

First Writes

By Maxine Cheshire

In the midst of the Watergate hearings, Doubleday has discovered another Washington novelist who may make it to the best-seller lists ahead of E. Howard Hunt.

Sen. Howard Baker Jr. is negotiating a six-figure advance for a work of fiction based on the nation's capitol as he knows it.

Sen. Baker's book, planned long before Watergate, will not be about political espionage. Nor will it focus entirely on the House and Senate. The theme, according to an editor familiar with the outline, will be about the overall power structure of Washington: lobbyists, legislators and social-climbers.

Politically in the forefront at the Watergate hearings and mentioned frequently for both the GOP presidential and vice presidential spots in 1976, Baker's main problem now is to find writing time.

"He's going to do it himself—no ghost-writers," a spokesman said last week. "And I don't know when, unless he plans to set aside 4:30 a.m. to 6:30 a.m. every day."

The contract with Doubleday still has "four or five details to be worked out," according to Sen. Baker's aide, and will probably not be signed for "a week or so."

Another Mitchell Departure

John Mitchell wasn't the only one who couldn't stand the strain of living with Martha.

The Mitchells' longtime maid, Julia Carter, who says she had to pay a doctor \$60 to "treat my nerves," has also departed.

Mitchell packed his suitcase and slipped out of the apartment while his wife was sleeping, to avoid a scene. Mrs. Carter stayed a week longer and then departed the same way, before Mrs. Mitchell woke in the morning.

"I knew she'd carry on when she woke up," Mrs. Carter said. "But I just couldn't stand that whole mess up there any longer."

Mrs. Carter, who worked for the Mitchells when they lived at the Watergate and then accompanied them to New York, has been one of Mrs. Mitchell's most loyal and devoted protectors.

"She (Mrs. Mitchell) is not a sick woman, no matter what they say," Mrs. Carter said last week. "She's disturbed, very disturbed, and she has reason to be. But she is as sane as I am."

A psychiatrist and his wife did live in the Mitchell apartment for awhile last month, according to Mrs. Carter, despite a denial by Mrs. Mitchell on television last week.

"But he was just like a house guest as far as I could see," she said. "They'd all go out to dinner together or have dinner there. I didn't even know he was a doctor until he was getting ready to leave."