

WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS

20 MAR 1972

The spies bumped into each other in Afghanistan

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Kathleen Trautman has lovely red hair, alluring green eyes and what she describes as a "big flannel mouth."

It's this last feature that is soon to give the federal government's foreign service establishment fits.

For Mrs. Trautman, until recently a foreign service wife, has written a book. It's called "Spies Behind the Pillars, Bandits at the Pass," and is due on the bookshelves late this month.

It's based on her life in Afghanistan, where husband Robert Trautman was our embassy's U.S. Information Agency officer.

She found it a great adventure. Travel to exotic places. Fascinating new friends. But also a scene that called for more than a bit of debunking.

For instance: One chapter in her book, sure to disconcert our cloak-and-dagger department, is titled: "The CIA and other Disasters."

Of Afghanistan she writes: "Green grapes and rugs are two of Afghanistan's major exports. Her major import, I suspect, is spies. There are so many of them bumping into each other that at times it was hard to take them seriously."

She reports her husband, now the White House correspondent for a British press service agrees. It was his estimate, she says, that Kabul, Afghanistan's capital, must have been either the place where old spies retired or inept ones were banished.

Nor is she one to keep silent about what too often has been the lot of the junior foreign service officers and their wives. She writes:

"People who survive are not outspoken. They work for 25 years without having an opinion said they're on top. Bright, really terrific young junior officers are put to work stamping visas. They never get to make a decision, so



Kathleen Trautman

they give up, resign and go into private business."

Kathleen Cale Trautman is a native Kansan. Her husband comes from Wisconsin. They married just before his Marine Division went to Korea. Now the Trautmans have two sons, Max, soon to be 14, and Karl, 12. Daughter Samantha, 2½, was born shortly after the family left Afghanistan.

The Trautmans' adventures in Afghanistan, with side trips to Russia, Iran, India and Pakistan, make good reading. Katie's blasts at the Foreign Service are written in good humor and, of course, she has changed names freely.

"Nobody will recognize anybody," said Katie. "Unless, of course, they were there at the time or ran up against the same people at another post."

MORI/CDF