

ESSAY

Now It Can Be Told

By William Safire

WASHINGTON, Dec. 31 — Sidney (Lethargic) Lazarre, the sleepy literary superagent, is trying to start a row along Publishers Row by leaking to the press his list of potential best sellers drawn from the memoirs of the members of the Carter Administration.

Since many of those public servants have been "villoried and pilified," to use Tom Stoppard's phrase, in this space, it is only fair to help Lethargic bring his wares to the attention of the book packagers and paperback rights bidders who power-lunch at the Four Seasons in New York and Mel Krupin's in Washington, touting "books with legs" — i.e., those that will march briskly off bookstore shelves.

I Remember Malaise, by Pat Cadell. In this poignant, data-strewn memoir, the President's pollster explains why no leader could have prevailed against the spirit of gloom and doom afflicting Americans. Rave reviews guaranteed in "The Troubled Times," a concerned weekly; no blockbuster expected.

A Cask of Amaretto, by Hamilton Jordan, a sweeping, tumultuous memoir in novel form by a misunderstood intellectual who comes to the power center only to be pilloried by predatory females and vilified by Establishment newsmen. This pageturner includes a sensational scene at a Presidential retreat in which the top man fires his Cabinet and then disappears into a 24-hour sulk. Lethargic, who once told Hemingway " 'A Farewell to Arms' has no legs," predicts a floor bid of two million on the basis of a two-paragraph outline.

Biting My Tongue, by Cyrus Vance. This painfully discreet, professionally loyal collection of memos is somewhat hard to follow because the Secretary of State's comments respond to memos written by the national security adviser, who will not permit Mr. Vance to use his copyrighted secret material. "Never has there been such a legless book," groans Lethargic, who vows to entice the sealed-lipped Vance into revealing how he was forced to take the gaspipe on the fateful U.N. vote, which Bob Strauss told the President would have to be switched.

He Never Wore a Sweater for Me, by Hedrick Herzberg, who took over as chief speechwriter after Mr. Carter's first and last fireside chat, and helped the President scale rhetorical heights not seen in the White House since Judson Welliver turned out the first blistering drafts for Calvin Coolidge. Lethargic is urging Herzberg, who writes quickly, to finish his manuscript before *You May Fire When You Are Ready*, Hedley, by Hedley Donovan, whose property is being handled by another superagent.

Desert One, by Col. Charlie Beckwith, subtitled "One Commander-in-Chief Too Many," the confessions of the mission leader about the derring-don't in the Iranian desert. For the first time, Beckwith tells why the mission really flopped, and reveals what the subsequent investigation whitewashed. A can't-miss movie sale: Lethargic envisions Robert Redgrave as a panicked Air Force commander, Vanessa Redford as a hostage wife.

Eminence Grits: The Kirbo Papers, by Robert Lipshutz. In this get-even memoir, the first White House Counsel spills what he knows about the protection of the President by Charles Kirbo, including details hitherto unrevealed of the Kirbo mission to Saudi Arabia.

The Unimportance of Being Earnest, by Stuart Eisenstat. Here is the minutiae of policy making, of interest to historians and librarians, by the only inner circler who took notes. "This is a long weekend's read for substance freaks," snorts Lethargic. "One leg."

Informal Brief Exchange, the extralegal reminiscences of Attorney General "Baltimore Ben" Civiletti. His real feelings about the munchkins in the criminal division; his warm assessment of White House Counsel Lloyd Cutler; and his cheery advice to clients who keep subpoena-able notes of non-meetings with their attorneys. Required reading at all law schools.

Take it Slow, Bro, the coming-clean of Billy Carter, the ex-marine who gave new life to "the shores of Tripoli." Bound in Morocco and boxed with the Lance memoirs.

Advice to Nancy, by Rosalynn Carter, including chapters entitled How to Put Steel In Hubby's Backbone; Suppress All Photos of Rabbit Attacks; Never Ask the Kids about Nuclear Proliferation; and Don't Let Them Take Your Tiny Pistol Away.

First One up the Wall Gets to Fight the Russians, by Zbigniew Brzezinski, with a selection of photos taken of defiant gestures at the Great Wall and the Khyber Pass. Lethargic wants to get this one out fast to trigger a response that will enliven *Biting My Tongue*. An epilogue will feature his critique of Reagan's first 100 days as "cravenly dovish." A Zbig book.

The Historic Camp David Accords: A Minute-by-Minute Account of an Unforgettable Mountaintop Experience, Along with a Brief Rundown of Other Events 1976-1980, by Jimmy Carter. The Chief Memoirist agrees with Lethargic that this would be the best approach; an earlier draft, *Leonid Kissed Me in Vienna*, was scrapped long ago.

Finally, *Where Have All the Targets Gone?*, a slim volume of nostalgic poetry by a right-wing pundit who, as the old year and old Administration passes, now knows how Dempsey felt when Firpo went off to make his fortune in the Pampas. Vanity press; no legs.

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