

## BIBLIO-FILE

# Max Evans sells movie rights to cowboy novel

By **Ollie Reed Jr.**

TRIBUNE REPORTER

For weeks now, Albuquerque author **Max Evans** had been chafing at the bit to tell me something but said he couldn't do it until all the T's were crossed and I's dotted.

Things apparently are in order now. Max called to say that Working Title Films of London has acquired the movie rights to his novel **"The Hi Lo Country"** for director **Martin Scorsese** ("Raging Bull," "GoodFellas").

The way Max tells it, actor L.Q. Jones turned Scorsese on to the novel while the two were working on the recently released "Casino."

"The Hi Lo Country," first published in 1961, is based on a true story of the fatal shooting of Max's best friend by the friend's brother. It's about the cowboy life in New Mexico a few decades back.

The late director **Sam Peckinpah** ("The Wild Bunch," "Ride the High Country"), a friend of Max's, tried for more than 20 years to make a movie out of the novel. But Max said Peckinpah was so ornery that every time he got close to getting the novel into production, he'd get into a fight with some studio big wigs and end up trashing the deal.

Max said Peckinpah never had a

good script for the movie anyway.

"In one script," he said, "Sam moved the story all the way from northeastern New Mexico down to the border and brought the Federals into it. I just had to laugh. Sam had to have Mexicans in it. Sam had a Mexican soul. He thought he was Mexican."

Max said he does not want to write the script because he is too close to the story.

"I just want to be an adviser," he said. "If I'm not, they won't get the humor right. And if they don't get that right, it'll just fall flat. The rhythm of humor in a drama is key."

Max, whose novel **"The Rounders"** was made into a successful movie in 1965 and who played a bit part in the 1970 movie "The Ballad of Cable Hogue," is savvy enough about Hollywood to realize that selling the movie rights to a work does not mean it will even be made into a film.

"I just feel highly honored that two of the world's great directors have loved my book, no matter what else happens," he said.

Movie deal or no movie deal, the next year looks to be a busy one for Max. Here's what up:

■ **"Broken Bones and Broken Hearts,"** a book containing two of his novels, has just been published in paperback by Jove at \$5.50.

■ The Fall/Winter 1995 issue of "South Dakota Review" contains Max's tribute to his friend John R. Milton, the late editor of the Review.

■ **"The Rounders"** is one of four novels to be published in the spring

by Houghton Mifflin in "elite hardback editions" under the banner title "World's Greatest Western Novels." The other novels are by **Ernest Haycox, Will Henry and Elmer Kelton.**

■ Also due out in the spring from Dove Audio are audio versions of Max's trilogy, **"Rounders 3** and his collection of seven short novels, **"Spinning Sun, Grinning Moon."**

■ Max's essay **"Song of the West,"** first published in Denver's Rocky Mountain News, will be the end piece for **"The Living West,"** a coffee-table book due out from Random House-Wings this spring.

■ Max's latest non-fiction work, **"This Chosen Place,"** the story of the 4UR guest ranch in Wagon Wheel Gap, Colo., is scheduled for publication in October by University of Colorado Press.



Evans

Max, who is 71, is amazed at his own output at this stage in his writing career.

"I write more damn words than any old fart I know," he said.

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Counselor and therapist **Katie Fashing** teams up with editors of and contributors to **"Christmas Blues: Behind the Holiday Mask"** (Amador Publishers, \$15) for an interactive workshop about holiday mania, 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday at the Serenity Shop, 3401 San Mateo Blvd. N.E.

Sixty-three writers contributed short stories, poetry and essays to the anthology, which deals with the down side of the holiday season. The workshop, which is free, is designed to help people deal with the season's dark side.

By the way, the book does sell for \$15. Based on outdated press material, the price was listed as something else in a Tribune features package published last week.

And — uh — in that same package Fashing's name was misspelled. That was due to this writer's outdated eyesight.

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**Signings, readings, lectures and so forth this week:**

**Bookstar, 2201 Louisiana Blvd. N.E.:** Author Jake Page and photographer Susanne Page are guests at a reception and book-signing celebrating

the publication of their book "Navajo," 7 p.m. Friday.

Dr. George Vergara signs his book "Hugh Robinson: Pioneer Aviator," 2 to 3 p.m. Saturday.

**Bookworks, 4022 Rio Grande Blvd. N.W. (In Dietz Farm Plaza):** Albuquerque author Rudolfo Anaya and illustrator Edward Gonzales autograph copies of "The Farolitos of Christmas," 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday.

Anaya also will sign his other works, including "Bless Me, Ultima" and "Zia Summer."

**Full Circle Books, 2205 Silver Ave. S.E.:** Workshop based on Lee Mun Wah's film "The Color of Fear" deals with healing the wounds of racism in the feminist community, 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday, \$10 donation welcome but no one turned away for lack of funds.

**Salt of the Earth Books, 3025 Central Ave. N.E.:** Hanukkah celebration with Malka Drucker — author of "The Family Treasury of Jewish Holidays," "Jacob's Rescue: A Holocaust Story," "Grandma's Latkes," "Jewish Holiday ABC" and "Frida Kahlo" — 7:30 p.m. Saturday.

**Murder Unlimited, 2510 San Mateo Place N.E.:** James Doss, who splits his time between Los Alamos and Taos, signs copies of "The Shaman Laughs," his second mystery

set on the Ute Reservation in southern Colorado, 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday. Some first editions of Doss' first Ute mystery, "The Shaman Signs," are available.

**Page One, 11018 Montgomery Blvd. N.E.:** Rudolfo Anaya reads from and signs copies of his book "The Farolitos of Christmas," 7 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Free Internet seminar, 10 a.m. to noon Saturday.

Christmas designer Richard Clawson talks about and signs copies of his book "Christmas Celebration: Santa Fe Traditions, Foods and Crafts," 2 to 3:30 p.m. Saturday.

Cindy Brooks, owner of Cindy's Santa Fe Bite-Size Bakery in Santa Fe, talks about and signs her book "Cindy's Itty Bitty Baking Book," from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Saturday.

Artist Diana Bryer discusses and signs copies of "The Girl Who Loved Coyotes: Stories of the Southwest," 2 to 3:30 p.m. Sunday. Nancy Wood wrote the book. Bryer illustrated it.

Jake and Susanne Page sign copies of "Navajo," 2 to 3:30 p.m. Sunday.

**"Biblio-File" is a weekly column of information on book signings, literary events and authors. Send information to Ollie Reed Jr., The Albuquerque Tribune, 7777 Jefferson N.E., Albuquerque, N.M. 87109.**