

Book Review

Reasonable And Necessary

by Priscilla Friedersdorf

The first novel by author John D. Mills demonstrates exceptional talent. He has crafted a book that is both interesting and well written. Mills draws on his own background as a lawyer who specializes in criminal defense and personal injury cases to inform and entertain us with his mystery novel, *Reasonable and Necessary*. Mills, in his account of the legal morass triggered by the death of a patient after a young physician fails to find a tumor, illuminates the confusing recent changes to medical care.

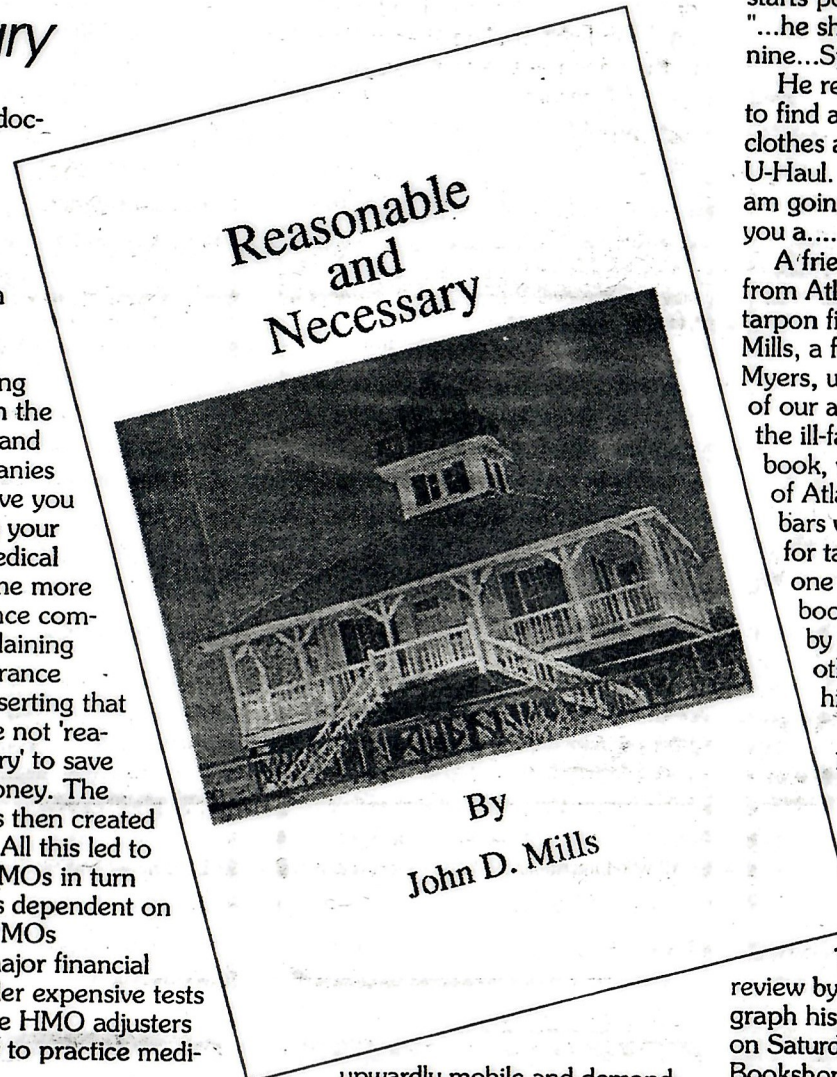
In a clear, straightforward and amusing style of prose Mills uses his main character, Dr. Chadwick "Chad" Elsworth, to demonstrate the pitfalls of HMOs and life in the fast lane. Chad is castigated by his wife for buying his mistress a red Porsche, "Who the hell is Ginger Smith?" she fumes and yells in response to his lame excuse, "You're no humanitarian unless she has big b...s and a nice a..!" Almost simultaneously the doorbell rings and Chad is served by the sheriff's deputy with a medical malpractice suit for 15 million dollars.

Chad hyperventilates as he remembers he used the premium on his malpractice insurance as a downpayment on Ginger's Porsche. The lawyer in the case, Karen Senard, has a reputation

for collecting from doctors in her malpractice suits. "Chad knew he needed a good lawyer...Fast Eddie was exactly the man for the job."

Mills outlines the complex hand-holding relationship between the HMOs, the doctors and the insurance companies in a way that will have you cheerfully munching your 'apple a day'. As medical treatment has become more expensive "...insurance companies started complaining about the cost...insurance adjusters...started asserting that new treatments were not 'reasonable and necessary' to save [their] companies money. The insurance companies then created a health care crisis." All this led to the HMOs. These HMOs in turn gave doctors a bonus dependent on how profitable the HMOs were..."This was a major financial incentive...not to order expensive tests for their patients...the HMO adjusters were telling him how to practice medicine."

Chad's life has been on a downhill glide since his marriage to the socially



upwardly mobile and demanding Georgia belle, Sarah and the birth of their twins. Low in energy, Chad

starts popping some little blue pills, "...he shot a 32 on the back nine...Speed. It works."

He returns home to his Tudor house to find a note from Sarah, "All of your clothes and other s... is packed in the U-Haul. The keys are on the seat...I am going to take you for everything, you a.....!"

A friend advises him to "get away from Atlanta" and the two decide on a tarpon fishing trip to Boca Grande. Mills, a fifth generation native of Fort Myers, uses his exceptional knowledge of our area and local lore to describe the ill-fated trip. This section of the book, while Chad flees the pressures of Atlanta and when he relaxes in bars with local characters and fishes for tarpon in Boca Grande Pass, is one of the many delights of this book. But Chad is being pursued by nefarious men with an agenda other than the silver tarpon. A hired killer is on his trail.

You will enjoy every exciting page of this mystery. The writing is clear and concise; Mills moves the plot along swiftly with a refreshingly wry humor. Discover this new and talented author for yourself.

This book was furnished for review by the author. Mills will autograph his book between 1 and 3 p.m. on Saturday, April 15, at MacIntosh Bookshop, 2365 Periwinkle Way.