

'Deep Throat,' Er, Just Call Him Bill

By William Claiborne

NEW YORK—A man claiming to be "Deep Throat" appeared briefly at an Alice-in-Wonderland-like press conference at the New York Hilton yesterday.

The "Deep Throat" who surfaced yesterday seemed unlikely as Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's shadowy government source in "All the President's Men."

In a period of just a few minutes, he clutched in a tearful embrace a woman claiming to be his wife, avowed dramatically that in spite of the risk it was time to claim credit for his role in the Watergate expose and then, clawing at his chest, collapsed to the floor.

Before his collapse in front of television cameras and two dozen slightly sheepish-looking reporters, the man identified himself as "Bill."

He said he had worked as a government telephone installer in the Nixon White House, "seeing to all the phones in and around the Oval Office."

"We're here to announce that I'm

going to write my own book, Mr. Woodward and Mr. Bernstein aside. This is all out of proportion. These two men have made God knows how much money, while I've been in California living in a trailer camp," complained "Deep Throat."

"It hasn't been easy," he added.

A man who identified himself as "Frank Santo—Deep Throat's press agent" rented the \$275-a-day Mayor's Suite in the Hilton, hired a uniformed security guard and staged one of New York's less likely press conferences.

Reporters were there from all three of New York's daily newspapers, several television networks, three wire services and several out-of-town newspapers, all of whom had been notified by telegram or phone calls.

Also present "just out of curiosity," was literary agent Scott Meredith, who was also called by "Deep Throat's" agents in an attempt to interest him in the alleged book.

"I've been in this business a long time, and if this isn't a fake I better quit," he said. And left.

The figures in the press conference,

including "Bill," "Santo" and two body guards were asked during the conference if professional hoaxter Alan Abel had had a role in yesterday's doings.

They denied that and claimed, moreover, that they had never heard of Abel, who, in 1973 produced at a Washington press conference a self-styled New York call girl who claimed she was part of a Watergate sex ring as a cover for political espionage.

Abel wrote a book in 1970 called "Confessions of a Hoaxter" and he also once dreamed up a spoof organization called the Society for the Indecency to Naked Animals. In 1968, he ran his wife, Yetta, for the presidency.

After "Bill's" collapse, Santo and the body guards said he would rest in his room until Thursday morning, when he would appear again and offer to talk with Woodward and Bernstein by telephone or in person to verify his identity.

When telephoned from the hotel suite yesterday, Bernstein said neither he nor Woodward were interested in talking to "Bill."

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A man identifying himself as "Frank Santo, Deep Throat's press agent," right, with his unidentified client.