

VIP

Martha Mitchell And Her Book

By Maxine Cheshire

The book publishing world is watching with amusement to see if Martha Mitchell's memoirs are eventually published by International Telephone & Telegraph, the conglomerate that caused the Republicans so much embarrassment over the Dita Beard memo.

Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., a company which is expected to be acquired by ITT sometime late this spring, is negotiating for the personal story of the former Attorney General's wife.

A spokesman said last week that the publishers have offered "an important six-figure" advance for a Martha Mitchell book to be written by Washington news-woman Winzola McLendon.

Mrs. Mitchell was once told by her husband she ought to get \$2 million.

"If I'd heard that figure," said Coward-McCann president John Geoghegan, "I'd have passed right out of the picture."

However, paperback reprints and magazine serialization bids could push Mrs. Mitchell's final package deal well over \$1 million.

There has been fierce competition among the women's magazines to tell the Martha Mitchell story. The Ladies Home Journal reportedly was so eager to offer its readers something about her that it had Mrs. McLendon do a preview for their May issue.

But the only thing that story tells about the Watergate is how she entertained when she lived there.

Interior Secretary Rogers Morton's wife, in Alaska last week on a mission to help save arctic wolves, narrowly escaped injury when park rangers assigned to guide her allowed her dogsled to take off without a driver.

She was unhurt and good-natured with the contrite rangers, who were expecting to be fired over their negligence.

"I guess we'll be sent to Siberia," one of the embarrassed rangers told her.

Shivering in the sub-zero temperatures, Mrs. Morton replied:

"No, it seems to me you're already there."

After the inauguration, Secretary of State William Rogers' wife, Adele, received a letter from a neighborhood boy who collects political novelties. He wondered if he might have her husband's inaugural licence plates when they expired. Last Sunday, Mrs. Rogers walked in the rain to the boy's house, carrying the tags and an inaugural invitation autographed by Rogers. "I'm sorry to have taken so long," she said, "but I had to check first with my grandchildren to make sure none of them wanted it." . . . Margaret Truman and her husband, New York Timesman Clifton Daniel, have rented a house in the Richard M. Nixon's old neighborhood, Wesley Heights. . . .

Along with reports that Attorney General Richard Kleindienst is planning to resign in June, there have been recurring rumors that his house in McLean is going to be up for sale. One Virginia real estate person says they were alerted that the Kleindiensts might be moving after a neighbor's house was robbed by burglars who backed a truck up to the door and helped themselves.

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