.

In an interview after publication, Mailer spoke of his relationship with John: "As a father of nine, I've tried not to have a favorite, but John endangers that position. I'm close to all of my children, but the two of us are extra-close." Because of his age—^m more than six years younger than Matthew—^m John had "the insularity of the single child," but also had the advantages of a big family. John made the same point in 2012, but went further:

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T EITFL Since the folks have passed, it has become clearer to me that being both an only child, and being the youngest of nine have each played an equal role in my understanding of what the word 'family' means. In my estimate, I easily got the best of my dad because he had mellowed some by the time I came around. He was more interested than ever in dedicating time to being a parent. Not that I think he wasn't a great parent to all nine of us, although some of my siblings may disagree with me. It's undeniable that he had something different with my mother than he had with his previous wives, and I think it boils down to stability.

(AF) → Spending more time with his parents than his siblings, right through his ^{twenties} 20s, John said, gave him a feeling of security that came from growing up with both parents living with you, something none of his siblings had for as long as he did. "Before mom got sick and dad got really old, but even right up to the very end, you just couldn't ask for better parents than I had." John also spoke of memorable family dinners and the colorful friends who joined them:

Every couple of months Bill Majeski, who was then a P.I., Ivan Fisher the lawyer, Richard Stratton, the former pot smuggler turned writer/magazine editor/TV producer, would all come over for dinner. On these days, my brother Matt would take me aside and say, "Hey Bubba, you know what night it is?" And we both would scream, "CRIME TIME!" Those conversations were amazing. I think that's where a lot of my sense of social justice comes from—hearing about how the penal system works and about how not all cops are good guys and not all criminals are bad guys. In-depth conversations on the moral complexity of the universe. But those evenings were stereotypical of a lot of dinner-time conversations at Norman's table. He would raise philosophical questions and the age you were didn't matter. You had to have your metaphors in good working order and your ideas had to be concise and tight and well phrased or else you got trounced—whether you were seven years old or twenty-seven.

Dinners were "a unique version of dinner theater, where you're not only eating the meal, you're also the show," and everyone at the table felt somewhat elevated, he said. "Their game would be better than ever before. And one of the reasons why it's so hard living in this world without

~~Norman Mailer is because I never feel as intelligent as I did when I was around him." He could lead you to a conclusion that you were already bound for, but couldn't quite see, John said.~~

TXR
TXF
ΨΨΨ
in the Forest
McNally
On May 4, shortly after the final manuscript of *Castle* was in the hands of Mailer's editor, Judith died. A heavy smoker who resisted all entreaties to quit, she had not felt well for a few months. ~~Although she was an~~ ^{nevertheless} extraordinarily intelligent person, she persisted in the belief that smoke killed germs, and was good for her plants. When her friend took her cat from her apartment after her death, it went into withdrawal, and the vet had to put on a nicotine patch. ^{his Providence friends} Mailer wrote to Ed McAlice, whose manuscripts Judith had read and critiqued for years, about her passing. McAlice himself was ill with emphysema, and becoming depressed. Mailer commiserated.

EXTL
Who?
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176
Growing old without cracking may be the subtlest of the art forms. Incidentally, while we're on these sad and sour subjects, let me tell you that Judith McNally died over a month ago. We never knew quite of what, she hid her illnesses, but I believe she had cancer of the lungs and cancer of the liver. As you can imagine she left quite a gap behind her. Indeed we had a memorial service for her at my apartment in Brooklyn. I still find it hard to believe. She, like me, despite her intense and often harsh criticisms of your work, had a very high opinion of your talent and thought the real stuff was there. So do I.

EXTS

~~Besides most of the Mailer family, many friends also attended Judith's June 8 memorial service, including Bob Lucid. He lauded her Irish wit and unflappable demeanor, describing her as a cross between Thelma Ritter and Bette Davis.~~

TX
Norris was in and out of the hospital during this period. Mailer wrote to a cousin about her, and said, "She has lost so much weight she looks again as she did many years ago when she was a model and is, if a touch weak, strikingly elegant and fun to look at." Sometimes she and Mailer would drive to Boston together for their medical problems. Stephen also became ill, and had surgery for a bleeding colon just before the Mailers went to New York for Judith's memorial. He came through all right, but his father and Norris were ~~very~~ worried. The night before the surgery, Mailer called Stephen in the hospital. He was in too much pain to talk much, so Mailer just said, "I love you." When he got off, he told Norris that Stephen had said the same thing to him. Their relationship was strained at times but the love was always there. The

2 exchange led to a discussion of the way the Hitler family interacted.

in the Forest was Mailer's ~~mark~~
The Castle is his first family novel, and he planned to hit on this point in pre-publication interviews. The interstices of family life, the grudges and anxieties and hidden agendas, all that nitty-gritty, are carefully delineated in the novel. The deathⁱⁿ euthanasia, reallyⁱⁿ of the household dog, Luther, brings out the cross-currents in the family, and ~~Klara's~~ mistaken belief that Alois is part Jewish is even richer in its presentation and implications. All this gave Mailer hope of good reviews. But every Mailer book is tested against his announced aspirations and accomplishments over a half-century, and some reviewers want notches on their guns. He was also concerned about how the novel would be received in Germany, and ~~can't decide if it will~~ ^{would it be regarded} read it "for exculpation," or see it as one more finger pointing at the German psyche. He didn't

N
This reads like the punch line to a bad joke.

Adolf's mother, Klara's

Would it be

like any of the initial dust jacket designs and sketched out a new one. It showed the entrance to a gloomy castle and on the stone lintel was a swastika. He colored it in, and ^{that} became the basis for the final jacket. For the German edition, and those in other European countries, the swastika was removed, as it violated the EU law. ^{on the jacket}
^{over the entrance of a castle}

With the novel put to bed, Mailer immersed himself in poker. There was a game three or four nights a week, and during the day he read the pile of poker books he had collected. His favorite was Doyle Brunson's *Super System: A Course in Power Poker*. He believed that Texas Hold'em was so popular because it enabled players to exercise buried paranoiac and anti-paranoiac tendencies. When a player surmises that another is bluffing, the former trait is put into play; the latter is a counter-force, akin to cold sober reasoning. He saw the game as a way of toning underused psychic muscles. Asked if Alpha and Omega were also a factor, he said it was too complicated to contemplate because A and O could have both paranoiac and counter-paranoiac tendencies.

When she wasn't too tired, Norris liked to sit in, as did his sister and the Lennons.

Neighbors Astrid Berg, Chris Busa and Marty Michaelson also played, as did a local journalist, Anne Wood, and a retired telephone operator, Pat Doyle, whose wry wit Mailer enjoyed. Most of his children played when they were visiting, and some of their spouses. All guests were encouraged to play. It was an open game with a \$20 buy-in so it was rare when someone lost or won \$100. When Mailer's nephew Peter, who played professionally and wrote a book about participating being in the World Series of Poker, *Take Me to the River*, showed up for a game, some players groaned. A superb player, he usually walked out as a winner. (N)

In July, a magazine editor heard about Mailer's interest in poker and contacted him about doing a piece on the World Series of Poker, a piece depicting tournament highlights and

characters, and presenting his ideas about the lure of the game. "I feel that there is a big poker novel to be written," he said, ~~and was sorely tempted to put off volume two of the Hitler trilogy.~~ His memories of Las Vegas in the 1960s were there to be drawn on, as well his psychological hypotheses. ~~The decision will work itself out over the next three months, he said. He could feel himself declining, and if he had been younger and healthier, there is little doubt that he would have taken the assignment.~~ When someone said that it would be a shame if he dropped the Hitler series, he nodded his head in agreement. "I've been abandoning novels like wives for many years, and I'd like to continue this one."

If *The Castle in the Forest* was successful, he would have another reason to begin the second volume. Michiko Kakutani, therefore, was on his mind. He was certain that she would review the novel. He criticized her again in *The Big Empty*, but agreed with John that calling her a kamikaze was a stupid mistake. He noted that she had recently given "hideous" reviews to three authors whose work he admired—Michael Cunningham, John Irving and Cormac McCarthy—and appeared "to have taken a vow to reduce the reputations of the best male American authors." When Douglas Brinkley's book about Hurricane Katrina, *The Great Deluge*, came out in mid-2006, Mailer assumed that Kakutani's review would be negative. But it was a rave. Mailer sent a note to Brinkley congratulating him on the book's reception and noting his amazement: "Kakutani didn't seem to bear a grudge which is hard to believe and it brings out my ultra CIA sense of buried scenarios." Could it be that she had no anti-white male agenda? He wondered.

Already
too much
Kakutani

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TXB

TXE Mailer had gotten heavier in the early 2000s. Now not much more than five-foot-five, he weighed about 220 before the surgery. But afterwards, he began to shed pounds as his appetite waned. Even so, walking had become increasingly difficult, and traversing the quarter of a mile to Michael Shay's, his favorite restaurant in town, was hard going. He loved the oysters they served, and ate there several nights a week, especially when Norris was back in New York. Her two sons and most of her step-children were there and she wanted to move her mother there. It was a touchy subject. Michael had gotten married in 2004, and Matthew and Peter the following year. The number of grandchildren continued to grow. Only John Buffalo and Maggie hadn't yet married. Norris loved spending time with the Mailer clan and her many New York friends, and took special delight in Mattie James, the daughter of Matthew and Salina Sais, but felt guilty about being away from her husband, who much preferred Provincetown. She drove back and forth, six hours each way.

TX The loss of one's upper teeth, Mailer said, was a blow to manhood. He made many trips to the dentist for complicated implant procedures, and for treatment of an infection. He received a huge bill from a New York orthodontist, but had to put off payment until the first check was received from the University of Texas. He rarely spoke of his health problems in any detail, but couldn't resist occasionally dramatizing his situation, as in this letter to Jim Blake, an architect with whom he had struck up a long-distance friendship. He began with his metaphor of an old freighter trying to make the next port.

EXTX
EXTFL The feet can go, the knees, the hips—not that they're all gone yet, but they're going—the eyesight, the hearing, the sense of taste, the screwing. I take pleasure in announcing to friends that once I could boast of a seven and a half inch column

of silver dollars, but now I'm down to half a roll of dimes. This, believe it or not, inspires my pleasure. It's a wan expression of audacity but it's still my own. Anyway, I tell you this not to feel sorry for me ¹~~me~~ I've had a reasonably interesting life ¹~~me~~ but to present this as preface to the one solid benefit of old age, which is you come to know at last who the hell you are. And so you are at peace with what you did and what you failed to do. And even the envy and competitiveness that kept one driving and working is moderated to the point where your heart does not turn black if a fellow novelist of high proportions has written a good book.

One of the things that cheered him up was a box of business-sized ^Y cards that a friend of John's had printed up. Each card carried a color photograph of a sailboat going before the wind beneath a bright sun, a greeting card scene. Three large letters were printed across the scene: G F Y. Mailer gave them out to everyone for months. He would pull one out of his shirt pocket, and hand it mysteriously to arriving guests. ~~For those slow to figure it out,~~ Most people got it immediately, but for those who were slower he translated: "Go fuck yourself." Then he would slap the table (as Barney used to), and laugh. At one point he got the idea of copyrighting the card and making ^{money} a few million on it, enough to buy a large ranch out west where all the Mailers would have their own houses, and follow their separate pursuits of writing, painting and so forth. He eventually saw the folly of ^{the} ~~all~~ this, but as Norris wrote, "he got a million dollars' worth of fun" from the cards.

Old friends were another pleasure. Hans Janitschek, loud, funny and irrepressible, always buoyed him up. In early October, Mailer went to lunch with him and the Lennons at a seafood restaurant in nearby Wellfleet, as recorded in the "Mailer Log":

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We got a table and ordered a drink as the rain came down on the saltwater lagoon outside. NM wanted oysters, the famous Wellfleet oysters; so did Hans. We got a table right in the middle of the room, which held about 25 other diners, mainly older Wellfleeters. While we waited for our meals, NM told a story about a dinner meeting with the British publisher, George Weidenfeld, in the late 1960s. Joining them was K, a beautiful blonde heiress who was attracted to him, he said, and who he lusted after. But after three hours together, she said, 'Goodnight Norman,' and went off with the publisher. Hans said that Weidenfeld was famously endowed; his member had a valuable twist. NM: 'An S-shape?' Hans: 'No, sort of a half moon.' Hans went on in his blustery voice to explain—with most of the restaurant listening—that Americans mispronounce 'penis.' 'They call it pee-NUS,' he said loudly, and then repeated the mispronunciation three times for emphasis. NM laughed at this and his teeth loosened. He took them out, wiped them with his napkin, and then pulled out a tube of glue or paste and applied it. He said he usually does this in the restroom, but 'what the hell.' The Wellfleet locals, all of whom recognized NM, enjoyed the show. The sun came out and we enjoyed our shellfish and chowders. NM took home some of his dozen oyster shells and those of Hans too.

Whenever Mailer had oysters, which was often, he examined the shell, and half the time found a face there, in relief. The waitress at Michael Shay's with whom he flirted asked him at the end of every meal which pile he was bringing home, and boxed them up. He cleaned them and then put them out on his deck to bleach. On each shell he saw the suggestion of one, a Greek

EXTS

TX

warrior, or a long-dead beauty. He had Norris touch up the features with paint, ^{they} and photograph them. He thought ^{they} it might make an interesting book.

TXB
TXF
Advance review copies of Castle ^{the} were in the hands of reviewers by late October 2006, and Mailer was scheduled for a round of interviews in New York the following month. He glanced through the Kakutani file, and read again her review of *Oswald's Tale*, which she had called "ultimately superfluous." In an upcoming *Esquire* interview he thought he might say something about her, and perhaps at a large meeting of book reviewers at a Manhattan restaurant. "I want the maximum of focus on her," he said, "so that when she picks up my book her hand is shaking with hate." He was also considering sending a copy of his analysis to the top editors at ^{New York} the *Times*, but did not. When anyone brought up the wisdom of ^{his} questioning Kakutani's motives, he bristled.

TX
He didn't mention her at the luncheon with twenty-odd book editors at Keen's Steakhouse on West 36th Street. He said afterwards that he'd made "a tactical decision." But in his interview with Tom Junod, the literary editor of *Esquire*, he did. He was going through the likely responses to the novel: from the Left (they will hate it because they are "essentially rationalistic" and don't want the Devil taken seriously); the Right (Mailer's God is not all-powerful, a sacrilegious idea); the Jews (unhappy to see German responsibility for Hitler undermined); and Kakutani, "Princess of the cookie cutter" because she eviscerates all ^{his} my books. Why she has "a hair up her immortal Japanese ass is beyond me," he said, ^{unable yet again to resist}

Back in Provincetown, he was feeling more optimistic about the novel's chances. He said that he had three things going for him: 1) Hitler, about whom there is always interest; 2) the ten-year gap since his last novel, which would make readers curious; and 3) Dieter, his demonic ^{was a classic remark attacking her}

first-person narrator, who is intermittently omniscient. Limiting his power are the Cudgels, God's angels, who can shield the consciousness of certain people—^hNicolas II, for example—^mso that Dieter cannot enter the person's mind. But he can follow young Hitler's thoughts easily, and can also use "dream-etchings" to suggest nefarious actions to his charge. Using a celestial figure as narrator allowed Mailer to retain the intimacy of the first person voice while not being bound by its limitations, a perspectival sleight-of-hand that parallels the clairvoyance of Meni in *Ancient Evenings*.

With no interviews scheduled until the new year, he began to think about a new dramatic version of *The Deer Park*. Michael had been visiting and talking with his father about filming a staged reading of the play. ^{Stephan} Stefan Morrow, who had played Stoodie in *Tough Guys Don't Dance*, ^Nhad directed and acted in a staged reading of the play the previous year, and Mailer saw ^{which} it and liked it. He invited Morrow to co-direct, if the money could be raised, about \$200,000 Michael estimated. Mailer wanted to do it at the Provincetown Theatre, with professional actors but no audience. Michael thought he could sell it to cable television. As Mailer was working on a new version of the play, a work that had engaged him, off and on, for nearly a half-century, word came that Bob Lucid had died of a heart attack on December 12.

✓ Mailer agreed to speak at the memorial service for his old friend at the University of Pennsylvania in April. He had also agreed to speak at the Boston memorial for Bill Styron, who had died a month earlier at the age of 81. On December 14 he made the two-and-a-half-hour drive from Provincetown to Boston, making several pit stops, some on the shoulder of the busy highway—^mMailer was unfazed about public urination. He slept through a lot of the trip, but talked about both Lucid and Styron. He said he generally hated funerals because "people say all the wrong things." He was one of the last speakers at the event, which was held at the Boston

It is clear that after every major novel he needs some sort of diversion

Public Library. Impatient and bored, he could hear little of what was said. But when he got behind the microphone, he was fully in charge, bantering with the audience, laughing at his own infirmities. He opened by saying, "On top of everything, I'm deaf," and dominating the room. He told a funny story about playing croquet in Connecticut with Bill and Rose Styron and Howard Fertig. ^{Rose} She was sitting in the front row and laughed heartily. Four months later, when the time came for Lucid's memorial, he felt too weak to attend, and his remarks were read by Lennon.

It was Bob's exceptional talent as a lecturer never to obscure the mystery of an explanation. A fine novel, as he would present it to his classes, was an opportunity to enter a little more deeply into the perplexities and complexities of existence itself. Social enigmas and psychological discoveries were not to be understood in full, completely and masterfully, rather they were to be elucidated to a further degree, and thereby prepared for further interpretations.

To what extent Mailer's complaints registered at the *Times* is unknown, but ~~Kakutani did~~ ^{Judged} ~~not review~~ *The Castle in the Forest*. ~~The job went to Janet Maslin, long-time *Times* literary and film critic. Her review was negative, but not nearly as dismissive as Kakutani's was predicted to be.~~ ^{film and then} Maslin's blows are glancing; her tone is respectful. She almost seems to like Mailer's extensive research on Hitler's incestuous heritage, but turns up her nose at the excremental and apiary investigations, the former ~~seen~~ ^{as} too exhaustive, and the latter too obvious. Two days later, Lee Siegel, in a 6,200- word essay in the *Times Book Review*, thoughtfully examines Mailer's entire career before giving unalloyed praise to the novel, which he calls "an utterly strange work of naked, wild empathy." Mailer, he said, is "an immensely disciplined craftsman and stylist who has spent the larger portion of his life at the writer's trade." The *Times*, Mailer

noted, had not pissed him off with this review. Nor was he displeased with J.M. Coetzee's conclusion in the New York Review of Books: "Keeping the paradox *infernal-banal* alive in all its anguishing inscrutability may be the ultimate achievement of this very considerable contribution to historical fiction." (N)

A majority of the other reviews were positive, and praised the subtlety of Mailer's insights into Hitler's diseased psyche, and the story's singular provenance. Many reviewers found Alois, Hitler's father, to be a more compelling figure than his son, much as the father figures in his earlier novels were so judged. According to Ebershoff, early sales were strong. Second and third printings were ordered, bringing the number of ^{copies} hardbacks in print to over 100,000. Mailer enjoyed following the novel's sales figures as they rose and fell with reviews and public appearances. After appearing on Charlie Rose's show on February 3, he saw the novel's ranking at Amazon and Barnes & Noble jump the next day. The In the Forest made the best seller list for three weeks, reaching number five on February 11, 2007, just after Mailer's 84th birthday. ^{It had now had} It was his eleventh best seller, at least one in each of seven decades, 1948 to 2007. (N)

During his west coast swing for Castle, Mailer, accompanied by John Buffalo, arranged to meet Lois Wilson for dinner at his hotel on the Embarcadero Waterfront in San Francisco. After John Buffalo was introduced, he left them sitting in a booth. "We had the end section of the restaurant," Wilson recalled in a conversation with her daughter. "It was very dark. And we talked and talked." They had trouble seeing the menu, she said. "They turned the lights way down, and we had sweeping curtains around, and he talked about how he was so sick." (N)

EXT 9
EXTFL

They pulled all his teeth because they were afraid his mouth would get infected and that was something that wasn't necessary, but it made a big difference. He said, "Did you ever know anybody who lost his teeth?" [Lois getting very emotional here, having trouble breathing and talking] And I said, "Yes," and he said, "What was their reaction?" and I said, "Desolation." [Lois very upset and serious during this part of interview] That was my father. He was so proud of himself—handsome—and they pulled his teeth and they never fit and they moved around in his mouth, and so I said, "No, I know it's terrible." And Norman said, "It sure is," and he'd had a lot of his vital parts operated on, I don't know what's what, and the same thing happened to Norris. So, then he said, "How would you characterize me?" I didn't say a word.

EXT 10
TX

A little later, he asked her the same question, but she still couldn't come up with anything. At the end of the meal he got up on his two canes and said, "Would you like to come up to the room?" She said, "If I come up, I'll fall asleep." He replied that he would too, and walked her to the lobby to get a cab. "Norman and I exchanged, at a distance, noisy kisses [she makes a smack noise], like one does with one's husband." She went home alone, "kind of drunk."

The next day, February 5, she called him on his cell phone.

EXT 11
EXTFL

I got him at KQED about to be interviewed by Mike Krasny. And he said, "I'll call you in an hour." And he did, exactly in an hour. And I said, "I'll never see you again." I knew that that was it. And he said, "Yes, I'll be here, I'll be back here in a year. I will have finished the next book and I'll be talking to Mike Krasny about

it. And I said, "That's good, I look forward to it." And that was that [long silence]. I'm not sure I have anything else to say about Norman. I tried to think of a way of characterizing him in a word or two, but you know, I can't. That's not how you go about Norman. He's very ¹—he's magnificent and rare. Nothing else like him.

This is
so moving
Mark

Shortly after Mailer returned from the West Coast, Norris told him that she was going to move to Brooklyn. They had talked earlier about selling the Provincetown house and buying a place in Connecticut to be near family and New York doctors. But nothing came of it. By the spring of 2007, Mailer had lost over fifty pounds, and his breathing was just as bad as before the by-pass surgery, perhaps worse. His doctor prescribed asthma medicine, but Norris suspected it was something else. He believed the sea air was sustaining him, and refused to go to the city.

Norris was insistent about her move. She said she was tired of "rattling around in this big house while Norman rattles around in his head." She told Raymond, "People are going to think I'm just the worst," but eventually her absence would make him "understand how much more sensible it is for us to be in Brooklyn." On March 9, with the help of ^{told friends that} Christina Pabst and Donna

~~Lennon~~ she packed her clothes, books, the manuscript of her new novel, and her computer ^{friends}—a sign that the move was not temporary ¹—and left with her mother for New York in a rental car. He made no fuss, ^{as usual} but was clearly unhappy. She was tearful but firm. When Lennon arrived the next evening to take him to dinner, Mailer was sitting alone in the dark. At Michael Shay's, nearly deserted, he ate 16 oysters, and pondered the shell faces. Back at the house for a nightcap, he said that his eyes were going from macular degeneration, and that he could be blind in eighteen months. "I'm not worried about it," he said. Norris ¹emailed friends that she was as happy as she

had been for a long time. Mailer said he would like her to spend at least ten days a month with him.

Norris left their Toyota sedan in case he needed it, but Raymond or friends usually drove him wherever he needed to go. But on April 17, he announced to Raymond that he was taking a day off from working on the revision of *The Deer Park*—¹~~A Play~~, and going to lunch at ~~The~~ Wicked Oyster in Wellfleet. Raymond was a bit worried about his boss driving and offered to accompany him, but Mailer said he preferred to go alone. As soon as Mailer left, Raymond called Norris in Brooklyn, and she said there was nothing to be done. Raymond drove by the house at 7:45, but the car wasn't there. He learned later that Mailer had gotten home safely, after dinner at the Lobster Pot, the big tourist restaurant. He'd left the Toyota when he had trouble starting it, and taken a cab home. Norris ¹emailed Raymond that she was proud of Norman, "and you can tell him that for me."

The next day, Mailer told Raymond about his lunch in Wellfleet, and how he'd driven around the country roads in Truro before going to the Lobster Pot for dinner, and then a final drink at ~~The~~ Old Colony. Mailer had done all this, but not alone. He had been saying goodbye to another old friend. Eileen Fredrickson had flown in from Chicago for a two-day visit, and Mailer had picked her up at her motel and squired her around. After she returned to Chicago, Fredrickson recalled, Mailer called her and told her it was "a perfect visit." He called her again a few days later and told her that he loved her and talked of another visit in October. It was ^{to be} their last conversation.

Norris came to Provincetown regularly in the spring, and Mailer travelled to New York for a few events—to receive the Hadada Award from ¹the *Paris Review* on April 23, presented by

 E.L. Doctorow, and on June 27 to appear in conversation with Günter Grass and Andrew O'Hagan at the New York Public Library. ~~The first event was a fundraiser and Mailer wore, for the last time, a tuxedo. For the event with Grass, with whom he had crossed swords at the 1986 P.E.N. Congress, he wore his Russell Crowe vest and his Uggs.~~ He had lost more weight, and was subsisting on oysters, red wine mixed with orange juice and Dove bars. "He couldn't walk more than a few steps, even with two canes, without resting," Norris wrote. "He could hardly breathe. The audience gasped when he walked out on stage." ^{at the Public Library} When Kate saw her father looking like King Lear at the promised end, she said, "We shouldn't let Dad do this. We have to take him to the hospital right now." But when he got on stage and began talking, Norris said, "He was astounding in his clarity and scope of thought." Barbara, sitting next to Norris, said, "If we can keep him on stage, he'll live forever."

Grass had just published a memoir, *Peeling the Onion*, in which he revealed that as a teenager in wartime Germany he had been a member of the Waffen-SS. He had been criticized for hiding this affiliation for 60 years, and O'Hagan was pressing him on the matter. Mailer rose to his defense, saying "How many of us would have the courage at age seventeen to go against the reigning government and fight it alone? Especially one as brutal as the Nazis?" Grass's situation, he said, had caused him to reflect on something that "I have held on to for a long, long time, and never written about"—the stabbing of Adele. He said he now knew that he never would. "I'm happy to be here tonight with him, and I honor the man" Mailer said. Grass was visibly moved by his statement.

Mailer told the audience at the beginning of the program that this would probably be his last public appearance. But he would travel back to New York for one more event, a showing of

Tough Guys Don't Dance and *Maidstone* at Lincoln Center on July 22. In between the films there was a discussion on stage with film critic Michael Chaiken, Lincoln Center programmer Kent Jones and Lennon. The event was sold-out. As at his appearance with Grass and O'Hagan, Mailer looked feeble until he began to answer questions, which he did for 45 minutes. In response to a question about working on Godard's film *King Lear*, he called the director the "second most evil person" he had ever known (Ronald Reagan is the first). "He spoke powerfully and eloquently about his years directing," Chaiken recalled, "the pleasure it had brought him, and the seriousness in which he endeavored to make them." After the discussion, *Maidstone* was shown. Mailer said that the second half was "repetitive and self-indulgent," with too much histrionic foreshadowing. In the Green Room afterwards, a number of friends and admirers stopped by, including John Bedford Lloyd, who played Wardley in *Tough Guys*, actor-comedian Jerry Stiller, A.O. Scott from the *Times*, Lee Siegel, who had reviewed *Castle*, and Lana Jokel, one of his film editors. ~~He knew that it was his last public outing, and drew out his conversations.~~

with his films
It was obvious that this was Mailer's last public outing, and drew out his conversations.

Back in Provincetown, Mailer was up and down, weak and dispirited one day, feisty and grumpy the next. There was talk of him getting an electroshock treatment. He said that if it didn't help, "I will be an invalid for the rest of my life." He continued to work. The success of Christopher Hitchens' *Why God Is Not Great* was a key factor in his decision not to postpone the theology conversations book. Random House was eager to publish it as soon as it was edited. After much discussion, he approved the title: *On God: An Uncommon Conversation*. It was scheduled for publication on October 16. ~~By this time, his appetite was much diminished, as noted in the "Mailer Log": "He can eat a plate of oysters and some soup, but cannot eat the big~~

~~meals he consumed just a couple of years ago. He is trying to eat just the things he really enjoys, like Mary Kitchen's Roast Beef Hash (which Dwayne ordered on the Internet), and an omelet with raspberry jelly in it. But yesterday, he took only one bite of the omelet and one spoonful of cereal. He is getting very thin and complains about his short breath all the time. Norris thinks he may have a heart problem.~~

Norris returned to Provincetown for the summer, and all the children sensing this could be his last summer, ^{visited} ~~came for visit after visit~~. On August 1, ^{Norris} ~~she~~ left on a three-week promotional tour for her new novel, traveling to Atlanta, Chicago and the West Coast. She planned to return in time for the September wedding of Maggie and John Wendling on the low-tide flats behind the house. For an hour or two a day, Mailer went over the final changes and jacket design for *On God*. He also read and was impressed with Andrew O'Hagan's review of Don DeLillo's new novel about 9/11, *Man Falling*. He said that perhaps it would be DeLillo who replaced him as the writer who takes on all the big themes and events in American life. He went on to say, "There was a time when I felt completely secure in tackling all the big topics. I was totally confident."

~~Much of his table talk had become elegiac; he kept summing up his record, trying to peer around time's corner to learn his place in literary history. He proposed "The 30-year rule": a place in the canon is dependent on being read 30 years after one's death.~~

On Norris' instructions, Mailer's three upcoming speaking engagements were cancelled. ~~He was angry when he learned, but admitted that he wasn't up to long trips anymore. He still planned, however, to go ahead with the filming of *The Deer Park*—A Play in November.~~

Michael hadn't yet raised the necessary production money, so Mailer planned to use the next big

← DeLillo said in 2010 that it was Mailer's "ambition, risks, broad vision, wide range in aspects of the American tradition that put me on the path I've been following all these years."

(OK) → (the University of)
 check from Texas. Norris didn't know of his plan, and he knew she would be furious when she learned it. One obvious reason that he continued to take on new projects was to keep the adrenaline flowing. But he was realistic enough to know that he probably wouldn't be able to write the next Hitler novel. "I'm too weak," he said.

He wrote his last letter on August 3, to help honor an old friend. "James Jones is one of the few major American novelists to emerge here since the Second World War. He was immensely talented and I think it is a splendid idea to endow a chair in his name at Eastern Illinois University. He would have grumbled, but I think it would have given him true pleasure." He wanted to begin the sequel to *Castle*. "It's all there," he said, pointing to his head, "a helluva novel. Hitler was so human, and I'd love to cook him to a turn." Now he was only functioning five or six hours a day, sleeping the rest. In mid-August, he stopped climbing to his study, and worked sporadically at the dining room table.

His breathing continued to get worse and he went to Mass General Hospital for an exam. One lung was partially collapsed and there was fluid in the other. There were other problems, including some sort of lesion on his pancreas. The doctors thought it might be best to keep him in Boston, which meant missing Maggie's wedding on September 8. Norris asked the doctors to tell him the seriousness of his condition. "He is going down; it's just a question of when," she said. Against medical advice, he came home two days before the wedding, after eight days in the hospital. The afternoon he arrived he got into a conversation with Susan and Lennon about the way elderly Eskimos and Indians wandered into the woods so they would not be a burden.

Mailer asked, "But how would they die?"

"By not eating or drinking," Lennon said.

regular text

regular text

TX
TX
"Or eaten by a wild beast," Susan said.

"That would be the way to go," he said, "fighting a wild animal. I am whipped by Time."

TX
Norris was sad and worried. She wanted to bring him to Brooklyn where he would be near a hospital, but he resisted.

TX
Carol Stevens, the bride's mother, ^{attended} was at the wedding, with about ^{a hundred} 100 others. Norris and Carol had become good friends—"almost like sisters," Carol said—and ^memailed each other almost every day, but Mailer had ^monly ^mseen her a few times in the past few years. He spent a few minutes in a quiet conversation with her. Mailer's sons got him down to the beach for the brief ceremony. He looked wretched sitting in the brisk wind on the flats with a flower in his lapel. Afterwards, he had a glass of champagne, ^{posed for} had some photos taken with the newly married couple, and then went upstairs to lie down.

New York
A few days later when Lennon stopped by, Mailer said he had an epiphany at three a.m. and almost called him. He explained that he wanted to do another book of conversations, this one on cancer. It would explore the idea that besides stress, trauma, repression and guilt, cancer is caused by boredom. His plan was to have someone read the obituaries of corporate leaders in the Times over a one-year period to see how many died of cancer, his idea being that it kills a disproportionate number. Challenged over long, busy lives, executives get bored after retirement and succumb to cancer. He wanted Lennon to assemble all the references to cancer in his interviews and writings on the topic. He went on for 45 minutes and then said he wanted to sleep, which he did. Before he lay down, he said that his doctor told him that if he didn't start eating he would die. ^{He said he was} This hit him and he is trying hard, eating steak and eggs in the morning, soup, more chocolate and ice cream and fish at night.

William
 Bill and Dana Kennedy visited him, as did Gene and Sarah Kennedy, his Chicago friends

and many others. On September 19, Bill Majeski came, and there was poker for several nights running, Mailer's last games. On the 22nd, Danielle and her husband Peter McEachern drove him to Brooklyn. Norris had finally convinced him. They made numerous pit stops on the six-hour drive. He now weighed not much more than 100, *a hundred* and Peter was able to carry him up the four flights of stairs to the apartment. His plan was to return to Provincetown in a month for the Mailer Society meeting.

Matthew recalled seeing his father in Brooklyn:

I was in denial as to how bad off he was. He was losing weight and didn't look good. I brought ~~his children~~ Salina and Mattie over for a visit. He'd just gotten up from his nap; he was sleeping a lot at that time. Got to the table and I learned he was planning on going to the hospital. It dawned on me that this could be it. I asked him, "Are you afraid? Do you think this is going to be it?" And he said, "Look, I've had a great life, I just don't want a bad end. I finished my novel, I'd like to write another book but I don't have that burning desire to write another one, it's just not there." There was this dark cloud over him. Mom took a picture of us sitting there. *in* I think it was the last picture ever taken, come to think of it.

August
 On October 3, he checked into Mt. Sinai Hospital. Copies of *On God* arrived that day, and he signed a few. Surgery was scheduled for 7:30 the next morning. At 1:00 p.m., the surgeon told those waiting that the operation was successful. Larry Schiller and his wife Kathy Amerman had just flown in from the West Coast, *then* and joined everyone in the waiting area. The doctor said that she had drained and inflated Mailer's lung, and that his heart was strong through the

operation. Family and friends were allowed in a few at a time to see him later in the afternoon.

When they went in, they saw right away that he was still feeling the pain killers. He was ranting.

He had a dream ^{that} and Schiller was the Devil and he was God and they made a pact to rid the world of technology. He flirted with the ^{nurse}, a 29-year-old woman who took it with good humor. He told her that she should write a novel and use her meeting with a famous author as the first chapter. Later, he had her write a vignette about a weekend with her boyfriend and promised to critique it.

The next day, more family members and friends arrived. The doctors said that the lack of oxygen in his blood had all but destroyed his appetite. Now, the prognosis was good. He was in a private room where the lights could be lowered and he had a full-time nurse. Everyone was optimistic. Norris was feeling wonderful. She gave a bravura reading at a Barnes & Noble in Manhattan on the day after the surgery, and answered questions about her book and her husband's health.

9) But A few days later, everything changed. On October 9, he came down with pneumonia, and the doctors found that he had lymphoma of the stomach, cancer, and this had been at the root of his weight loss. These problems could be treated with drugs, but Mailer was pessimistic. He told Norris to get him transferred to the Hyannis hospital and from there he would sneak home. He thinks he is dying, she said. "He wants to die." She was worn down by the long daily trip to see him, as well as visiting her mother in assisted living.

The media was eager for information, and emailed and called friends and family. So many people, some of them crazy, were trying to visit him in the hospital that finally a guard had to be posted to screen visitors. He looked somewhat better toward the end of the month, but he still wanted to pull out all his tubes and wires. For obscure reasons, he had a tracheotomy, and so

could only mouth words, and write notes, most of them illegible. He wrote a note to Donna Lennon, and then pointed to the word "P-Town," and then to himself, indicating that he wanted to go there. The family discussed getting him there, but the risks were too great. On October 29, he was operated on for an infection in a vein in his groin. He told his nephew Peter, "My ass feels like Iraq."

~~John Buffalo had a serious talk with the doctors and they said he'd be able to speak and eat and write again. Roller coaster is the simile everyone used to describe the emotional state of family and friends over the past three weeks.~~ Seeing one of the most ferocious, intense communicators of the last ^{hundred} 100 years, the man who had written 40 books and been interviewed a thousand times, locked into silence by his ailments was heart-breaking. The look in his eyes was woeful. He was angry and very frustrated that no one could read his chicken scratches.

He was cheered a bit when *New York* published excerpts from *On God*. The cover of the magazine had a head shot of him, white hair flowing, with clouds behind him as if he were a celestial being. He nodded his head in approval, and enjoyed the sections Norris read to him. Earlier when he could still talk, he saw Norris crying and said, "You must really love me." She answered, "Of course I love you, you silly old coot! Why else do you think I've stuck around all this time?" Peter McEachern, knowing that Mailer missed the ocean, drove to Provincetown and taped the sound of waves from the master bedroom window, complete with an occasional groan from the Long Point fog horn. He played the tape, on a loop, in Mailer's room.

During the second week in November, he began sinking. Family members took turns sitting with him. At one point, the phone rang. It was Michael, who had an idea: a last drink for

the old man. Peter went through a drink list with him, and Mailer ^{nodded} shook his head yes for rum and orange juice. Peter told the story at Mailer's memorial some months later.

Michael finally returned with a bottle of rum and a container of orange juice. But all we had was a plastic cup, which if you knew my uncle, was worse than no cup at all. So Michael went to the nurses' station and managed to get a real glass, and we started to mix the drink. Norman took over at this point, indicating the correct proportions for water, orange juice, and rum. One last problem: how to give it to him. Because of the breathing tube in his throat, he wasn't supposed to drink; he could choke. Sacrilege, but we gave him the drink on one of those lollipop-shaped sponge-on-a-stick thingies. I dipped the sponge in the glass then put it in his mouth. He gave a look of utter exasperation. Then he grabbed the glass out of my hand. I looked to Michael. He shrugged. We all watched Norman put the glass to his lips and take a nice long sip. Then another. He was going to drink that drink the way it was supposed to be drunk even if it killed him. After a few sips, he allowed himself a smile. We all did. Norman held up the drink and pointed at each of us. He wanted us to share the drink with him. So we passed the glass and we each took a sip.

A few hours later there was a conference with the doctors, who said that he would go quickly if all the tubes were removed. The family agreed that this would be done in the morning. Stephen, who had just flown back from the West Coast where he was in a play, said he would stay the night with his father, and everyone else went home.

"About five a.m.," Barbara wrote in a memoir, "the telephone rang and woke me." It was Norris, who had just received word from the hospital that Norman had died. Sue and Marco were staying with me. We threw on some clothes and grabbed a cab. Stephen was there, of course, with his tale of how the bells and whistles Norman was attached to had awakened him and that as he stood at the foot of the bed, Norman sat up, gave him a beatific smile, and then fell back. A medical team came into the room and pronounced him dead. We sat in the room with Norman's body for several hours until the usual arrangements could be made. The family began to arrive. We were pretty quiet and grim to begin with. I think at one point Betsy went over to the bed and held Norman's hand. And Marco, I believe, tried to find some Hebrew prayers we could say over Norman. But as others began to arrive, the usual Maeler élan revived, and we were all talking at once. Leading to a moment of ghoulish comedy. A young doctor, probably an intern or resident, opened the door and entered the room.

"Well," she said cheerfully, "you seem to have a nice party going. But I have to give Mr. Maeler an injection." There was stunned silence until someone blurted, "But he's dead."

Oops. She was out the door. She fled so fast we couldn't help ourselves.

We burst out laughing.

I hope Norman's spirit was still there. It was a moment he would have relished.

got a copy of the Hebrew prayer, Kaddish, from the hospital rabbi, and he and Michael and Stephen read it, and we all said "Amen."

TX The official time of death was 4:28 a.m., November 10, 2007. The cause on the death certificate was acute renal failure.

Laudatory tributes appeared within 48 hours on the front pages of newspapers around the world. Kakutani's was among the most thoughtful.

ERS
EXPL Mr. Mailer used his copious talents—quick skewering eye; a gift for the cameo portrait; bat-quality radar for atmosphere and mood; and blustering, bellicose prose—to capture the American spirit as it lurched from the civil rights and antiwar demonstrations of the '60s into the Watergate era of the '70s. In his best work Mr. Mailer made America his subject, and in tackling everything from politics to boxing to Hollywood, from astronauts to actresses to art, he depicted—or tried to depict—the country's contradictions: its moralistic prudery and grasping fascination with celebrity and sex and power; the outsize, outlaw past of its frontier; and its current descent in to 'corporation land,' filled with cheap consumer blandishments and the siren call of fame.

About 200 people paid respects at McHoul's funeral home in P-Town, mainly locals.

What happened to Wiley?
TX Mailer's agent, Jeff Posternak, his editor, David Ebershoff, his collaborator, Larry Schiller, were there, along with many other friends. They had embalmed him in New York and slicked his hair down, making him look much different. The local funeral home director fluffed it up a bit.

spoke
Speaking at the grave the next day were several of his children and friends: Michael, Danielle, John, Stephen; his nephew Peter, Ivan Fisher, Dick and Doris Goodwin, Tom Piazza, Doug Brinkley, Congressman Neil Abercrombie and Larry Schiller. Danielle's husband Peter played J.J. Johnson's "Lament" and Michael's wife Sasha Lazard sang an Irish lullaby. Stephen sang

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~~"Your Song" by Elton John. Michael said, "Dad would have been appalled by that song, Stephen, but you did it well."~~ Everyone threw handfuls of sand on his coffin. ~~Lennon said, "Earth, receive an honored guest; Norman Mailer is laid to rest."~~ Norris was poised and serene throughout. She posed for photos for the flock of reporters who were there, and answered a few questions. After that, she invited everyone back to the house for food and drink, including two ex-wives, Beverly and Carol.

Before the coffin was closed, John Buffalo put the ace of spades in one of his father's pockets; ~~Pat Doyle slipped in another card, and Donna Lennon a white poker chip.~~ His grandson Alejandro contributed a hand-crafted piece of organite. Matthew placed a photograph of the family taken in Maine on his father's chest. Norris added a note. Norman Mailer, singular, unprecedented and irreplaceable, was prepared for his next voyage.

odd work,
is it?
He had
models
from
Tolstoy
to Des Passes

there
was
only
one
Mailer
he differed
in many ways
from Des Passes,
Laurie R. King, Hemingway
& Tolstoy

BMH

Appreciations

BMOT

First on line is Mailer himself, who asked me to write this biography. Beginning in the late 1970s, I worked with him on various projects, served as his archivist, and edited several books by and about him. In December 2006, after the death of his close friend and authorized biographer, Robert F. Lucid, Mailer asked me to take over. I had been working for several years on an edition of his letters (still in progress), while filling the role of biography understudy. Lucid had covered Mailer's life only to 1951, and our perspectives and styles differed considerably, so with Mailer's blessing I decided to make a fresh start. In his final years we completed over twenty interviews focused largely on his personal life and beliefs. My wife and I had purchased a condo in Provincetown in 1997, and during the last 30 months of Mailer's life I stopped by almost every day and when he was in the mood drew him out in conversation. Even as his health declined, he insisted on detailing people and events from every period of his life, for example, devoting an interview on each of his six wives. These interviews and my notes on our conversations ("Mailer Log") are one of my most important sources, surpassed only by his massive correspondence, about 45,000 letters over 68 years. While always his own best lawyer, Mailer never hinted at how he wished to be portrayed, nor did he ask my intentions. He answered all my questions candidly and with much good humor, enjoining me to "put everything in." I had full access to his papers, library, and correspondence. Few biographers have had a more cooperative subject.

BMTX

Mailer's last wife, the late Norris Church Mailer, his sister Barbara Wasserman, and the rest of the family were invariably helpful, patient, and bighearted. Not only did all of them stand for interviews and answer follow-up questions, they provided documents, read portions of the manuscript and made corrections and suggestions. Barbara read all my chapters as I wrote them,

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edited them with care and irreplaceable knowledge, and helped me understand her brother, the Mailer family, his circle of friends, and the spirit of his times. Her confidence and editorial acumen have been sustaining. Barbara and Norris (until her death in November 2010) also fed and housed me on my regular trips to New York. My deepest thanks go to them. I am also grateful to Mailer's nine children, his cousin Sam Radin, Barbara's son, Peter, and their spouses: Susan Mailer and Marco Colodro, Peter Alson and Alice O'Neill, Danielle Mailer and Peter McEachern, Elizabeth Ann (Betsy) Mailer and Frank Nastasi, Kate Mailer and Guy Lancaster, Michael Mailer and Sasha Lazard, Stephen Mailer and Elizabeth Rainer, Matthew Mailer and Salina Sais, Maggie Mailer and John Wendling, John Buffalo Mailer and his girlfriend Katrina Eugenia, and Sam Radin. Four of Mailer's ex-wives are living, and they answered my questions and/or provided copies of their correspondence with him. Thanks to Beatrice Silverman, Adele Morales, Beverly Bentley, and, especially, Carol Stevens, who spoke to me at length many times over several years.

From the time my wife Donna Pedro took a photograph of me reading my first letter from Norman Mailer in January 1972 to the present, she has shared my interest in his life and work, and supported me with steady counsel and advice. Like Barbara, she read every chapter upon completion, provided shrewd feedback on matters of style and substance, and ran the household single-handedly for four years. My sons and their spouses, Stephen M. and Lauren B. Lennon, Joseph A. Lennon and Marika Beneventi, and James C. Lennon, read and commented on portions of the manuscript, and helped in uncounted and unselfish ways. My siblings, Peter Lennon, Kathleen Arruda, and Maureen Macedo, were similarly supportive, and have listened to my ideas for decades. Peter read the entire manuscript, made many useful comments and corrections, and also passed on innumerable pertinent reviews, essays and contextual material.

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Thanks also to my uncle, Hugh Lennon, for sending me Mailer clippings for more than thirty years.

Four other people read the entire manuscript, all the while making hortative utterances that buoyed me up. Robert Heaman, my colleague at Wilkes University, read the chapters as they emerged and did an extremely thorough line edit. With me from the start has been my agent, John T. "Ike" Williams, who provided astute counsel and perceptive commentary on a regular basis. Robert Bender, my editor at Simon and Schuster, guided me over the three-plus years of composition, and helped bring the manuscript into its final form with his masterful ability to see every stitch in the tapestry, and the full tapestry as well. Fred Chase copy^hedited the manuscript and improved it considerably, ferreting out errors and tightening continuity. I am happy to acknowledge with a cheer the steady and careful assistance of the staff at Simon and Schuster, especially Johanna Li and Maureen Cole. I must also salute Nancy Potter, my mentor at the University of Rhode Island, who has been a steadfast and wise presence in my life for many years. She read portions of the manuscript and made a number of subtle suggestions. I owe a large debt to all these good friends and fine people

Several graduate students in the Wilkes University graduate Creative Writing Program did research on various aspects of Mailer's life. Matthew Hinton was my graduate assistant for two semesters and created a regularly consulted event timeline. The following individuals spent a semester doing excellent research on aspects of Mailer's life and thought: Amber Barron, the late Allen Boone Barton, Rachael Goetzke, Maureen O'Neill Hooker, Bill Lowenburg, Nancy Slowikowski, and Michael Suppa. I am indebted to them for their able assistance.

I was aided in conducting interviews by four people: my brother Peter, who interviewed Eileen Fredrickson and Richard G. Stern; John Buffalo Mailer, who interviewed Edwin Fancher and Anne Barry; Michael Chaiken, who spoke with James Toback; and Erin Cressida Wilson, who interviewed her mother, Lois Mayfield Wilson. Lawrence Schiller provided copies of interviews with him conducted by Lawrence Grobel, and also several that Grobel did with Mailer. Beginning in 2007, I interviewed over 80 people (see accompanying list), a number of them several times. The interviews were transcribed by my wife, with the exception of a few early ones done by Julia Overlin. My warm thanks to these individuals.

Several others require special thanks. The late Robert F. Lucid, my friend and mentor and the dean of Mailer scholarship, was my first guide to Mailer's life and work, and discussed them with me for 30 years. Instrumental in creating Mailer's archive, he instructed me on its contents and importance. My debt to him is tremendous. Six colleagues, Robert Begiebing, Philip Bufithis, Morris Dickstein, Barry H. Leeds, Phillip Sipiora, and John Whalen-Bridge, have written and or edited important studies of Mailer's work, and have engaged and enlightened me on Mailer's place in the American canon. Mashey Bernstein helped me get a richer sense of Mailer's deep Jewish roots; Stephen Borkowski, chair of the Provincetown Art Commission, has cheerfully helped on numerous research and logistical matters, and been a knowledgeable and reliable consultant; Fred and Nancy Ambrose, and Christopher Busa, editor of *Provincetown Arts* magazine, carefully delineated Mailer's Provincetown history; Sal Cetrano, Ron Fried, Michael Mailer, and Jeffrey Michelson provided vivid accounts of Mailer's boxing exploits; Michael Chaiken was my guide to the American film scene in the 1960s; Ivan Fisher, William Majeski, Barbara Probst Solomon, and Naomi Zack helped me re-create the Jack Abbott affair; Mark Olshaker, president of the Mailer Society, has been inordinately generous with his time and

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knowledge; and Richard Stratton illuminated Mailer's temperament with candor and intelligence. I owe much to Eileen Fredrickson and the late Lois Mayfield Wilson, who magnanimously contributed their candid and detailed memories of their long, intimate relationships with Mailer. Finally, Lawrence Schiller, Mailer's most important collaborator, has been unstinting. He kindly opened his archives, shared his memories of his friend and their several joint projects, and provided thoughtful feedback on my manuscript. I would also like to thank my colleagues at Wilkes University for their interest and warm encouragement, especially those who commented on parts of my manuscript: John Bowers, Philip Brady, Jason Carney, Bonnie Culver, Jaclyn Fowler, Kaylie Jones, Nancy McKinley, and Robert Mooney.

Dean John C. Stachacz and the staff of the E. S. Farley Library at Wilkes University have my gratitude for assistance over many years, with special thanks going to Brian R. Sacolic, who cut through many a bibliographic knot for me. I am grateful for the fellowship awarded by the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas[!]-Austin where Mailer's papers are housed, and am happy to acknowledge the creative and tireless help of Director Thomas F. Staley and his staff, including Patrice F. Fox, Robert Fulton, Molly Hardy, Jennifer Hecker, Cathy Henderson, Kathryn Hill, Steve C. Mielke, Richard W. Oram, Gabriela Redwine, Molly Schwartzburg, Joan Sibley, Apryl Sullivan, and Richard Workman. Thanks also to my friends and colleagues in the Norman Mailer Society and the Norman Mailer Center, whose good fellowship and enthusiasm have been of huge value to my work.

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I quote from Mailer's letters approximately 700 times; his correspondence and interviews with him, his family, friends, and associates are my key sources, along with his writings. I thank the Mailer Estate for allowing me to quote from his published and unpublished works. I also

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benefited greatly from the work of the four Mailer biographers who preceded me. Thanks especially to Hilary Mills, the first one of us into the quarry, and Mary Dearborn, Peter Manso, and Carl Rollyson. Their books and my other sources are noted in my bibliography and source notes. I should add that *The Mailer Review*, a joint publication of The Mailer Society and the University of South Florida, has been an indispensable resource. I am indebted to all of these sources and individuals for insight and information; errors and oversights are my sole responsibility. Thanks to all, remembered or, alas, forgotten, who helped me research and write this biography.

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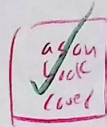
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↓ An Uncommon Conversation



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follows