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Abstract       Ramparts magazine reportedly up for sale; reports that magazine now has circulation of 100K and "is breaking even."

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# David Obst: Ramparts Purchase Negotiations

By Maxine Cheshire

David Obst, literary agent for Ramsey Clark, and Daniel Ellsberg and one of the men who made the Mylai massacre story public, is reportedly in California negotiating to buy the muckraking magazine, Ramparts.

If Obst's mission is successful, sources close to him say that he intends to move the financially imperiled magazine from San Francisco to Washington.

He has already lined up one byline, columnist Jack Anderson's youthful associate, Brit Hume.

Hume became nationally known last spring as the reporter to whom lobbyist Dita Beal first confirmed authorship of the controversial memo in which ITT pledged \$400,000 to the Republican National Convention while antitrust suits against the conglomerate were pending in the courts.

Hume is giving up his full-time job with Anderson this week to freelance, but will continue to work for him on a part-time basis.

Obst, reached at the Ramparts office in California last week, was reluctant to talk about the deal at this stage. He confirmed that negotiations were going on, but said at that moment he was "just sitting back smoking a cigar."

Ramparts, which lost \$4 million and was reorganized

V I P

"Sources close to him say that he intends to move the financially imperiled magazine from San Francisco to Washington."

several years ago under the Federal Bankruptcy Act, now has a circulation of 100,000 and is "breaking even."

Obst, 26, intends to shift the magazine from its doctrinaire liberal focus, aiming for more investigative reporting by writers like Hume and a broader national appeal.

Obst, at 23, first became known outside radical circles as the agent who marketed the Mylai massacre story, which ultimately won the Pulitzer Prize for reporter Seymour M. Hersh.

More recently, Obst surfaced as the representative who set up Attorney General Ramsey Clark's press confer-

ences here and in California after Clark returned from Hanoi.

## Potpourri

Washingtonians answering a recent "House For Sale" ad in the classifieds discovered that the Georgetown dwelling was owned by Abigail McCarthy. But she is merely getting rid of the place as a real estate investment, she says, and has no plans to move away from Washington. Both she and former Sen. Eugene McCarthy, from whom she has been separated since 1969, are busy writing new books and both say they have no plans at the moment to file for divorce . . . There's a long line of agents, magazine and book editors eager to get Martha Mitchell's memoirs under contract. Someone who called her at the Essex House in New York last week discovered that there were 30 people who had gotten there first . . . Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson were just sitting there at the ranch, having breakfast and watching the "Today" show last week when someone mentioned on the air that it was Barbara Walters' birthday. So the former President got on the telephone. He didn't sing "Happy Birthday," but he did have some nice things to say.

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