

SUNDAY, 1

Previewing Agnew's Novel:

"Steve Galdari put down the newspaper and looked out the window. The brightness of the blue sky struck his eyes with a near physical impact. Far off to the west, the Sierra Nevadas made the horizon a jagged blue-grey pencil line. It reminded Galdari of a sales graph, with Mount Whitney being a very good week."

—Opening lines of "The Canfield Decision," a novel in progress by Spiro T. Agnew.

By Maxine Cheshire

"Porter Newton Canfield" is the name of the chief character in the suspense novel former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew is now writing. He is described in Agnew's plot outline as a future Vice President of the United States who is a "wealthy and aristocratic Ivy League politician."

In his first book, a fictional account of how Canfield is "seduced" by foreign agents into committing acts

of villainy, Agnew seems to be taking pains to ensure that readers do not think he has patterned the novel's protagonist on himself.

There are traces in the opening chapter—all that has been shown to publishers so far—of Agnew's personal philosophy and frustrations as Vice President. But the plot outline stresses the fictional Canfield's aristocratic origins: "old English stock . . . one of America's first families" who dwell in a 24-room mansion on Philadelphia's Main Line.

The character bears virtually no autobiographical resemblance to Agnew, who grew up in modest circumstances as the son of a Greek immigrant restaurant operator. Agnew worked as an insurance claims

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Glimpse of a Work in Progress

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adjuster and food store personnel manager, went to law school at night and rose from suburban county politics to the governorship of Maryland.

If Porter Newton Canfield reminds readers of anyone in politics at the moment, it is more apt to be former Attorney General Elliot Richardson, the man who brought about Agnew's resignation.

Canfield, according to the book outline which Agnew's literary agent was circulating to publishers in New York last week, "had the best of everything from the start . . . prepped at Hadston, graduated cum laude from Princeton . . . University of Virginia's Law School . . . Ensign U.S. Navy . . . married Philadelphia socialite Amy DeVrees."

The outline describes the fictional Vice President as moderately liberal in his political views, pragmatic and ambitious, handsome and self-assured, impeccably dressed.

Canfield is not overly bright, however, the outline says, "despite the cum laude which some say can more from heavy Canfield endowments than from his ability."

Before going into politics, Canfield was a member of the "society" law firm of Canfield, Redeman, Adan & Preller which, the outline notes, offered an "acronym of some delight to struggling young attorneys without connections."

Canfield also "cultivates the press," something he would accuse Agnew of doing.

Agnew's choice of a central character is the mo

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intriguing aspect of the 26 pages of outline, notes and actual manuscript which his literary agent Scott Meredith submitted to a half dozen top publishing houses for bids last week.

The book, unwritten except for a 12-page opening scene aboard the vice presidential plane, has become a "hot property" since it was turned down initially by Random House two weeks ago. The Ladies' Home Journal has indicated their willingness to pay somewhere between \$50,000 and \$100,000 for serialization rights and sweetened their offer with a pledge to accompany the first installment with a story and color pictures on Agnew's new career as author.

The book, when sold, is expected to bring Agnew an advance of some \$250,000, five times what he originally asked from Random House.

Of course, he still has to write it. The project is in a very preliminary stage, according to the material which was shown to publishers. There are detailed notes on some main characters, but only one-sentence descriptions of most. The plot is sketchily outlined.

The story takes place in 1983 and 1984. Agnew's Vice President is appointed in 1979 to take the place of a predecessor who died of a stroke while presiding over the Senate. If Agnew seems to identify with anyone in his book, it is this recently deceased Vice President, a "pragmatic and considerate man," a former governor of Montana who is mourned by his Secret Service agents as someone who kept the press in their place and "wasn't always kissing their butts."

Other characters include:

Secret Service agent Steven Mark Galdari.

The Vice President's secretary, Katherine Ann Dryden.

HEW Secretary Meredith Pamela Lord. (She runs her department with "an iron hand," is on the "verge" of an affair with the Vice President and is described as "beautiful, intelligent, hard as nails, with a Ph.D. in psychology.")

TV anchorman Bradley K. Barton.

Counselor to the President Josh Devers.

California Sen. Stanley Kroner.

Senate Majority Leader Ridgewell Gray.

The editor of "Twiceweek" magazine and the publisher of "Dime."

Most don't appear in Agnew's first chapter, which is all he has written to date, so it is too early to start guessing whether or not any of them are based on real people.

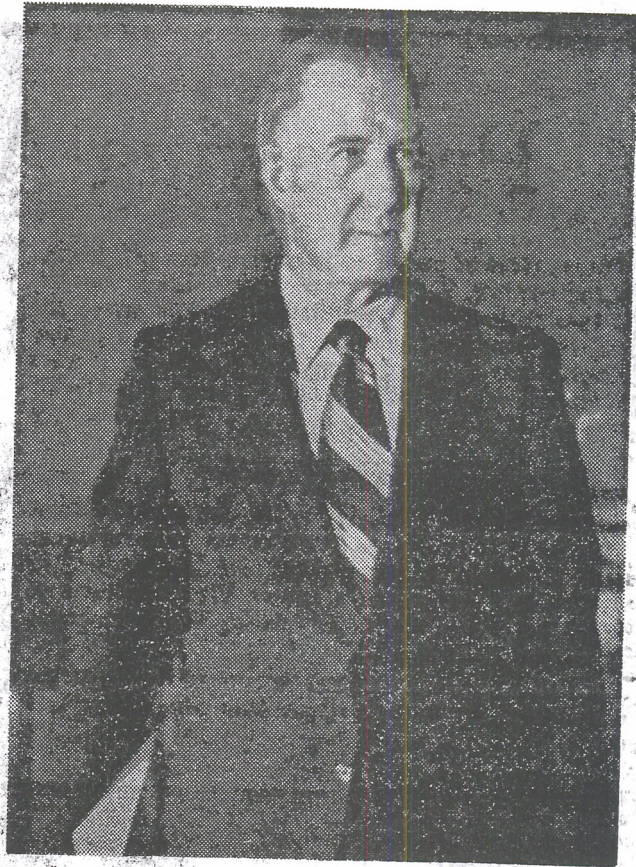
The plot concerns a "secret society of militant Iranian nationals called the Persian Protective League (PPL) which is hostile to the Shah." The PPL "misinterprets" a spy report that falls into their hands and mistakenly thinks the Soviet Union is planning to take control of Afghanistan and use it as a base to attack Iran.

The PPL decides the only way to prevent this is to provoke a crisis between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. over Israel. To do this, they set about inflaming pro-Israel sentiments in this country.

They make a vulnerability study of U.S. officials who can be duped into helping them and decide Canfield is their man. "Through a variety of devices" not spelled out in Agnew's outline, they succeed in subverting the Vice President.

Then begins a "campaign of terror . . . and assassinations of Jewish political leaders and intellectuals" with a false trail of evidence leading to the Arabs.

The Secret Service agent and the Vice President's secretary save the day. They become alarmed at the "erratic and inexplicable actions of their boss." They



United Press International

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solve the puzzle and avert catastrophe "at the last minute."

What they do, or how they do it, is not explained in Agnew's preliminary summary.

The first chapter, 12 typewritten pages long, is only a stage-setter and doesn't get into the plot.

The scene is aboard the Vice President's 727-E, a "beautiful beast" of a plane that is flying him to a speaking engagement in Phoenix, Ariz.

There are members of the press aboard and disdain for most of them shows through in this bit of dialogue between a Secret Service agent and a steward who observes:

"Having the press aboard is no picnic. Guess I'll never learn to move fast enough to run booze to those newsies. Man, they really scarf it up, especially the writers. Of course, there are some exceptions. The TV boys are a little more restrained. A commentator can't have a fuzzy tongue . . . but the print boys can get as buzzy as they want. After all, they only dictate their stories to a rewrite guy or type them on a night letter."

Agnew's own feelings seem to be showing again in a later conversation that takes place between Vice President Canfield and Sen. Stanley Kroner, "his closest friend in that august body."

Asked by Kroner what's bothering him, Canfield responds—"with a tight little smile"—that it's probably nothing serious. "It's just that the White House makes me nervous sometimes," he says recounting how his press secretary had been routed out of bed at 6 that morning by a call from a press aide to the President.