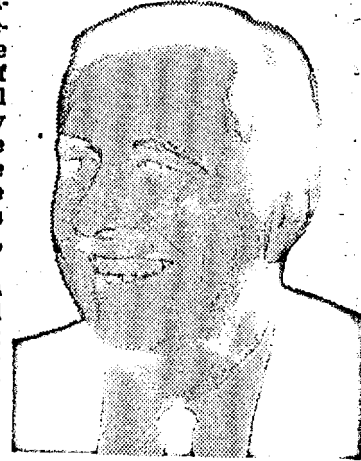JAN 6 1968

The Week in BOOKS By MARTHA MacGREGOR

Fletcher Knebel's new novel ("Vanished") is placed vaguely in the future. Peking is now a UN member, and the President of the U. S. is a popular, good-tempered fellow named Paul Roudebush. "Like all the novels I've done," he says, "it's a novel of suspense with a major political theme, and I don't think any reader of this one will mistake the fact that I don't like the CIA." In fact, he dislikes the CIA so much that he disbands that organization in his book, part of the happy ending.

When he began working on "Vanished" he realized he would have to get into the CIA to check his settings. "So I called their PR man and somewhat to my surprise they invited me to lunch. The thing that struck me most was all the gaily colored doors, yellow, red, orange, blue, pink, green. It looks like a nursery, kind of gay and frolicsome. You tend to forget they are involved in all those black arts."

FLETCHER KNEBEL

Knebel says he has a horror of using a specific place in his novels and not describing it accurately. He lives in Princeton, but has a part time researcher in Washington: "I'll write her a note: 'My recollection is that the Ring Building is at 18th and M Sts., and right in front of it is a little triangular park and the statue is who?' It's Longfellow! In a story where you're going to put tremendous pressure on the reader's credibility it's up to the writer to go to really extraordinary lengths to have the people, places and things as simple and authentic as possible. That's the dividing line between this type of book and science fiction. The author of science fiction asks you to take tremendous leaps, which most people won't do."

Knebel placed his novel in the future "because if you use the President of the United States and put it in the past, every reader will try to turn it into a keyhole novel, which this isn't."

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