

VIP

Memoirs of an Unwanted Agent

By Maxine Cheshire

Former Secret Service agent Rufus Youngblood, who says he was pushed into early retirement by Nixon aides, is planning to write his memoirs.

Youngblood didn't tell why he left when he resigned quietly four months ago. He is reportedly compiling notes for a book that would trace his distinguished career as an agent decorated for valor in shielding then Vice President Johnson, during President Kennedy's assassination in Dallas.

"Morale is bad' in the Secret Service at the moment, Youngblood said yesterday, confirming reports which have been circulating in Washington for months.

Agents, instead of being considered career men whose loyalties are to the presidency itself and not to a particular man elected to the office, he asserted, have been singled out as "Johnson men" or "Kennedy men" and banished to less prestigious, lower-paying posts outside Washington.

Youngblood said that one of his associates, with five years at the White House, was bumped from a Grade 17 to a Grade 15 and sent to Birmingham because he was considered a "Johnson man."

Youngblood, considered an LBJ loyalist, fell out of favor at the White House less than two months after the Nixon administration moved in.

He says he was barred from continuing to eat in the White House mess, under instructions of presidential assistant John Haldeman.

"I've been asked why did I leave, why didn't I stay and fight," Youngblood said last night. "The answer is, who pays my salary? The taxpayers, that's who. I wasn't allowed to do the job I was being paid to do, sitting there every day with them putting things in my "in" basket for me to initial, when the decisions had already been made by someone else and the initials were just a formality."

Youngblood accused Haldeman and presidential assistant John Erlichman of "bringing in their own people" and trying to run the Secret Service now "like a Los Angeles advertising agency or Disneyland."

The White House would make no comment last night on Youngblood's charges. "I don't think we'll be saying anything about that," presidential press secretary Ron Ziegler said. "If you wanted to sell a book, wouldn't you say something like that. It makes a lot better book."