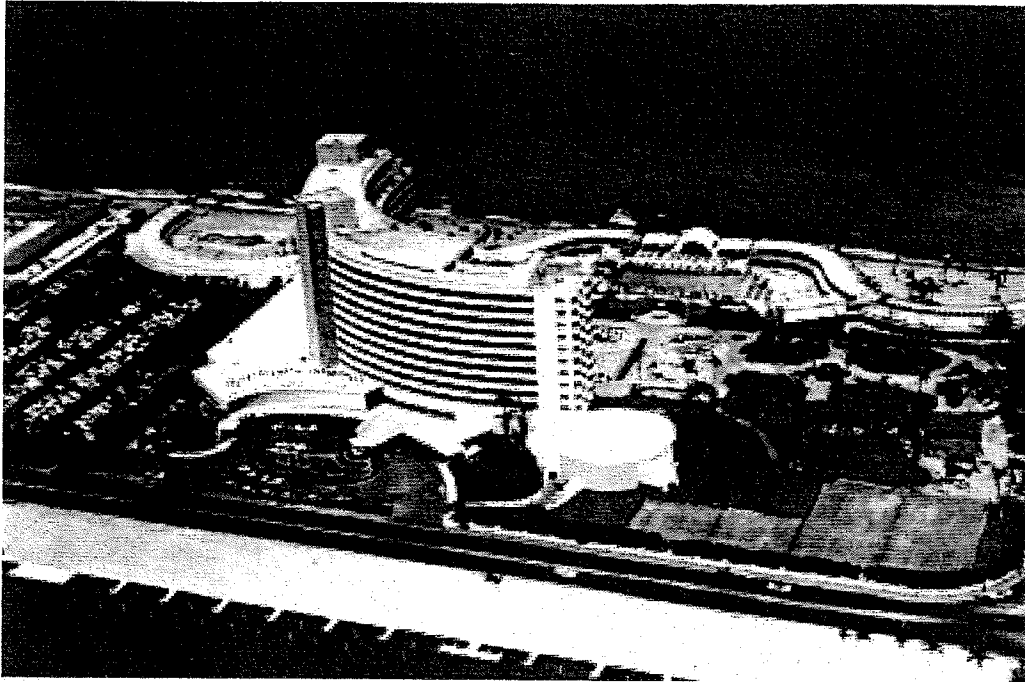


*Aerial View of Gardens  
Slide image courtesy of L. Wiggins*

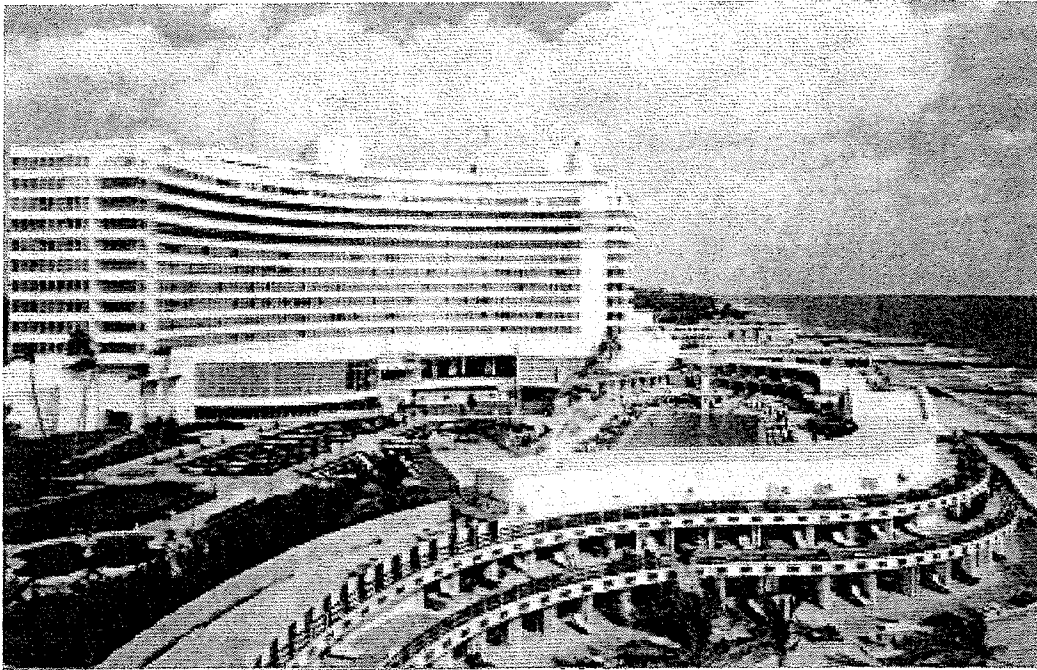


*Postcard: America's Largest and Finest Resort-Hotel  
Published by Curteichcolor (1955)  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*

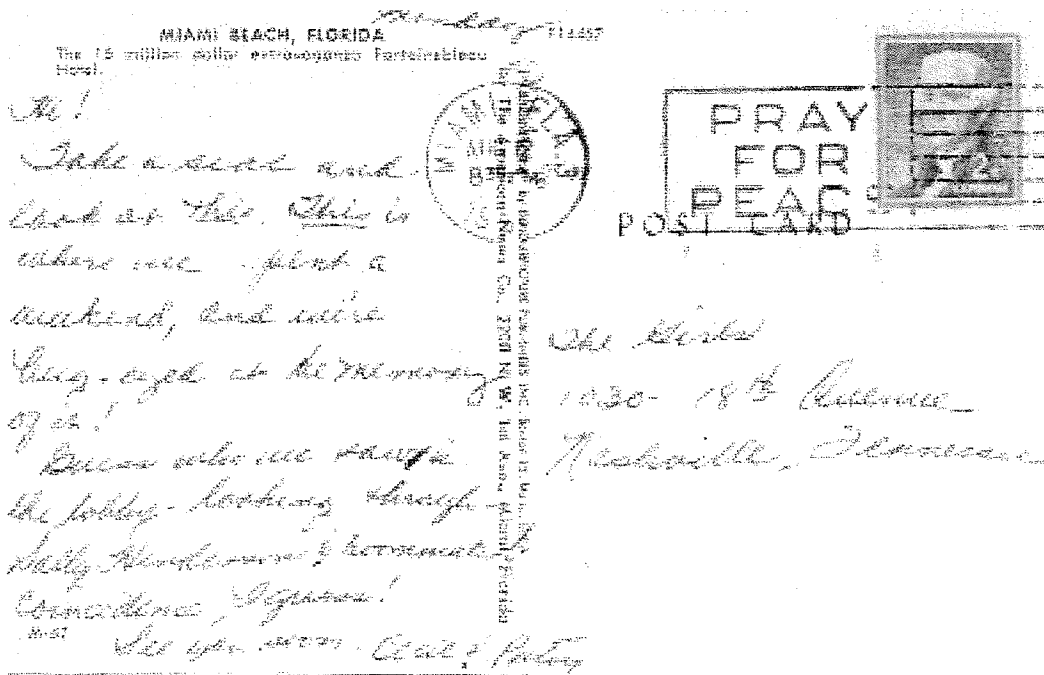


*Postcard: Air View of the Magnificent Fontainebleau  
Published by Palm Color Card Co., Inc.  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*

Fontainebleau Hotel  
Miami Beach

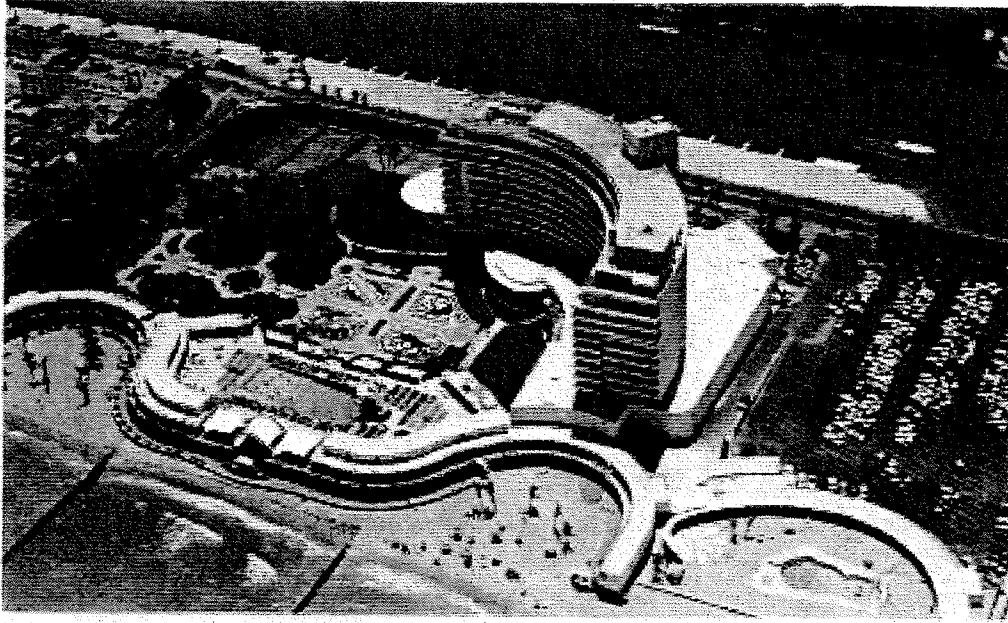


Postcard: Fontainebleau Hotel (postmarked 1956)  
Published by Colourpicture Publishers, INC  
Image Courtesy of ATS



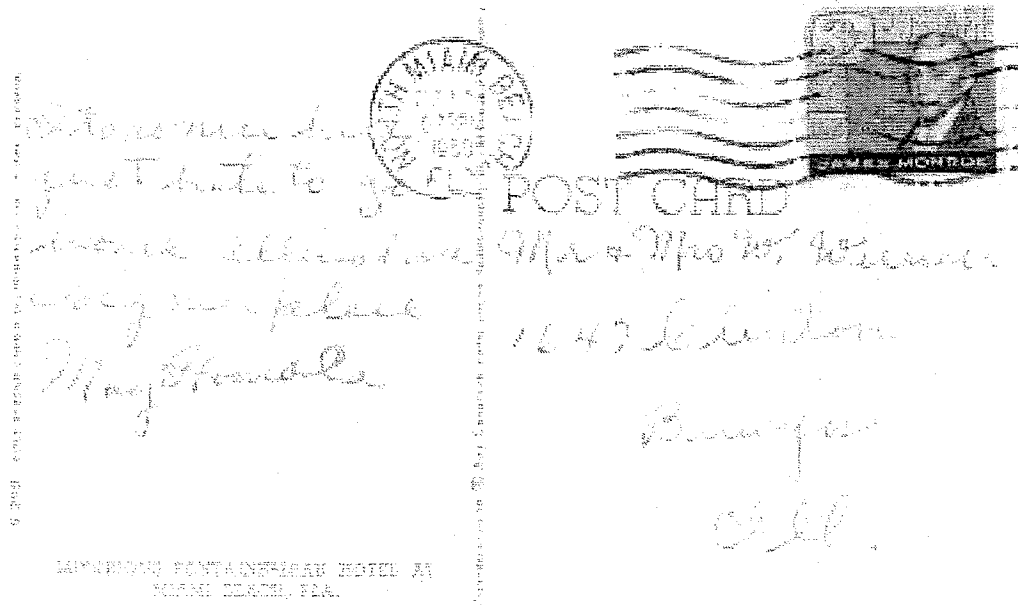
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**Fontainebleau Hotel**  
Miami Beach



*Fontainebleau Hotel, Miami Beach, Fla.*

*Postcard: Luxurious Fontainebleau Hotel (postmarked 1960)  
Published by Curteichcolor  
Image Courtesy of ATS*

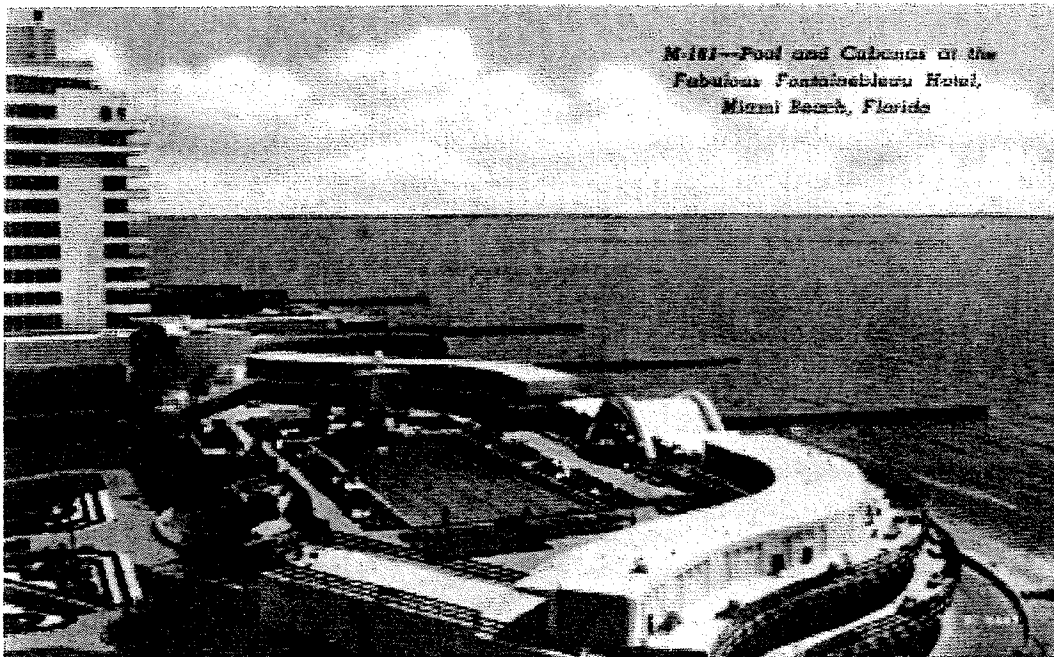


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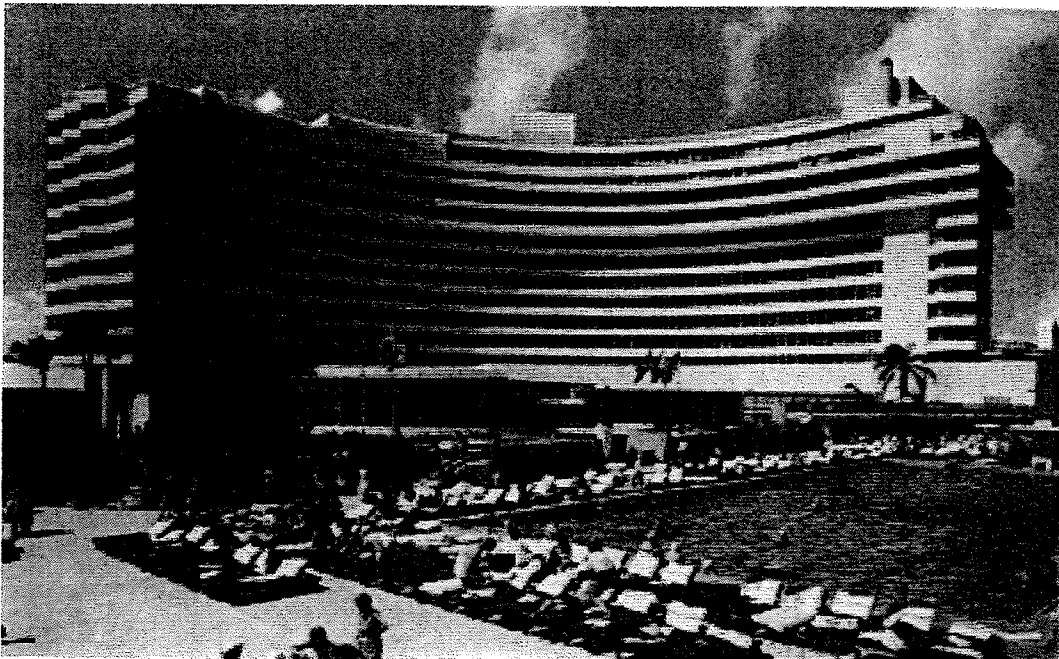
*Postcard: Magnificent Fontainebleau Hotel  
Published by Gulf Stream Card & Distributing Co. (1955)  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



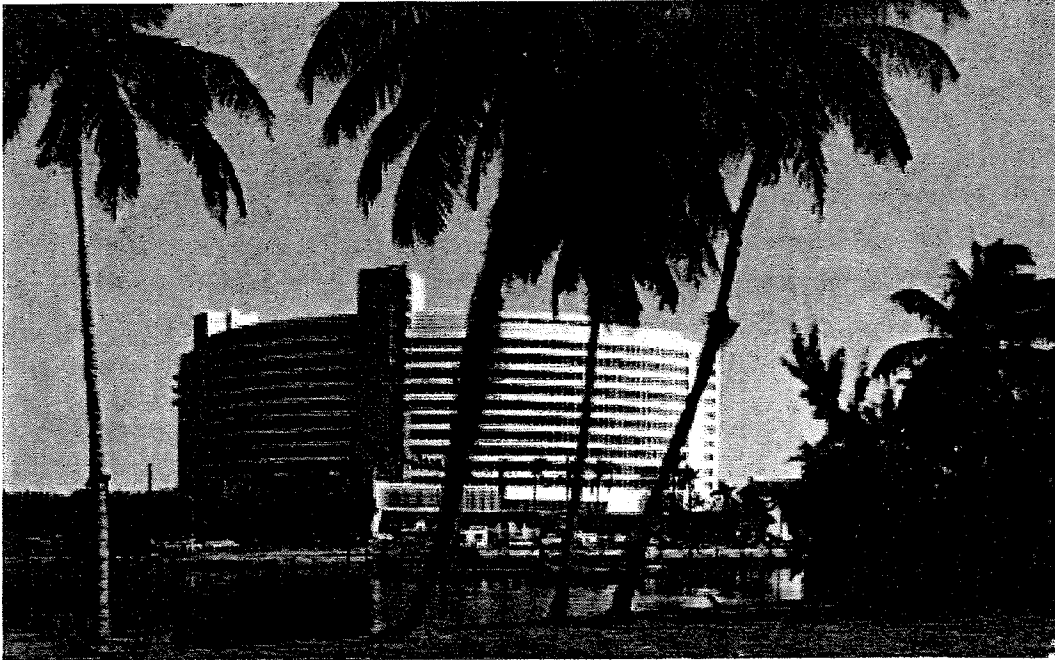
*Postcard: Pool and Cabanas at the Fabulous Fontainebleau Hotel  
Published by Genuine Curteichcolor-Chicago  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



*Postcard: Pool and Cabanas of the Fabulous Fontainebleau Hotel  
Published by Natural Color Publishers  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



*Postcard: The Largest Luxury Hotel in the World  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*

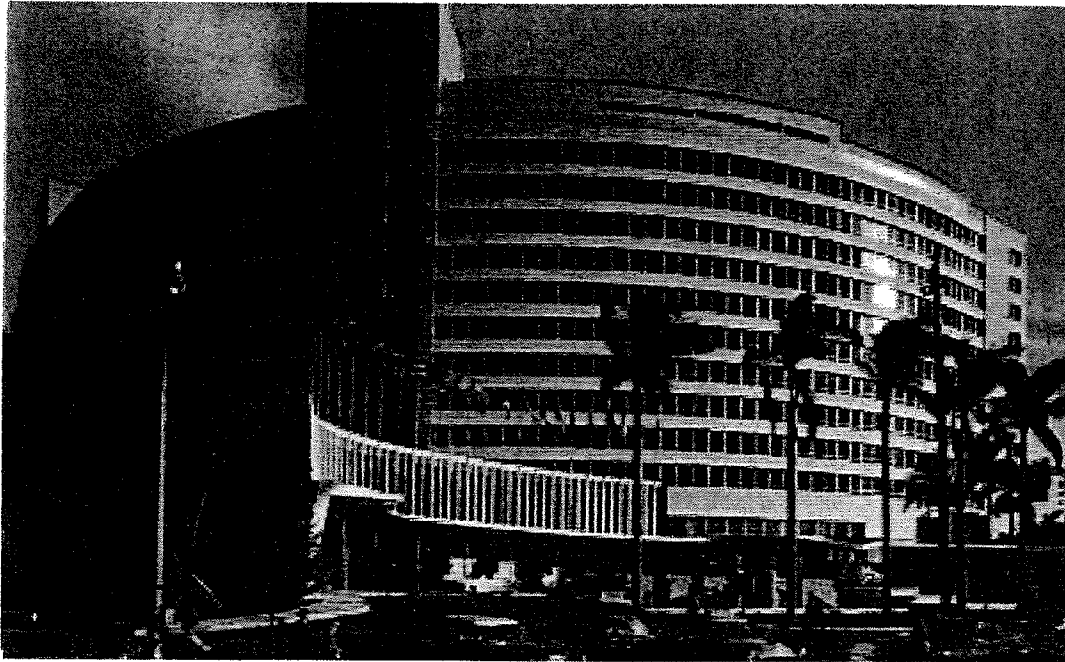


*Postcard: Fabulous Fontainebleau Hotel  
Published by Genuine Curteichcolor-Chicago  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*

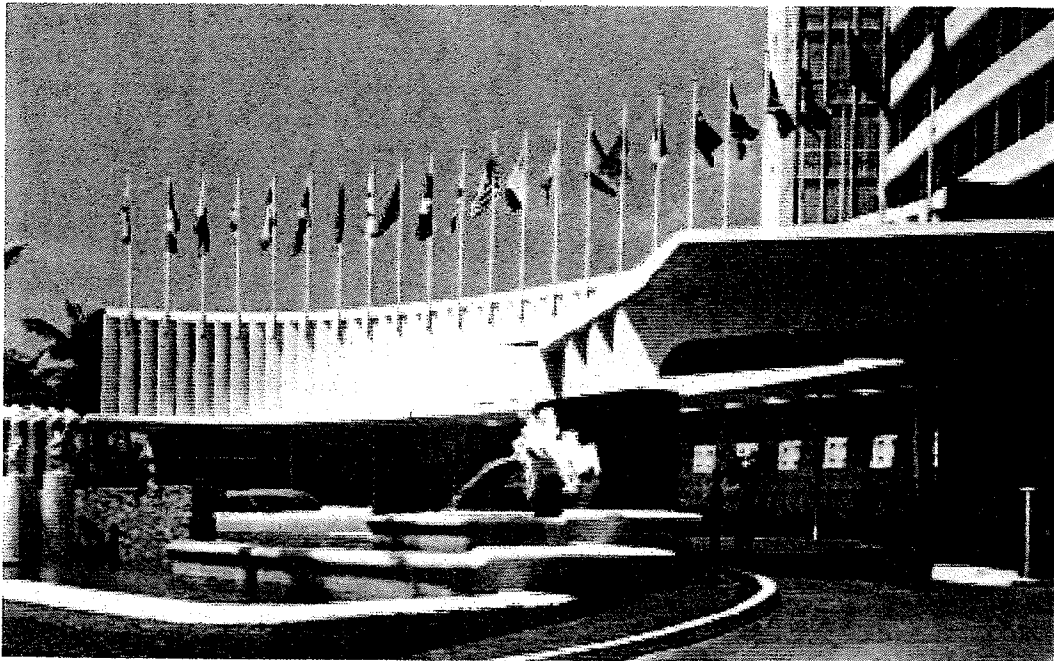


*Postcard: The Fabulous new Fontainebleau Hotel  
Published by Florida Natural Color, Inc.  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*

**Fontainebleau Hotel**  
Miami Beach



*Postcard: Fontainebleau Postcard  
Published by Valence Color Studios  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



*Postcard: America's Largest and Finest Resort-Hotel  
Published by Curteichcolor  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*

Historic Report, August 31, 2005  
Allan T. Shulman Architect, P.A.

**Fontainebleau Hotel**  
Miami Beach



*Postcard: Fontainebleau Postcard  
Published by Tichnor Bros., Inc.  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*

### Expansion Northward: Fontainebleau vs. Eden Roc (1958-1961)

Novack's Fontainebleau was an original new landmark, but it was also the model for a new generation of luxury resort hotels. The repeatability of the model became apparent almost immediately, and directly next door, when "Lapidus was hired by Harry Mufson, Novack's ex-partner, to create a hotel of equal glamour, if somewhat smaller, immediately to the north. Mufson wanted glitz to out-glitz the Fontainebleau. ... and stylistic flourish was again part of the formula. According to Lapidus, the Italian Renaissance and Baroque were discussed, at which point Mufson said: "I don't care if it's Baroque or Brooklyn, just get me plenty of glamour and make sure it screams luxury."<sup>1</sup> Of course, Lapidus' acceptance of this commission ensured that Novack would never speak to him again.

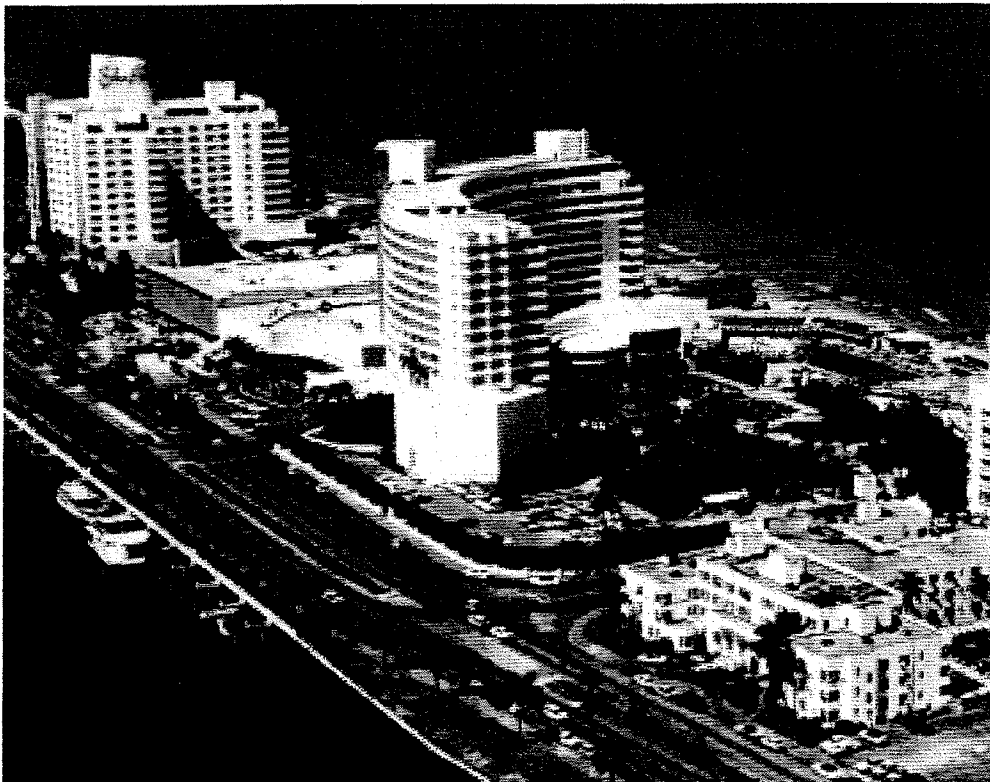
Ben Novack later found a way to exact a type of revenge. In 1959, he nearly doubled the hotel, adding a major new ballroom, parking garage, and most famously, the 335 room Fontainebleau Towers, on the North side of the existing structures. Facing Collins Avenue, an apparent loggia architecturally rendered in concrete vaults and recessed walls punched with circular 'cheese-hole' windows fronted the massive ballroom and connected the new Fontainebleau Towers to the original lobby. Designed by architect A. Herbert Mathes, it created a new landmark façade often mistaken for the work of Lapidus. More importantly, the new tower was the object and subject of a massive controversy, as it seemed clearly engineered to cast shade on bathers at the Eden Roc. It was, as Don Bedwell has noted, "The world's biggest spite fence."<sup>2</sup>

When plans for the tower addition were made public, the owners of the neighboring Eden Roc protested to city authorities that the looming fourteen stories would shield their pool deck from the afternoon sun, taking away the one of the resort's most valuable commodities. The city council, to prevent such 'obstructive' construction in the future, passed an ordinance for new buildings requiring a series of setbacks for each floor built over a specified height. Litigation in circuit and appeals courts resulted. For residents here, the legal fight that held up construction of the largest of the projects, the new wing for the Fontainebleau, was an engrossing one.<sup>3</sup> Finally the Florida Supreme Court ruled that the city of Miami Beach may not legislate sunshine and shadow on oceanfront property.<sup>4</sup>

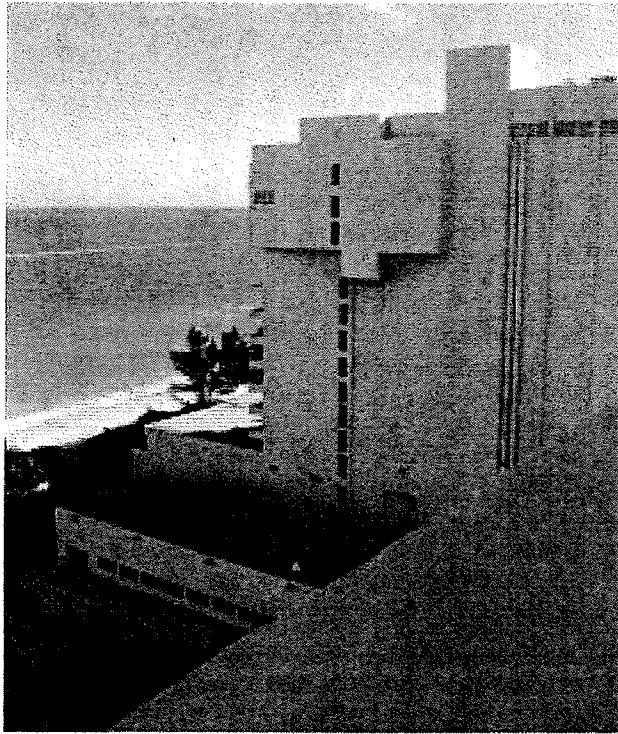




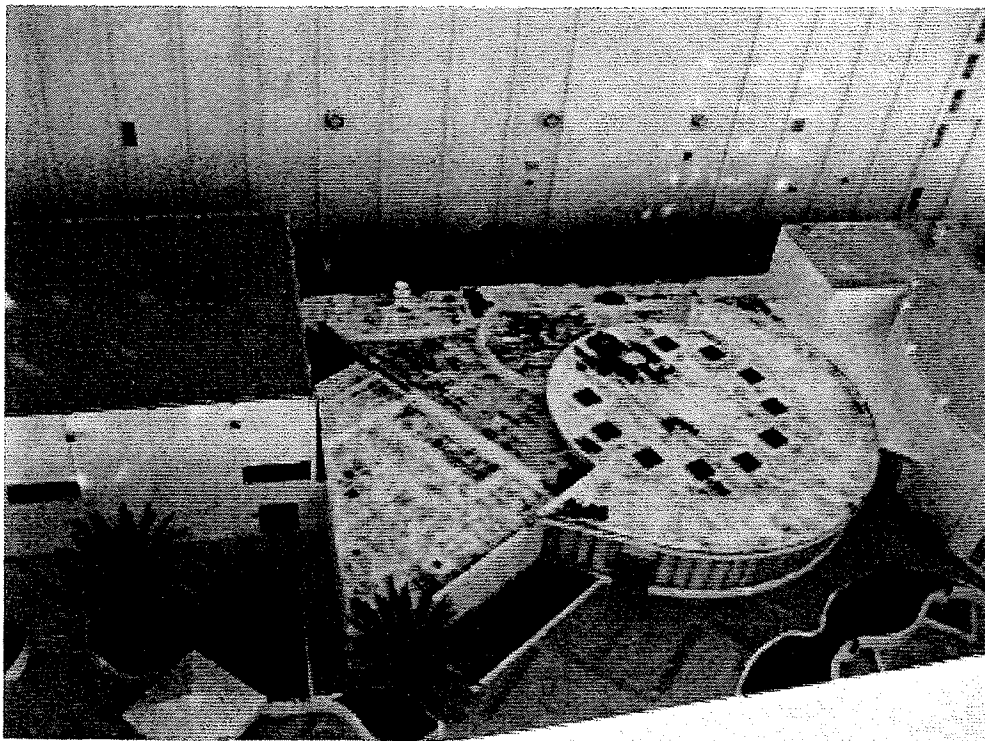
*The Eden Roc & the Fontainebleau (pre-1959)  
Published by The American News Co.  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



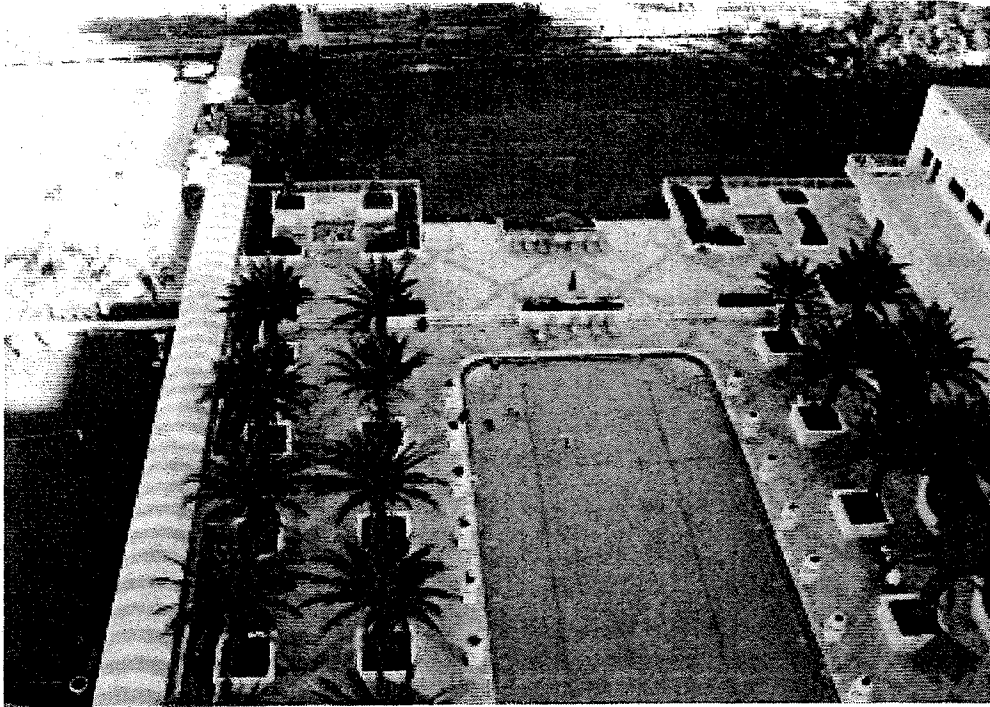
*Aerial Photograph looking Northeast, showing La Ronde and ballroom additions,  
before North Tower, and Eden Roc Beyond (1958)  
Image Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection*



*View of Fontainebleau North Wall  
ATS 2005*



*Aerial View of Eden Roc Topiary Room showing shadow cast by Spite Wall  
ATS 2005*



*Aerial View of Eden Roc Southern Cabanas and Pool*  
ATS 2005



*Aerial View of Oceanfront Pool and Cabanas*  
ATS 2005

To make way for the new ballroom and tower addition, approximately 16 cabanas on north side of property were demolished in July 1958. The massive additions, were subsequently permitted on July 31, 1958. The ballroom and convention facilities comprised 73,500 square feet (210' front, 416' depth, 47' height) in one and two stories, depending upon the section of the plan. It provided one floor and a mezzanine of public space and two parking levels for 273 cars. The baroque interiors of the Ballroom and Grand Gallery were reportedly designed by Gerald Ward, current president of the NSID Florida chapter.<sup>5</sup> The tower atop these facilities was permitted as a 14 story CBS building with 339 hotel rooms and 18 apartments. Its footprint alone was 20,500 square feet and it required a variance (granted on July 23, 1959) to extend three building wall projections six feet into the north 20 foot side yard setback along the north wall. Activities at the expanded hotel, given its new large function rooms, required expanded parking capacity. On May 9, 1960 the Zoning Board granted a variance for a three-level parking garage on the southwest portion of property to extend within five feet of both Collins Avenue and 44<sup>th</sup> Street. Other hotel amenities followed, including a bowling alley on first floor level of existing cabanas (October 1961) and an ice skating rink (March 1962). An addition to the La Ronde Supper Club on the southwest corner of the circular theater was permitted around the same time, in October 1958, to provide added stage and backstage space for more ambitious performances. The cumulative effect of these additions was to ensure the Fontainebleau's virtual monopoly as the city's premier convention hotel while providing an ever increasing menu of amenities for its resort and business clientele.

### Expansion Southward

A decade later, Novack further expanded the Fontainebleau by purchasing the Sorrento Hotel, its neighbor to the south. As part of the Sorrento's subsequent facelift and integration into the Fontainebleau property, a variance was granted (May 12, 1969) for an addition to the northeast portion of the Sorrento, extending to the southeast portion of the Fontainebleau property, now under one ownership, to a setback of 90 feet from the harbor line. The condition attached was that construction had to commence within six months. The applicant additionally had to provide 208 parking spaces for the 138-unit increase. Presumably to make way for this expansion, the south section of cabanas was permitted to be demolished on August 27, 1968. Judging from historic photographs, a line of temporary cabanas was constructed on the beach, just southeast of the pool deck. On May 11, 1970, the Fontainebleau requested another variance, this time to construct a canopy for restaurant to be known as the "Gaslight Club."

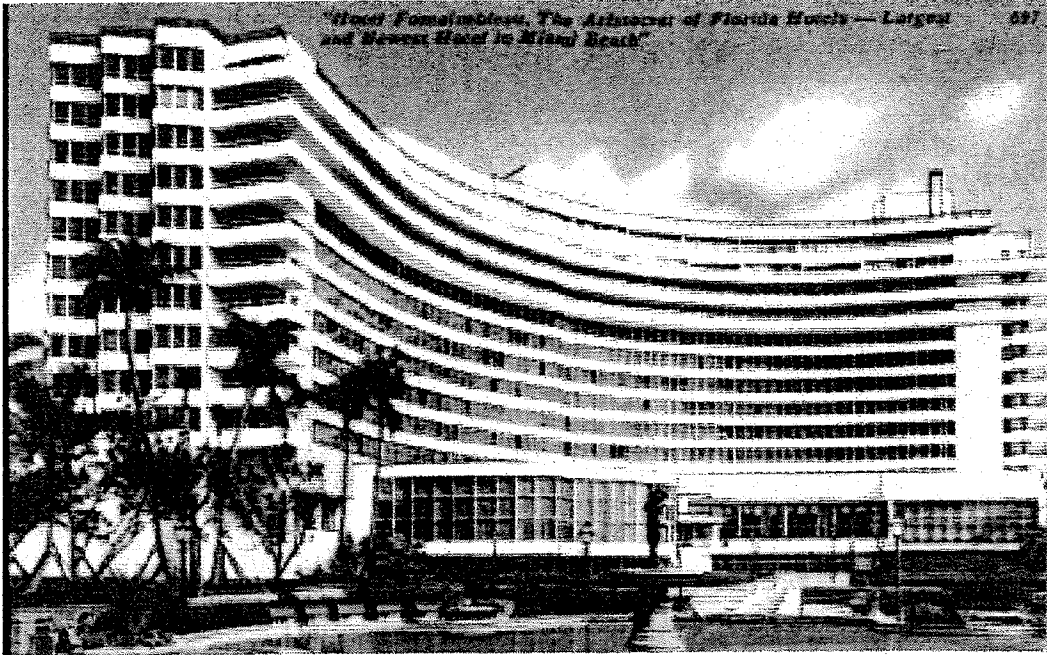
<sup>1</sup> Wolfe, Kevin, "Morris Lapidus," *Metropolis*, December 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Don Bedwell, "Novack: I Wish Hotel Were 'Somewhere Else'" *The Miami Herald*, June 13, 1975???

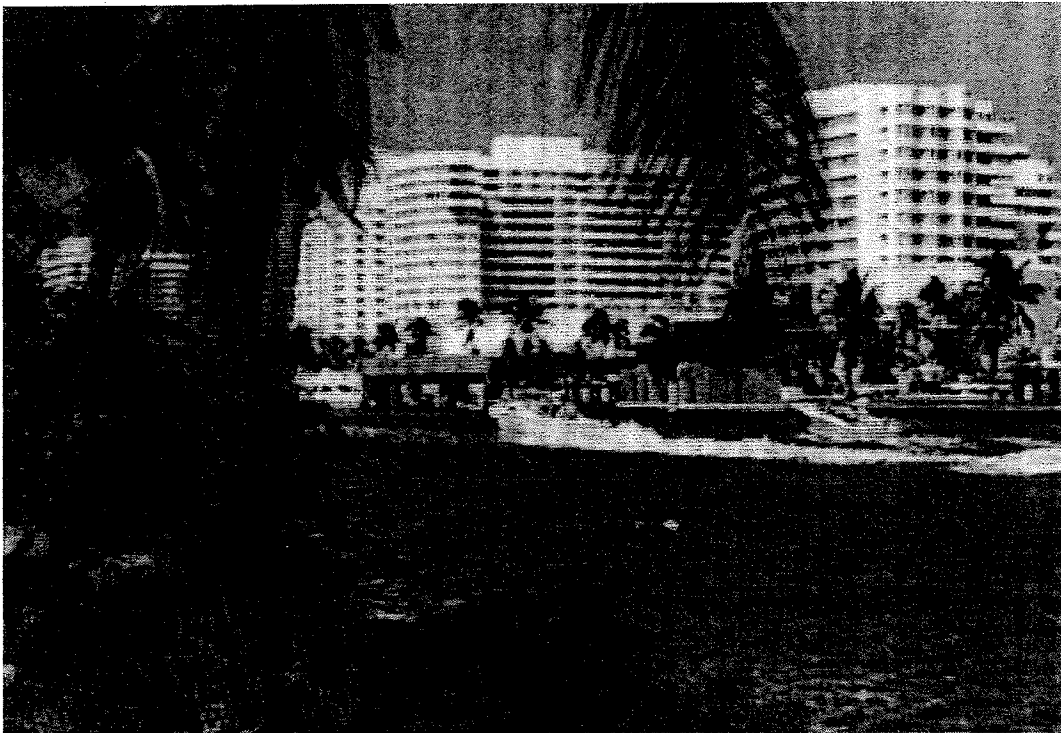
<sup>3</sup> "Return of a Boom," *New York Times*, June 7, 1959.

<sup>4</sup> "Legislating the Sunshine," *New York Times*, May 10, 1959.

<sup>5</sup> "For the Miami Cadillac Trade," *Interiors*, May 1961, v. 120, pp. 110-113.

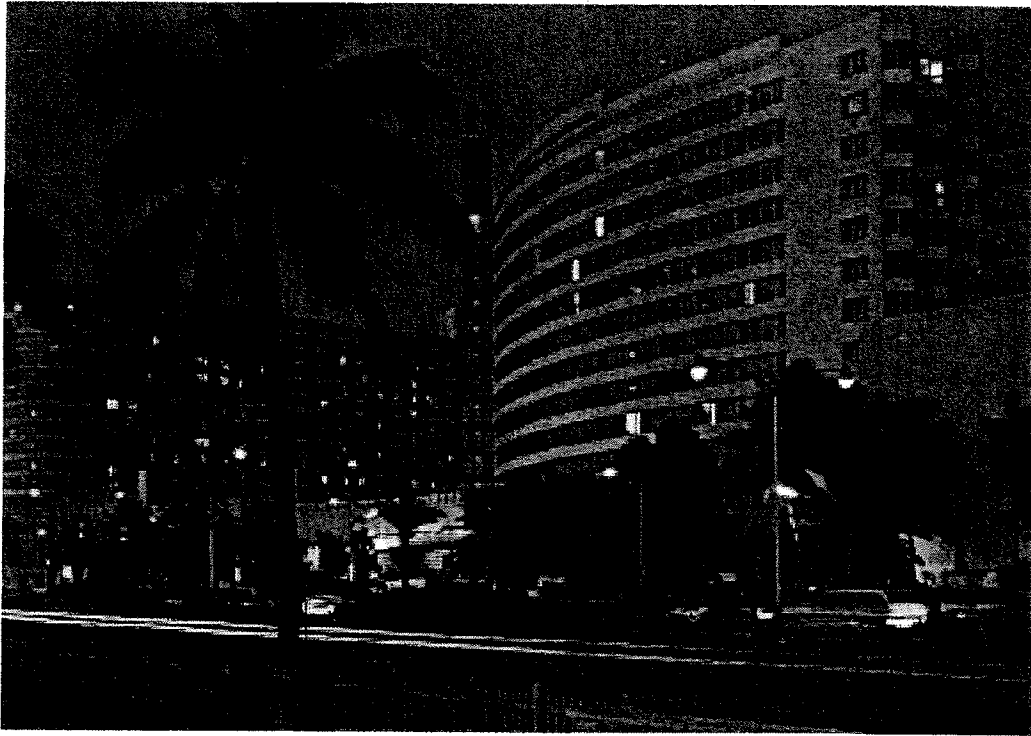


*Postcard: Fontainebleau Postcard  
Published by Tichnor Bros., Inc.  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



*Postcard: View from Indian Creek Waterway  
Published by Florida Natural Color Inc.  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*

Fontainebleau Hotel  
Miami Beach



*Postcard: Fabulous Hotels line Collins Avenue, Night View  
Published by Gulfstream Card Co., Inc.  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



*Postcard: Air View of the Magnificent Fontainebleau  
Published by Palm Color Card Co., Inc.  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



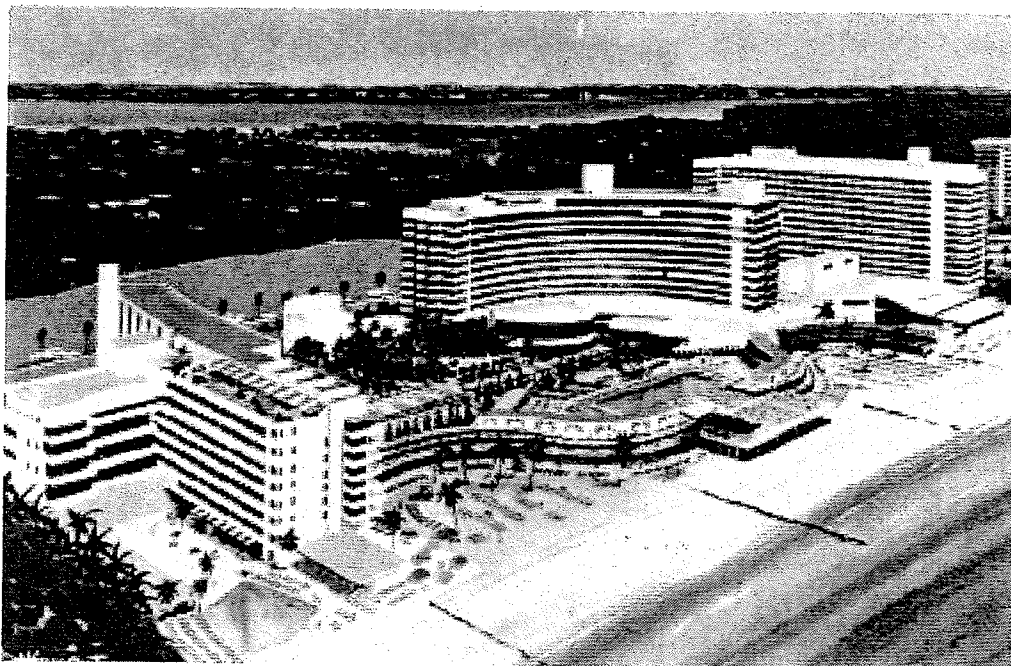


*Cabanas, Gardens, & Pool view from South  
Image Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection*

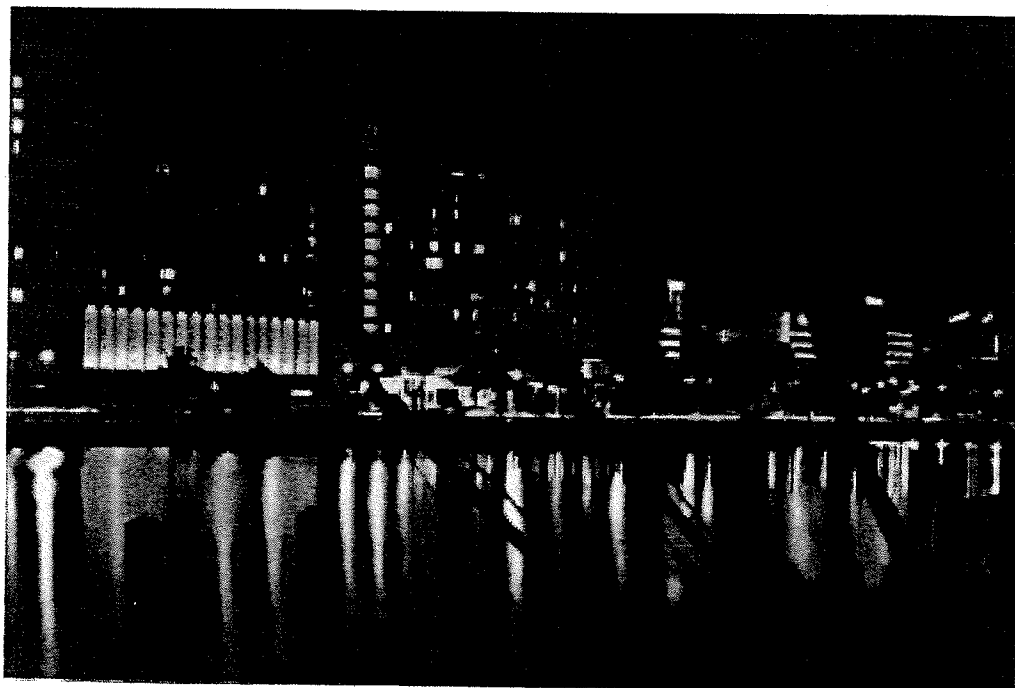


*Aerial Photograph looking Northwest (1968)  
Image Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection*

**Fontainebleau Hotel**  
Miami Beach



*Postcard: Aerial Perspective Rendering including North Tower & Ballroom Addition (1969), Published by Curteichcolor  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



*Postcard: Miami Beach Skyline at Night  
Published by Curteichcolor  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*

Historic Report, August 31, 2005  
**Allan T. Shulman Architect, P.A.**



*Collins Avenue looking North:  
View of North Tower & "Cheese Wall" with Eden Roc Beyond  
Image Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection*



*Collins Avenue looking South  
View of Chateau & "Cheese Wall"  
Image courtesy of Elliot Erwit, MagnumPhotos*



*Postcard: Millionaire Yacht at the Fontainebleau Dock (Postmarked 1972)  
Published by Dukane Press  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*

## The Fontainebleau as a Mid-Century Cultural Icon

From its opening day the Fontainebleau attracted a range of leisure-class tourists, from newly wealthy Americans to rich South Americans. It also attracted the attentions of the press, and celebrities. The hotel's register included the biggest names in show business, politics and popular culture, while performers like Frank Sinatra, Joey Bishop, Dean Martin, Red Skelton and Sammy Davis Jr. performed on the stage of the La Ronde Room.<sup>1</sup> Miss Universe was crowned at the Fontainebleau, and in 1972 the Republican and Democratic conventions were both held there. Along with the sparkle of gowned and jeweled guests often came rumors of questionable financial dealings and the involvement with organized crime.

Publicity, good and bad, preceded the completion of the hotel. During construction, a bomb went off and shattered a concrete pillar. Engineers rushed out at 3:00 am to prevent the collapse of the entire structure. Lapidus later recalled: "A year later, the hotel was open and we were sitting having dinner with a man – I won't tell you who or what he was – and I said your boys weren't very smart. You should have bombed a central pillar in the lobby. It would have collapsed the whole building. He said, Mr. Lapidus, our boys know our business very well. We didn't want to collapse the hotel. We just wanted to send a message."<sup>2</sup> One may only guess the nature of the message.

People wanted to be part of this exciting building, and the Fontainebleau was often rumored to be for sale, or sold. The first of these rumors surfaced in 1955, within a year of its completion, when it was reported that Conrad Hilton had offered \$18 million.<sup>3</sup> The Hilton would, eventually, manage the hotel, but only after the ousting of Ben Novack, who would operate the Fontainebleau as a private fiefdom. Novack operated the hotel while making his home for over 20 years in the Governor's Suite. It boasted five bedrooms, a billiard room, full kitchen, dining room, gold faucets and marble bathtubs.

Within the complex organization of the hotel's ownership, battles were sometimes raged over control. In November 1957, a palace coup erupted into the public eye when Novack was briefly deposed from the management of the hotel. The *New York Times* reported that the movement against Ben Novack was led by Arnold Kirkeby, wealthy hotel chain owner, who like Novack possessed 40 shares of the hotel (minority partners comprised the remaining 20 shares). While the rival stockholders were ousting Novack in a special meeting, the managing owner's attorneys were in Circuit Court filing a temporary injunction. Novack charged Kirkeby with 'fraud' in the suit, as Kirkeby apparently immediately sold his 40 shares back to the corporation for \$4,500,000.<sup>4</sup>

Over time, the frequency of certain guests returning to the fabled destination earned them permanent places at the hotel as well. Their rooms had acquired names, consecrated with brass plaques: the Frank Sinatra Suite, the Bee Gees suite and the Burt Reynolds suite.

Political organizations too knew that the Fontainebleau was the place to stage a drama and get attention to their issue. When the AFL/CIO (the hotel employees union) chose the busy winter season to renew its organizing campaign at oceanfront hotels, picketers took their place in front of the Fontainebleau hotel early in the morning, just a few days before Christmas when holiday vacationers were at their most active. Bert H. Ross, union vice president in charge of the Greater Miami organizing campaign, said the hotel “had ‘stalled’ on a union request to discuss recognition of the union as bargaining agent for hotel employees.” Novack, of course, denied the accusation.<sup>5</sup>

As Miami Beach’s premier emblem, the Fontainebleau attracted the attention of political radicals as well. On September 19, 1977, “A man with a heavy Spanish accent called The Associated Press at 1:50 A.M. identifying himself as a member of the Luis Boitel Commandos and said: ‘Listen carefully. We have planted bombs at several Miami Beach hotels. Unless our demands are met, we will take further action. Freedom for all Cuban political prisoners!’” Ten minutes later, nearly simultaneous explosions hit the pool area of the DuPont Plaza in Miami and outside the Fontainebleau Spa. There were no injuries.<sup>6</sup>

The Fontainebleau was such a landmark attraction in its own right that on Thanksgiving Day 1961, its management decided to close the grounds to the public. Until that time, it was one of the last luxury resorts on Miami Beach to operate on the so-called ‘European plan.’ The closure created a private resort club and spa. A hotel spokesman noted that “the clutter of tourists filling the lobbies and grounds during the day and evening prevented the regular guests from enjoying the hotel’s facilities. Only guests and their invited friends now will be able to use those facilities.”<sup>7</sup>

The hotel’s appearance in several movies and a television series makes it possibly the most filmed building in history.<sup>8</sup> Designed chaos arrived at the Fontainebleau Hotel with the filming of “The Bellboy” (1960). The movie, starring Jerry Lewis as author, actor, producer and director, was replete with his callisthenic antics, with Lewis acting out every possible scenario of hotel service disaster. The exaggerated pantomime seems everything that is contrary to the lush, sophisticated theater that is the Fontainebleau Hotel. The filming of the hotel created a stir humorously covered by the *New York Times*. “To say that guests of the hotel, reputedly the largest (and most expensive) resort hotel in the world, have been mildly horrified, would be a gross under-statement. The sight of Mr. Lewis skating wildly out of control across glistening marble floors, and the sudden emergence from elevators of thirty dogs of assorted breeds have created the suspicion that the Fontainebleau is not what it used to be.”<sup>9</sup>

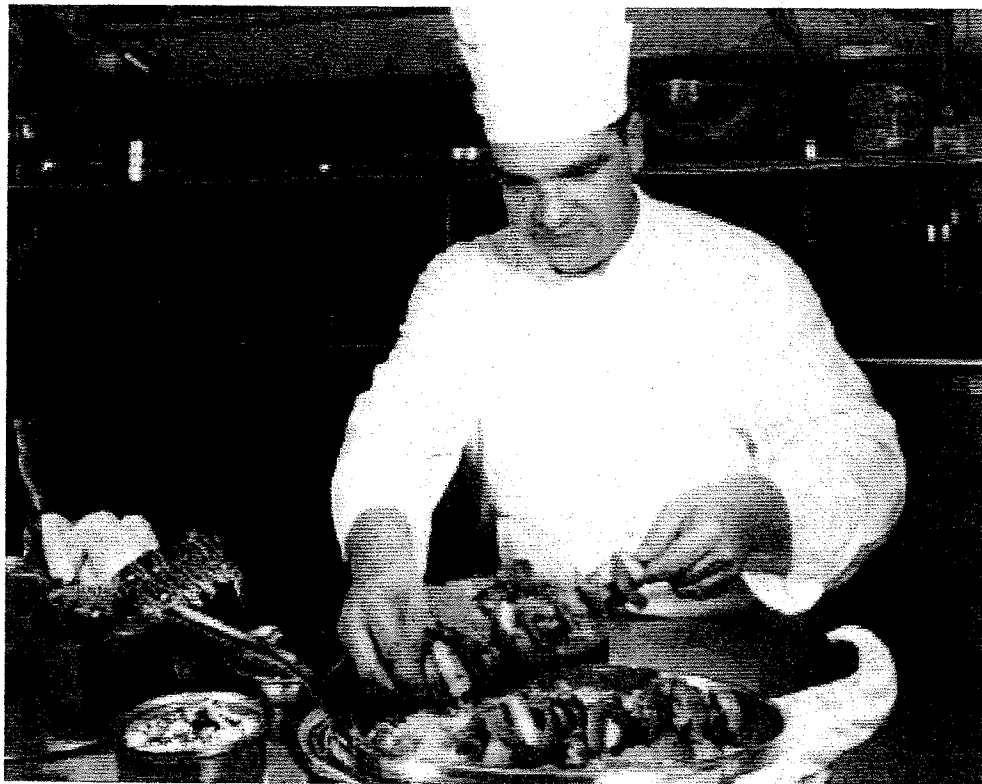


In *Tony Rome* (1967) and *Lady in Cement* (1968), the Fontainebleau co-stars with Frank Sinatra as a Miami-based private eye in a role that framed the hotel in an increasingly degraded and morally ambivalent social context. Vincent Canby of the *New York Times* called the film, “such a perfect blending of material with milieu that the movie’s extraordinary vulgarity and sloppiness can almost be cherished for themselves, like wide-screen graffiti. ... Unlike ‘The Detective,’ an earlier collaboration of Mr. Sinatra, Gordon Douglas as director and Aaron Rosenberg as producer, “Lady in Cement” turns its fakery and garishness into negative virtues that can be appreciated, if not particularly admired. It is to well-planned movies what one of those 10-year-old Miami Beach hotels – one that has begun to crack – is to the Plaza – a reminder of a fantastic, All-American lifestyle that is no less significant because it’s not especially good.”<sup>10</sup>

James Bond’s gaudy gallantry in “Goldfinger” (1968) also seamlessly matched an exotic film persona with the movie set that is the Fontainebleau. Decades later, in a Lapidus retrospective, the film stirred the memory of Herbert Muschamp, who drew a visceral connection between Goldfinger, the hotel and the cultural context they together represented: “The password is ... swanky. ... The fleeting image is a tan young man in a white bathing suit plunging off the high board, somersaulting out of the deep blue sky into the water of a sky blue pool. Cut to shot of Sean Connery wearing a light blue terry cloth playsuit. Anyone else would look ridiculous in such a get-up, but not James Bond. He looks ... swanky. Any piece of architecture would look stupid if it were wearing staircases that went nowhere, ceilings with Swiss cheese holes in them and an allegorical statue salvaged from the first-class dining saloon of the S.S. Normandie. But somehow Morris Lapidus pulled it off. At the Fontainebleau Hotel, scene of the Miami shots in “Goldfinger,” Lapidus made Swiss cheese holes look ... swanky. ... The password was swanky and swanky meant sex. ... In the 1960’s, everyone I knew loved Lapidus, for the same reason we loved “Goldfinger.” Both carried the seal of parental disapproval. Like Miami Beach, Lapidus stood for a certain idea of the exotic. Eroticism was part of it.”<sup>11</sup>

Although landing only a cameo role in “Midnight Cowboy” (1969), the Fontainebleau Hotel holds a symbolic position. The movie’s Bronx character, Rizzo, slightly deformed and limping with a club foot, dreams of escape from his unheated apartment in an abandoned building to a land of sun and sea. The Fontainebleau’s beach and pool deck are the setting for his montage dream sequence in which he becomes helper and hero to a squadron of wheelchair-bound older ladies. In this resort designed “to convince a sucker spending \$50 that he’s actually spending \$100,” even a near-homeless cripple can rise to the American Dream in luxury and valor.

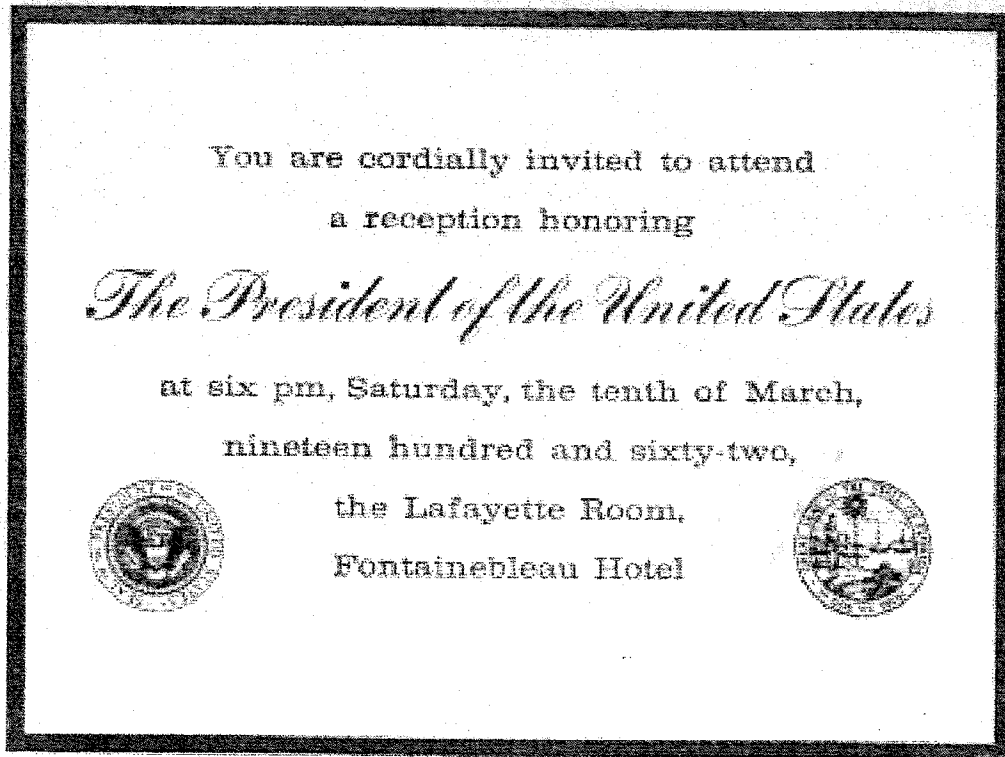
- <sup>1</sup> "Night of Stars," *New York Times*, November 6, 1960.
- <sup>2</sup> Mike Capuzzo, "The Sand Castle: The Famed Fontainebleau, inspired by a French castle and a Miami Beach toilet seat, has seen – and barely survived – more than 10,000 nights," *The Miami Herald*, February 19, 1984.
- <sup>3</sup> Susan M. Burnside, "Fontainebleau Sale Rumor is Denied," *The Miami Herald*, June 17, 1971.
- <sup>4</sup> "Battle for Control of Hotel Continues," *New York Times*, November 22, 1957.
- <sup>5</sup> Diana Rice, "News Notes from the Field of Travel," *New York Times*, December 25, 1955.
- <sup>6</sup> "Around the Nation: 4 Miami Beach Hotels Are Damaged by Bombs," *New York Times*, September 20, 1977.
- <sup>7</sup> "From the Field of Travel: Fontainebleau Hotel Set to Become a Private Resort and Spa," *New York Times*, August 27, 1961.
- <sup>8</sup> "The Bellboy" (1960), "Tony Rome" (1967), "Lady in Cement" (1968), "Goldfinger" (1968), "Midnight Cowboy" (1969), "The Specialist" (1994).
- <sup>9</sup> James W. Merrick, "'Hurricane' Lewis Hits Florida Gold Coast," *New York Times*, February 28, 1960.
- <sup>10</sup> Vincent Canby, "Lady in Cement Here," *New York Times*, November 21, 1968.
- <sup>11</sup> Herbert Muschamp, "Defining Beauty in Swanky American Terms," *New York Times*



*Chef preparing a dish of Shish Kebabs (1959)  
Image Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection*



*"The good old days, with Sammy, Jayne, Dean and Frank."  
from "The Fontainebleau Fairy Tale: Once upon a time comes again"  
by Madeleine Blais, The Miami Herald, February 3, 1980  
Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida, WTVJ files*



*President Kennedy*



*James D. [unclear]*



*Frank D. [unclear]*



*John [unclear]*

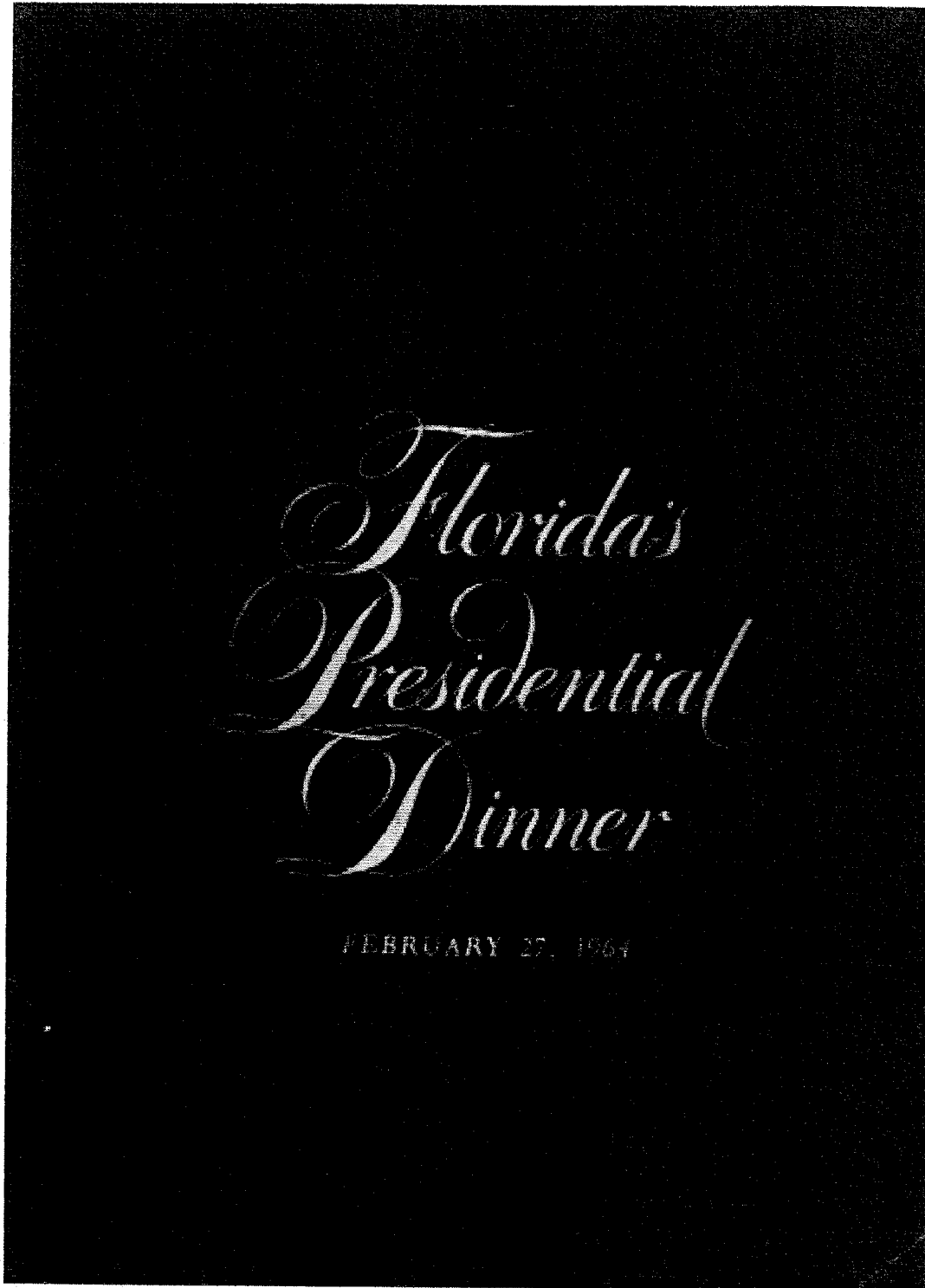
*Invitation and placecards for guests of dinner honoring President John F. Kennedy,  
March 10, 1962  
Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



*John F. Kennedy & George Smathers (1962)  
Image Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection*



*President Lyndon B. Johnson (1964)  
Image Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection*



*Program from Florida's Presidential Dinner at the Fontainebleau Hotel  
Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 25, 1964

Dear Friends:

During my twenty-seven years of service in Washington, I have come to know and respect the able and distinguished representatives you have sent to the Nation's Capital. You may be proud of them.

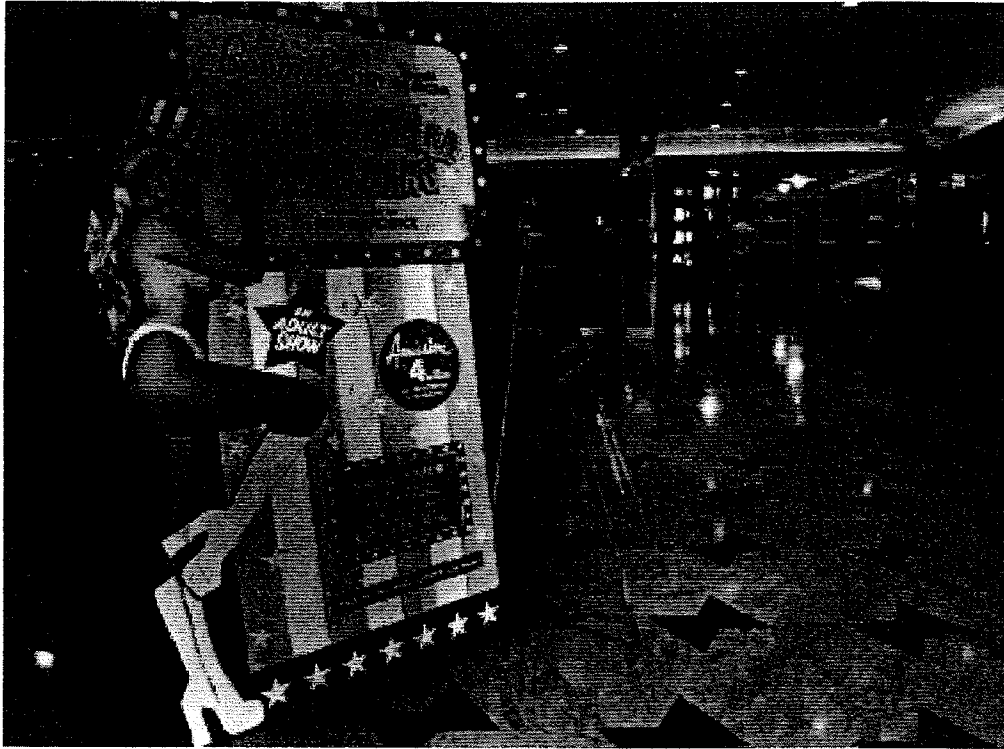
Mrs. Johnson and I want to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for the support of Democrats in Florida.

The days ahead must find all of us working together for a nation free from want, a world that is free from hate — a world of peace and justice, and freedom and abundance, for our time, and all time to come.



Lyndon B. Johnson

*Program from Florida's Presidential Dinner at the Fontainebleau Hotel  
Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



*Lobby sign advertising "Star Spangled Bang-Bang" adult show in the Boom Boom Room  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



*Poolside soiree  
Image Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida*



*Meeting of the City of Miami Beach Tourist Development Authority (1969)  
Image Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection*



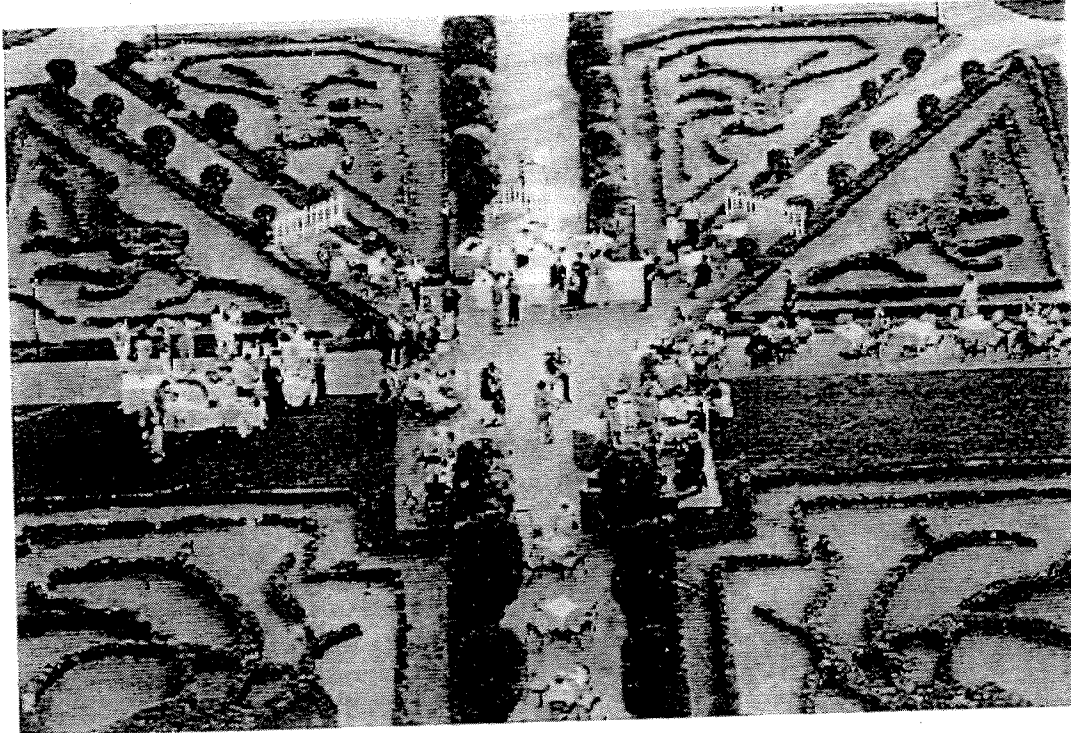
*Ana Myers & Rabbi Leon Kronish (1970)  
Image Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection*



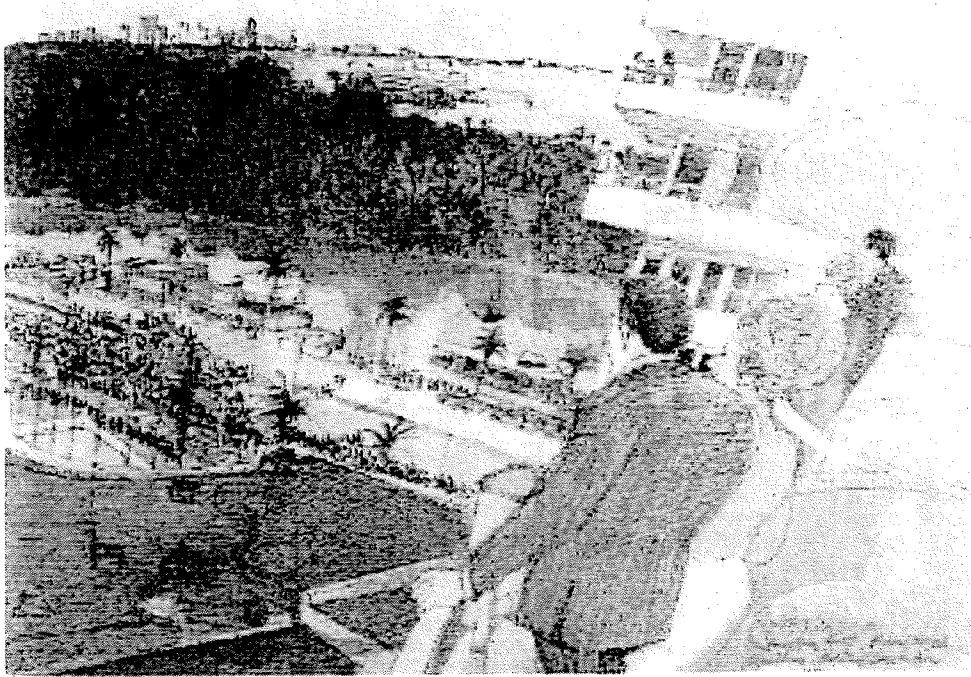
*President Ford speaking at the Fontainebleau Hotel (1976)  
Image Courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection*



*Fleur de Lis Room (1965)  
Image Courtesy of Stock Photo*



*Event at the Formal Gardens  
Image Courtesy of Stock Photo*



*Republican Convention Delegates Watch an Anti-War Protest  
from Their Hotel Balcony (1972)  
Created by Franklin McMahon, Image Courtesy of Corbis*



*Delegates to the 1972 Democratic National Convention, Miami Beach,  
Viewing the Fontainebleau Hotel (1972)  
Created by Franklin McMahon, Image Courtesy of Corbis*

Fontainebleau Hotel  
Miami Beach



Night view into North Tower (1965)  
Courtesy of Stock photo



**FRANKLIN HOTEL** (1925) - 1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139  
Tel. 361-1111  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139

**FREMONT** (1925) - 1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139  
Tel. 361-1111  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139

**FLAMINGO CLUB HOTEL, MARINA**  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139  
Tel. 361-1111  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139

**FLAMINGO PLAZA HOTEL**  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139  
Tel. 361-1111  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139

**FONTAINEBLEAU HOTEL** (1925) - 1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139  
Tel. 361-1111  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139

**FONTAINEBLEAU HOTEL**  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139  
Tel. 361-1111  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139

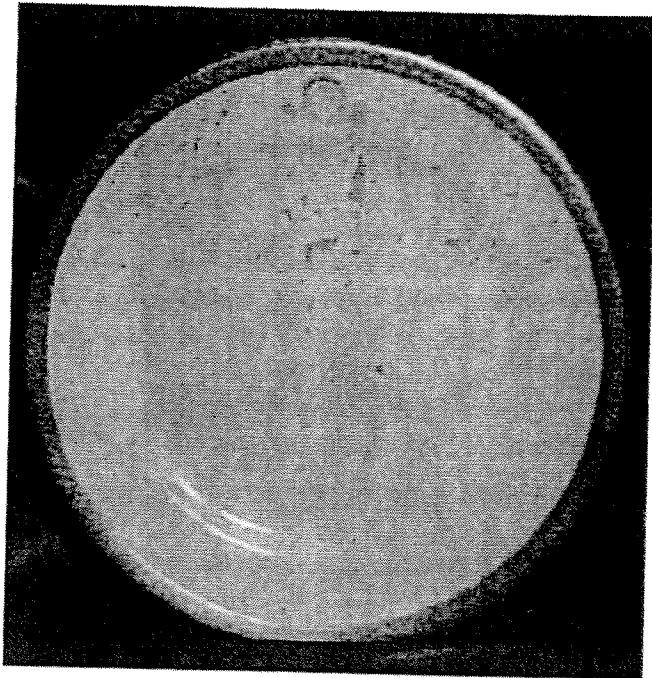
**GALT HOTEL** (1925) - 1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139  
Tel. 361-1111  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139

**GRAND CENTRAL HOTEL**  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139  
Tel. 361-1111  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139

**GRAND CENTRAL HOTEL**  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139  
Tel. 361-1111  
1100 Biscayne Blvd.  
Miami Beach, Fla. 33139

Miami Beach Hotel Guide, cover & Fontainebleau listing  
Courtesy of the Historical Museum of South Florida





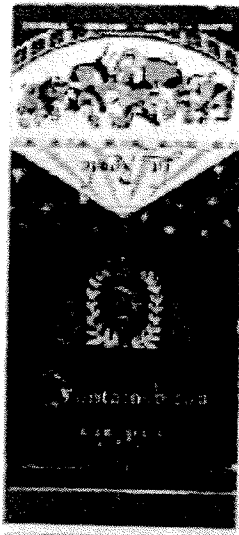
*Original gold-trimmed Fontainebleau dinner  
plate on ebay*



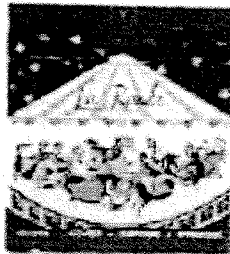
*Original logo*



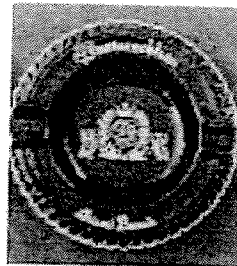
*Detail of dinner plate*



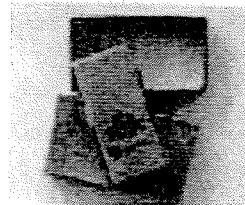
*La Ronde Supper Club matchbook*



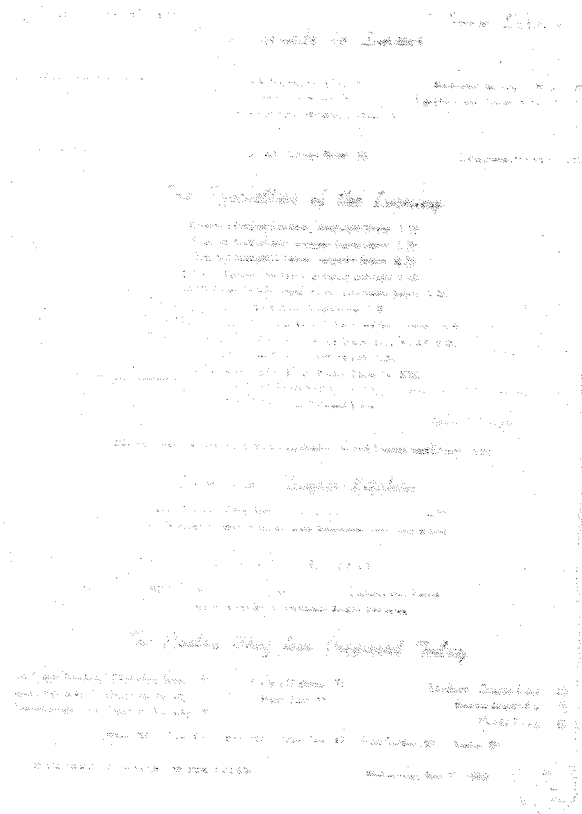
*Fontainebleau Moments  
Image Courtesy of ebay*



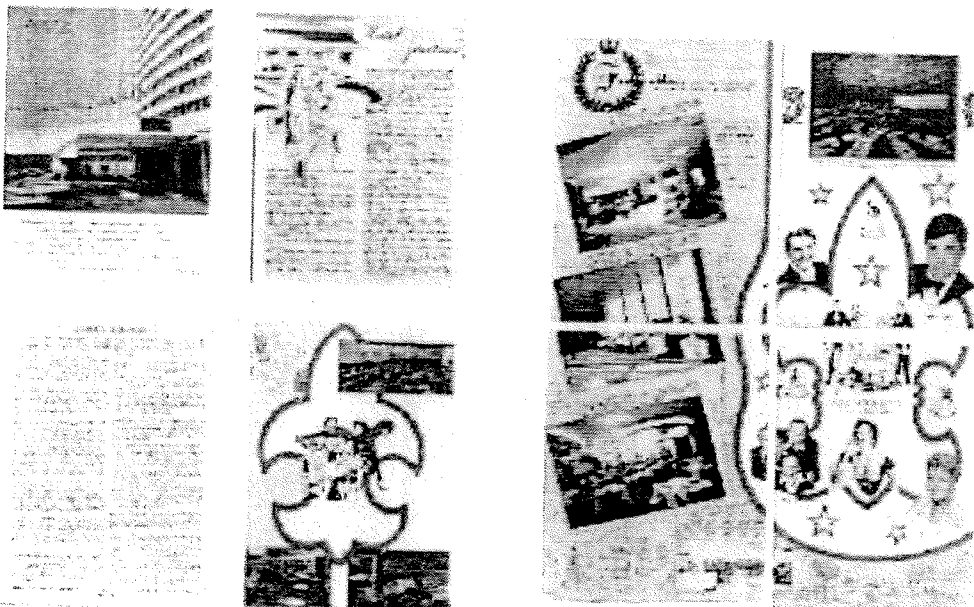
*Vintage ashtray*



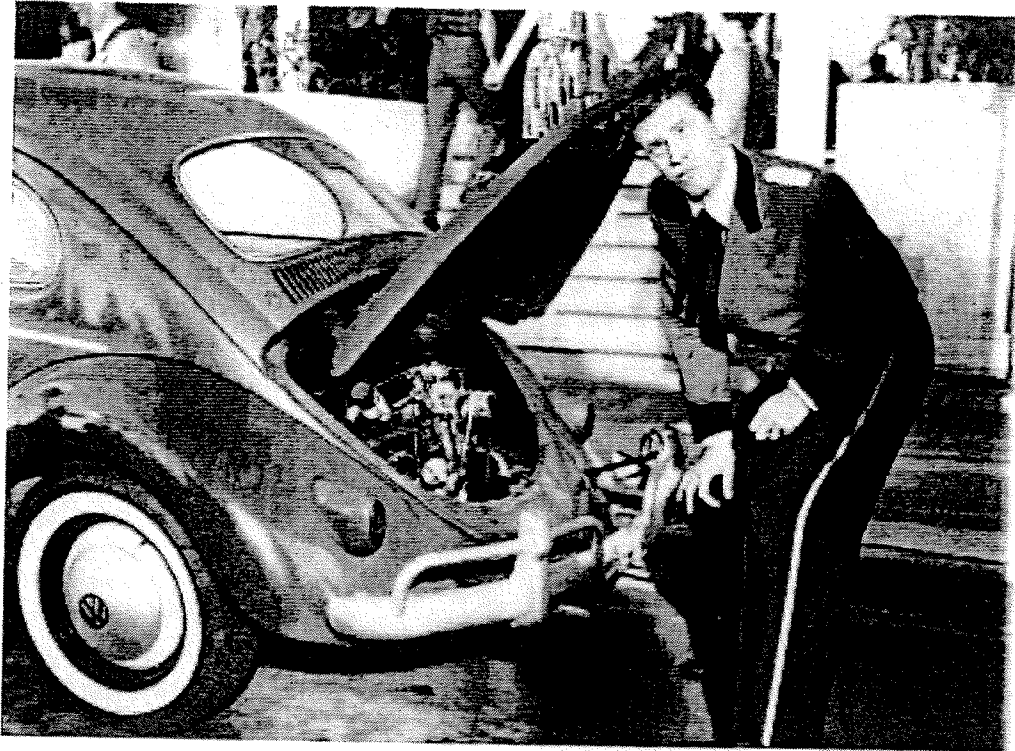
*Vintage  
cigarette lighter*



Room service menu from May 1968  
Image Courtesy of ebay



Fold-out brochure for Fontainebleau Cabana and Yacht Club,  
featuring Jerry Lewis, Liberace, Ritz Brothers and Betty Hutton.  
Image Courtesy of ebay



*Jerry Lewis (as Stanley), "The Bellboy" (1960)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



*Jerry Lewis (as Stanley), "The Bellboy" (1960)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



*Jerry Lewis (as Stanley), "The Bellboy" (1960)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



*From the left: Alex Gerry (as manager), Jerry Lewis (as Stanley)  
"The Bellboy" (1960)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



*Jerry Lewis.(as Stanley), "The Bellboy" (1960)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



Frank Sinatra (as Tony Rome), Jill St. John (as Ann Archer)  
"Tony Rome" (1967)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.



Frank Sinatra (as Tony Rome), Jill St. John (as Ann Archer)  
"Tony Rome" (1967)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.



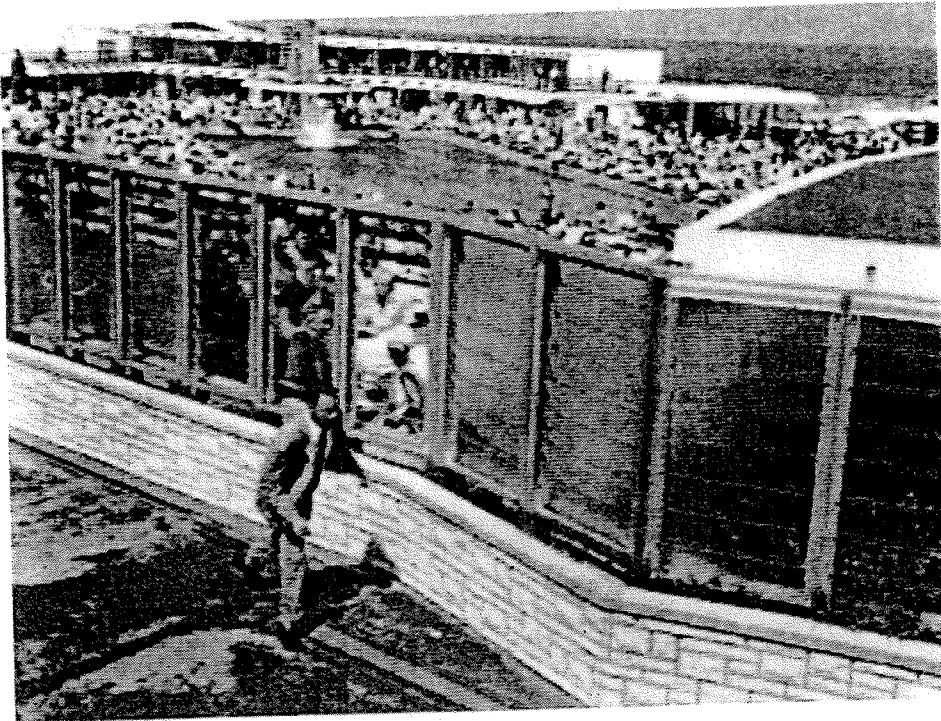


*Frank Sinatra (as Tony Rome), Jill St. John (as Ann Archer)  
"Tony Rome" (1967)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*





*Jill St. John (as Ann Archer), "Tony Rome" (1967)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



*Pool Deck of the Fontainebleau  
Richard Conte (as Lt. Dave Santini), "Lady in Cement" (1968)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



*Richard Conte (as Lt. Dave Santini)  
"Lady in Cement" (1968)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



*Sean Connery (as James Bond), "Goldfinger" (1968)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



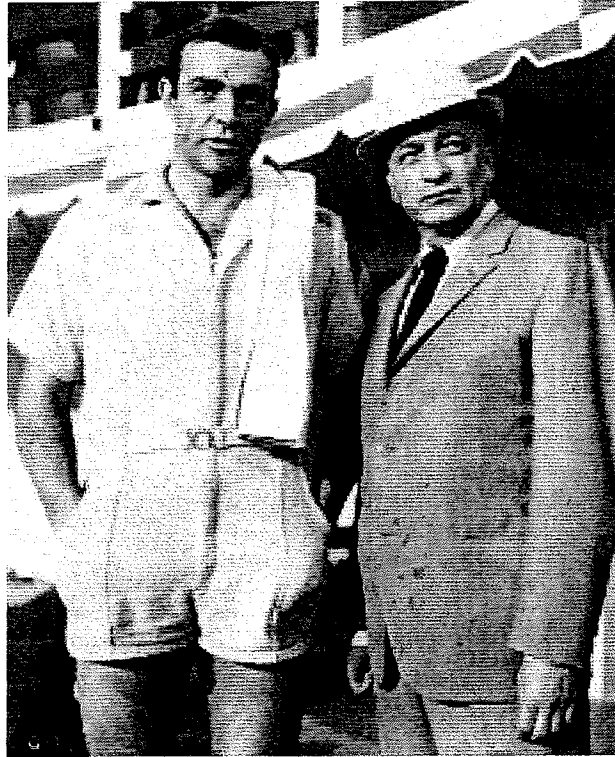
*Sean Connery(as James Bond), "Goldfinger" (1968)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



*Gert Frobe (as Auric Goldfinger), "Goldfinger" (1968)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



*Margaret Nolan (as Dink), Sean Connery (as James Bond), "Goldfinger" (1968)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



*Sean Connery (as James Bond, Cic Linder (as Felix Leiter), "Goldfinger" (1968)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



*Sean Connery (as James Bond), "Goldfinger" (1968)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



*Fontainebleau Pool  
Dustin Hoffman (as Ratzo Rizzo), "Midnight Cowboy" (1969)  
Image Courtesy of Photofest, Inc.*



### Miami Herald Investigation (late 1960s)

In May 1967, *The Miami Herald* began calling witnesses for depositions, with the intention of exposing a relationship between the Fontainebleau and organized crime. The Miami Beach hotel reacted the following month by filing a \$10 million libel suit against *The Herald*, claiming the paper had been undertaking “burdensome and harassment tactics” and publishing “slanted” stories.<sup>1</sup> One target of *The Herald*’s investigation was the opaque ownership structure of the hotel, and the web of financial transactions that paralleled its construction and ongoing operation. For instance, in June 1967 *The Herald* deposed Ben B. Sigelbaum, a local ‘investor’, who declined to say whether he had ever loaned money to the Fontainebleau or Ben Novack. *The Herald* focused on the connections between Sigelbaum (a former light bulb salesman), Las Vegas gambler Ed Levinson (with whom Sigelbaum had many business interests, including part ownership in the Singapore Hotel) and Jack B. Cooper (a major figure in Dominican Republic gambling casinos before the assassination of dictator Raphael Trujillo). *The Herald* investigated links between this group and ‘hoodlums’ Isadore Blumenthal and his brother Yiddy Bloom. The wives of Blumenthal and Bloom purportedly owned title to a portion of the Fontainebleau land, and a mortgage on the remaining land. Sigelbaum was also suspected of owning Fontainebleau land, and receiving broker’s fees for securing loans for the hotel.<sup>2</sup>

*The Herald* investigation also turned up numerous contacts with gambling figures. In June, Miami Beach haberdasher Mickey Hayes, a friend of Novack, was subpoenaed by *The Herald* and testified to meetings between Novack and London casino operator John Mills aboard Novack’s yacht, the Fontainebleau II, which was touring the Mediterranean as a ‘goodwill cruise’ during the summer of 1966.<sup>3</sup> *The Herald* reported that Mills was Novack’s purported British subject partner in the Miami hotelier’s unsuccessful attempt to purchase Cat Cay and its Bahamian gambling permit. Parenthetically, the ship was quickly registered in the Bahamas by the law firm of Bahamian gambling figure Sir Stafford Sands. The yacht, which was normally parked in front of the Fontainebleau in Indian Creek, was detained in 1967 by the U.S. Customs service for payment of an entry duty. In papers filed in relationship to the duty, it was discovered that the boat was owned by Argosy Ltd., a corporation whose stockholders were all Bahamian attorneys in the Sands office. Sands had, the week before, liquidated all holdings and established residence in Spain. His departure followed revelations, in a Royal Commission investigation, that he received \$2 million in legal and consulting fees in relation to casino operations after a gambling permit was granted for a casino in Freeport. Sands both spearheaded the gambling license application and sat on the board that granted it.<sup>4</sup>

According to testimony by another Bahamian, George Thompson, Ben Novack’s application for a Bahamian gambling permit was held up by his lack of clearance to own a casino by the local police, a result of “problems” with the American FBI. Novack was urged by Thompson to “clear up his position with the FBI so that the [Bureau would] be” be in a position to give a favorable report to the police here. Thompson testified that Peter Graham, cabinet minister in the outgoing white Bahamian government and Novack’s lawyer at one time, told him that “Mr. Novack was a gangster.”<sup>5</sup> However, Thompson also left the impression that Novack’s competi-



tors in Grand Bahama Island may also have squelched the hotelier's bid, principally by awarding consulting fees to cabinet members opposed to granting Novack a license.<sup>6</sup>

Facing a public relations debacle, on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1967, the Fontainebleau Hotel asked Circuit Court to "stop 'harassment tactics' by *The Miami Herald* in the libel suit."<sup>7</sup> Specifically, the motion sought to stop *The Herald* from taking depositions and reporting on them. On August 18<sup>th</sup>, lawyers for *The Herald* successfully argued that the newspaper's inquiry was "in good faith and intended to gather information about the history of ownership and reputation of the hotel." Circuit Court Judge Grady L. Crawford refused to halt or limit *The Herald* from taking depositions in the libel suit.<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, the Fontainebleau lawsuit backfired by providing a rich mosaic of tantalizing information illustrating Ben Novack's questionable business practices and his connections with the world of organized crime.

*The Herald's* depositions and reporting thus continued in September. On September 19, 1967, the paper reported that five witnesses testified in the case, including Clarence Jones, co-author of *The Herald* articles in question in the suit. Four others, including an ex-convict and a gambling wire operator (who both plead the fifth), a hotel time-keeper and a restaurateur testified.<sup>9</sup> Sam (Radio) Winer testified that he introduced Ben Novack to Bahamian politician George Thompson. Thompson had previously testified in front of a Royal Commission investigating gambling in the Bahamas that Novack had offered him \$100,000 in 1965 to lobby for a Bahamian gambling license. The license was denied by the later government of Premier Lynden Pindling.<sup>10</sup>

The depositions soon turned from gambling to the relationship between hotel management and organized crime. In his testimony, hotel General Manager Margulies refused to answer questions about whether he knew Max Eder (alias Maxie Raymond), who *The Herald* called a notorious gambler and labor racketeer who made the Attorney General's list of notorious criminals in 1959."<sup>11</sup> The Miami Beach police had previously identified Eder as a 'behind-the-scenes' figure in the Fontainebleau and the operator of its linen shop.

In fact, known bookmakers and gamblers were known to frequent the hotel. Testimony revealed that according to the Florida Attorney General's office, 4441 Collins Avenue (The Fontainebleau) was "becoming a hangout for hoodlums with a national reputation."<sup>12</sup> The testimony of the night bell captain illustrated a telling event. The bell captain recounted a fight between comedian Shecky Greene and Chicago Mafia figure Joe Fischetti in a public area of the lobby. Greene was performing at the La Ronde Room during Frank Sinatra's engagement there. Joe (Fish) Fischetti, cousin of Al Capone and brother of two deceased Chicago Mafia leaders, was known to accompany Sinatra during his performances at the Fontainebleau. The fight demonstrated the close relationship between the hotel's glamorous and seamy sides.

In fact, Sinatra's relationship to the Fontainebleau came into question not in the investigations of the late 1960s but a few years later. In 1972, convicted mob triggerman Joseph (the Baron)