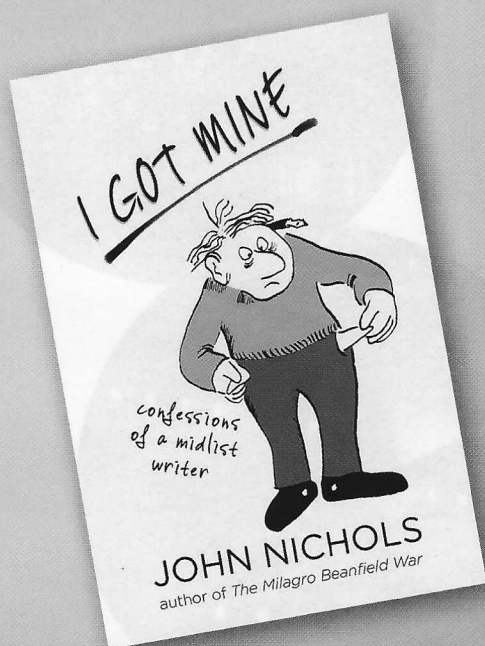


BOOK REVIEW

By Wolf Schneider

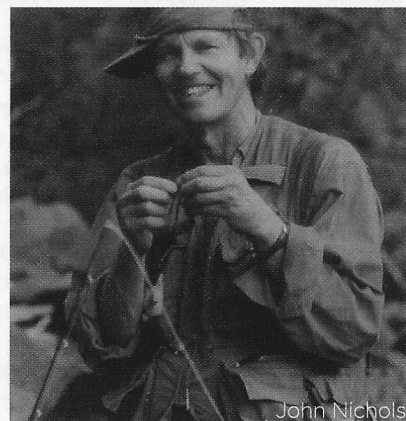


I GOT MINE

JOHN NICHOLS OFFERS THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF HIS LITERARY LIFE

He arrived in Taos in 1969. John Nichols was 29 then, intent on furthering his career as a writer and adamant about pursuing his left-leaning socio-political ideology. In the decades since, he's worked with film legends like Robert Redford and Costa-Gavras, prolifically written novels and screenplays, devotedly hiked New Mexico's mountains, raised chickens and goats along with a family, travelled to LA, Paris, and New York for meetings, and always insisted he would not work for extended periods anywhere but Taos. It's all here in his ironically witty, revealing memoir *I Got Mine*.

Nichols has led a life both earthy and transcendent. On the one hand, he has repaired irrigation ditches, gotten rid of skunks from under the floorboards, and serviced outhouses (he'll tell you how). On the other, he's collaborated with Hollywood heavyweights while working on the screenplays for *Missing* and *The Milagro Beanfield War*, the latter based on his own novel. Zeroing in on Hollywood's excesses brings the humor to anecdotes like his recounting of a studio pitch meeting with Costa-Gavras where they gathered with "eight tanned moguls wearing Armani suits in a room whose windows offered a 360-degree view of the greater Los Angeles area." As Nichols recalls it, "Costa says, 'I want to make picture about science and human values in twentieth century.'" Then the international filmmaker tosses to Nichols who improvises, planning how "I'd schmooze with nuclear physicists in Los Alamos near my Taos home, do much research and many interviews, and Costa and I would come up with something brilliant." It worked for the moment.



John Nichols

A Taoseño for more than five decades now, Nichols is still creating into his eighties. He writes every night. Health troubles (he's had plenty) be damned; he keeps moving forward. Like they advised him back in college cross-country training where everyone was fleet-footed, "It's the mind that runs the race." He's one of the good guys. And he knows New Mexico better than most. ■