



DAVID OBST, wonderagent of Washington books, has been very busy recently:

John Dean's memoir, *Blind Ambition*, was picked Tuesday afternoon by the Book-of-the-Month Club as a full selection for November.

David Eisenhower's as yet unwritten biography of his grandfather was bought by Random House Tuesday evening. Obst said the money was enough "to support a major work of this kind," including a full-time researcher.

An unfinished book by Julie Eisenhower has been bought by Simon & Schuster. S&S editor Michael Korda, when asked if this is just a small book before the big one, said "it is not, as has been suggested, the answer to *The Final Days*" (which, like Dean's book, was handled by Obst and published by S&S).

Obst will be on the West Coast this week, and there have been rumors that he will drop by San Clemente for a chat with Julie's father. Obst would not confirm or deny such an encounter.

NBC'S TODAY SHOW may be cutting back its book coverage. Paul Friedman, the 31-year-old producer who took over the show six weeks ago says he will be looking very carefully at what books go on the air and why. He wants to be sure that Today "is serving the audience, and not the authors and not the publishers." There will be more of an emphasis on books with a "news handle." The total number of books dealt with on the show may be reduced, the ones that do appear will generally get less air-time, and there will probably be more "round-up" reviews. Friedman says he is concerned about how coverage of novels will fit into the new picture. The net

result of all this may be that "Washington books" will receive more attention than in the past.

TSAR NICHOLAS II, Grand Duchess Anastasia and the rest of the Romanovs may be the subject of major controversy again. In October Harper & Row will publish *The File on the Tsar*, by Anthony Summers and Tom Mangold: an account of the royal family's disappearance based on the original 7-volume dossier compiled by an official White Russian investigation. The investigation report, which is the generally accepted version of the case, concluded that they had all been shot and bayoneted in Ekaterinburg on July 16, 1918. The complete dossier, however, suggests that the report suppressed evidence indicating some members, perhaps all, of the royal family, survived long after July. The dossier has been listed in the card catalog of Harvard's Houghton Library since 1964, but according to curator of manuscripts Rodney Dennis no one before BBC producer Anthony Summers had thought to give it close scrutiny.

FRICION has developed between Elizabeth Ray and her publishers at Dell, according to one of her business advisors. Though she was mobbed while autographing copies of *The Washington Fringe Benefit* at a bookstore on Capitol Hill last week, she wants Dell to send her on a national tour so she can sell even more books. (At last count 1.6 million were in print.) Dell doesn't think it's necessary. Another problem arises from her contention that she was not given final approval over the finished text.

ROBIN MOORE, author of *The French Connection* and *The Making of the Happy Hooker*, has been in Washington working on a book about sex, scandal and politics.

IN THE AFTERMATH of his defeat Mo Udall is saying he'll write about his recent experiences. His brother and campaign manager, Stewart Udall, is talking seriously about another kind of book, an essay on the effect of the media, which he believes decided Carter was the candidate only two weeks into the primaries.

by Christopher Dickey

*THE MIRACLE OF JIMMY CARTER*, a quickie paperback to be published July 12 by Logos International (a religious publisher) has already had a press run of over half a million copies. Carter's nomination is referred to in the past tense.

WASHINGTON romans a clef seem to be more popular than ever this year (*The President's Mistress*, *The Company*, *Making Ends Meet*, to name but a few). In September we will have *The Henderson Equation*, by Warren Adler, publisher of the Dossier gossip sheet. According to the Putnam's catalog, it "goes beyond the Woodward-Bernstein *Washington Post*." Quite a bit beyond.