



Drawing by John Twohey—The Washington Post

VIP

Spiro Agnew: Another Rejection Slip

By Maxine Cheshire

Former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew has turned novelist and met secretly in a New York hotel suite two weeks ago with the representative of a major publishing company.

Agnew showed the editor an outline, one chapter and notes for a proposed work of fiction about a future Vice President of the United States who turns out to be a "Manchurian Candidate" programmed for disaster by the Chinese Communists.

The manuscript, the publisher said yesterday, was turned down "on its merits" as a work of fiction. "The only reason to publish it would have been for its curiosity value," he added, "and that was not enough for us. "As a moneymaker it's strictly speculative, there's no way to tell. If it had been a hell of a novel we'd have published it."

The publisher said he had ideological misgivings about publishing "Dean or Haldeman or any of those people."

"I'm not so sure I'd want to publish Agnew unless he wrote 'Ulysses.'"

Asked whether Agnew is writing the book himself or has employed the help of a ghost, the publisher said:

"It was our assumption he wrote it. The question never came up when my editor met Agnew (at the Park Lane Hotel). He indicated to my editor he wrote it and it would have been insulting to suggest he hadn't. Of course, it crossed my mind to wonder did he write it, but worry over a Clifford Irving hoax was not why we rejected it."

However, a suspicion that Agnew may not be working alone on the project lingers in the minds of other employees within the publishing company. A junior editorial staffer said yesterday that there was "a rumor" that someone identified only as "a journalist" would be doing the actual writing.

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"We are embarrassed," the publisher said. "We were asked not to tell anyone of Agnew's overture and we didn't. We don't know how it leaked out but it was not from us."

Agnew's office in Washington refused yesterday to comment on the book. "We are no longer talking with the press," said an aide who answered the phone.

It is not known how many, if any, other publishers have been contacted.

Tricia's Heavy Wheels

Cabinet members and other top government officials may have given up their "gas-guzzling limousines" because of the energy crisis, but the Secret Service has just replaced Tricia Nixon Cox's 1973 baby-blue Lincoln Continental with a 1974 baby-blue Lincoln Continental.

The \$8,000 4-door Mark IV, which gets 7.9 miles to the gallon in city traffic, was delivered to the garage of the Cox's Manhattan apartment the week before Christmas. The vehicle is leased from the Ford Motor Co. by the government for \$1,000 a year.

A spokesman for the Secret Service yesterday defended the use of "a heavy car" as being "in the best interests of security."

The car which the Secret Service uses to transport Julie Nixon Eisenhower to and from her Bethesda residence is a less-conspicuous Mercury. The Secret Service classifies this also as a "heavy" car. It gets 9.9 miles to the gallon.

According to the Secret Service, it is their policy to exchange leased cars for newer models each year to ensure they are in "good running order." There has been no directive for them to switch to smaller cars for those under protection, the spokesman said, because security is the most important factor of concern.

Former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, who was being chauffeured by the Secret Service in a 1973 Lincoln after his resignation last October, also has a new 1974 car assigned to him. The Secret Service declined to say whether it was also a Lincoln.

It is customary for the Secret Service to provide transportation for the children of Presidents, even when they are married and live away from the White House. Both daughters of President Johnson had the same service.

Only the Nixon daughters use the Secret Service cars. David Eisenhower drives himself to George Washington University campus in a 1969 Plymouth Barracuda. Edward Finch Cox is a jogger who often gets around New York on foot.

'Revelations' From Martha

Serious bidding has finally begun on Martha Mitchell's memoirs and publishers are being asked to take her word for it that there will be Watergate "revelations" in the book.

There wasn't even a hint what these disclosures might be in the outline which she has been circulating with her biographer, Winzola McLendon.

Dell publications and Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, Inc., are the top bidders thus far, with the book expected to bring \$500,000 in the hardback and paperback rights.

Doubleday has asked for "topping" privileges, which means they have a right to make one more bid after everyone else has finished.

Doubleday editor Tom Congdon, who is familiar with the outline of the proposed book, says it reads like a "Gothic novel." He compared Mrs. Mitchell to a Victoria Holt heroine who is "beset by sinister forces, some of which she could perceive, some of which she could not perceive."