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press release

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10 P.M. ON THURSDAY 25 NOVEMBER 1971

We would be grateful if all journalists would make this a verbal embargo until the announcement is made officially at the Cafe Royal on Thursday, when Professor Frank Kermode will present the prize, so that the surprise element will be as great as possible.

BOOKER PRIZE 1971

The winner of the third £5,000 Booker Prize for fiction is V.S. Naipaul for his novel In a Free State (Andre Deutsch). This announcement was made by Professor Frank Kermode on the evening of 25 November at the Cafe Royal at a dinner to celebrate the event, when he presented the £5,000 cheque and Booker Prize trophy to Mr. Naipaul.

42 books were considered by the judges, John Gross (Chairman), Lady Antonia Fraser, Saul Bellow, John Fowles and Philip Toynbee, who released a short-list of six contenders a month ago:
The Big Chapel by Thomas Kilroy (Faber & Faber)
Briefing for a Descent into Hell by Doris Lessing (Cape)
In a Free State by V.S. Naipaul (Andre Deutsch)
St. Urbain's Horseman by Mordecai Richler (Weidenfeld & Nicolson)
Goshawk Squadron by Derek Robinson (Heinemann)
Mrs. Palfrey at the Claremont by Elizabeth Taylor (Chatto & Windus)

John Gross, on behalf of the judges, says:

"The leading contenders this year were impressive for range as well as quality. Apart from the winner, there were three novels by established writers, Doris Lessing, Elizabeth Taylor and Mordecai Richler, all of them confirming their authors' previously high reputations and breaking new ground at the same time. And neither of the two first novelists on the shortlist, Thomas Kilroy and Derek Robinson, were put to shame in this company; both of them indeed found strong advocates on the judges panel.

"In the end, however, V.S. Naipaul's In a Free State emerged as the clear winner. It is, the judges feel, a work of great distinction, beautifully written, deeply felt, addressing itself with an often disturbing irony to the problems of uprooting and dislocation in the post-colonial world - a book which reverberates long after one has finished reading it, and in every way worthy 'of the prize.'"

The Booker Prize is sponsored jointly by the Publishers Association and Booker McConnell Ltd.

Please see over for biographical details of V.S. Naipaul, and for further information and photographs please contact:

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