



Drawing by John Twohey—The Washington Post

VIP

Spiro Agnew: Another Rejection Slip

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By Maxine Cheshire

Former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew has turned novelist and met secretly in a New York hotel suite two

weeks ago with the representative of a major publishing company.

Agnew showed the editor an outline, one chapter and notes for a proposed work of fiction about a future Vice President of the United States who turns out to be a "Manchurian Candidate" programmed for disaster by the Chinese Communists.

The manuscript, the publisher said yesterday, was turned down "on its merits" as a work of fiction. "The only reason to publish it would have been for its curiosity value," he added, "and that was not enough for us."

"As a money maker it's strictly speculative, there's no way to tell. If it had been a hell of a novel we'd have published it."

The publisher said he had ideological misgivings about publishing "Dean or Haldeman or any of those people."

"I'm not so sure I'd want to publish Agnew unless he wrote Ulysses."

Asked whether Agnew is writing the book himself or has employed the help of a ghost, the publisher said:

"It was our assumption he wrote it. The question never came up when my editor met Agnew (at the Park Lane Hotel). He indicated to my editor he wrote it and it would have been insulting to suggest he hadn't. Of course, it crossed my mind to wonder did he write it, but worry over a Clifford Irving hoax was not why we rejected it."

However, a suspicion that Agnew may not be working alone on the project lingers in the minds of other employees within the publishing company. A junior editorial staffer said yesterday that there was "a rumor" that someone identified only as "a journalist" would be doing the actual writing.

"We are embarrassed," the publisher said. "We were asked not to tell anyone of Agnew's overture and we didn't. We don't know how it leaked out but it was not from us."

Agnew's office in Washington refused yesterday to comment on the book. "We are no longer talking with the press," said an aide who answered the phone.

It is not known how many, if any, other publishers have been contacted.