

MONEY MAKERS

Abbie, Jerry Cashing In on the Revolution

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NEW YORK—Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin live in two worlds. There's the world of the streets—of Chicago, the Pentagon, of Uncle Sam hats, American Flag shirts, Brillo hair—the media-manipulative, put-on world of the Yippies.

But less visible, there's another world—of literary agents, royalty checks, sales percentages, lecture fees, book and movie contracts.

For Hoffman, 32, and Rubin, 31, are leading examples of a new discovery by book publishers and movie producers: there's big money in revolution.

Hoffman's two books already have sold 191,000 copies and earned more than \$50,000 in advances, royalties and resale rights. As an added bonus, his book, "Revolution for the Hell of It," was bought by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer to be made into a movie. Hoffman's share in the complicated deal is at least \$25,000, with another payment still pending. The Yippie leader also has a piece of the net profits.

Quiet About Business

Hoffman and Rubin, flamboyant radicals with more than 30 arrests between them, are a bit reluctant to talk about their business side.

Are you a good businessman, Hoffman was asked? "Maybe," he replied after a long pause. "But I'm a better pool hustler."

"He talks about advances. He talks about percentages of things. He knows what he's doing," says Christopher Cerf, the Random House editor who worked on Hoffman's second book, "Woodstock Nation."

Rubin's book, "Do It," has sold 175,000 copies since it appeared last year. "It's going to sell a million," he

predicts. Rubin has earned at least \$45,000 from the paperback so far. In a dispute, he returned half of his \$10,000 advance to Simon & Schuster so "Do It" could have the intricate photo layouts he wanted.

"I'm a terrible businessman," he moans. "I paid for the layout myself." Others differ. "He can take care of himself," says Danny Moses, Rubin's editor.

Eye Kept on New Left

Spurred by the success of the two Yippie leaders and Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver before them (Cleaver's book, "Soul on Ice," sold more than 1.2 million copies), some major publishers have assigned editors to keep an eye on the New Left, for potentially hot literary properties.

The latest entry: Panther Party Chairman Bobby Seale's book which was sold by fellow Panthers during a rally on his behalf in New Haven, Conn., last month.

"There's a certain competition among publishers for who has the best radical going," says Carl Brandt, Rubin's agent, who also represents traditional writers such as Marquis Childs and Stephen Birmingham. In a large sense, it's the latest twist—with today's royalties added—to a phenomenon that started with Tom Paine—revolutionary pamphleteering. Publishers, themselves, may not agree with the sentiments, but they feel the public has the right to know.

The books clearly are aimed at youth. Hoffman and Rubin sell well

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at college book stores. Their success mixes with Marxes, Karl and Groucho. There's lots of show biz.

A key person in the beginning was Joyce Johnson, Hoffman's first editor at the Dial Press.

She recalls:

"I lived in the East Village on St. Marks Place. One could not help become aware of Abbie. Just on the off-chance he might be interested in doing a book, I dropped him a note."

Abbie collected a \$2,000 advance from Dial. But the book really didn't take shape until just after the Democratic National Convention in 1968.

'Just Pours Out'

"He called me up and said 'I've got the book.' It was right after Chicago. It suddenly jelled," says Hoffman's first editor. "He wrote very quickly. He's very facile, very clever. It just pours out of him."

Hoffman did most of the writing on his second book in Christopher Cerf's office. Often he lay on the floor, shirt off, scribbling in longhand. A parade of mini-skirted editorial assistants filtered in and out, staring.

One day Christopher's father, Bennett Cerf, head of Random House, toured the company with a staid matron. They opened the door and there was Hoffman, bare-chested, working on the book in his usual position. "He's not my son. He's not my son," Cerf exclaimed.

"Hi, dad," Hoffman answered with a big grin.

Brandt recalls he first met Rubin in Central Park while he was watching a Yippie "love-in." Those were the days when the Youth International Party, founded by Hoffman and Rubin, was trying to recruit members, so protests could be organized in the streets at the Democratic convention.

Rubin later arrived at Brandt's Park Ave. office with the outline for his book, "Do it," was turned down by 15 publishers be-

fore Simon & Schuster accepted it.

Hoffman and Rubin are supreme self-publicists.

"Jerry's a marvelous promoter," says Brandt. "The trial itself was great promotion."

TV Appearance

During his Chicago trial on charges of conspiring to cross state lines with intent to incite riot, Rubin gave U.S. District Court Judge Julius J. Hoffman pages from the book. Since then, Rubin has appeared on ABC television's late night Dick Cavett show. Rubin did not plug the book, but he tore up and stepped on a judge's robes. Letters to Cavett generally damned Rubin but praised the program for having him on.

"Just being Abbie is publicity in itself," says a spokesman for the Dial Press. "He makes news. In our office he's courteous. He's trying to figure out ways to promote the book . . . He knows what he's here for. We know what he's here for."

"When 'Revolution for the Hell of It' came out in November, 1968, Hoffman was laid up with hepatitis in a hospital in the Bronx. But he promoted himself an experimental patient

and escaped most medical bills.

Sometimes, when traveling around the country on revolutionary missions, Hoffman will tuck a list of book stores to be visited into his suitcase. During a recess at the Chicago trial, he hosted a fingerprint party—instead of the traditional autograph party—at a Chicago bookstore. Hoffman made deals with customers. He managed to sell copies of the \$2.95 "Woodstock Nation" paperback for prices ranging from \$5.00 to \$20.

"He's better at publicity than anyone else I've met," Cerf says. Hoffman's lawyer and business agent, Jerry Lefcourt, says: "He'd probably be worth \$250,000 on Madis-

on Ave."

"I suppose so," Hoffman says a bit dryly. "I could not last a year in those neon ovens."

Paperback Press

All the hoopla tends to obscure the business side. Both Hoffman and Rubin found their own book designers. Both insisted on being published in paperback. "We will not write a hard-covered book," says Hoffman. "We are not writing for people who will read hard-covered books."

And then, there's the business of revolution. The books are designed to bring down inhibitions and institutions.

A sample from Hoffman:

"One good way to protect the security of your gang is to all turn on together with LSD. A cop would smoke pot but he sure as hell would never drop acid. Also I've never seen an undercover cop with long hair and I've seen a lot of undercover cops."

And one from Rubin:

"When planning a demonstration, always include a role for the cops. Most people don't get excited until the cops come in. Nothing radicalizes like a cop. Cops are perfectly dressed for the role of 'bad guy'."

Says Rubin of "Do It":

"The goal of the book is to destroy the system . . . it's a Molotov Cocktail. The whole purpose of the book is to spread chaos."

MGM Negotiations

Lefcourt threatened Hoffman through difficult negotiations with MGM. "Metro said 'How do we do an Abbie Hoffman film,'" explained Hillard Elkins, who is producing the Hoffman movie. "Abbie said 'How do I let Metro do it without selling out.'"

Actually, there are two movies: a feature film based on Hoffman's book, and a separate documentary based on the Chicago Conspiracy Trial. (Hoffman and Rubin received five-year sentences.) The documentary film is budgeted at \$100,000; the fea-

ture at \$900,000. The advance for a documentary went to a fund for the defendants in the Chicago trial.

Where has all the money gone? Some of it has gone for bail. Hoffman and Rubin vehemently deny having sold out to capitalism in the slightest degree. They say, and their agents claim, almost every penny of their earnings flows back into the movement. Lefcourt says that Hoffman's life style has not

changed — and that the Yippie leader now has to worry about his income taxes.

"He isn't rich," adds Lefcourt.

"I was not co-opted," Rubin says. "I didn't do the book for money. I did the book because I wanted to spread the fire. We're using the system to destroy it."

But Rubin praises Simon & Schuster. "Even a good Communist can respect a good capitalist," he says. "They have distributed the book well."

What of the future? Hoffman is writing two more books. One is called, "Steal This Book," and is a manual of how to get things free in America.

Hoffman's wife, Amita, also is writing a book. Rubin says he is planning another book this summer.

The two revolutionaries paused the other day amidst all the activities to reflect on themselves as authors.

"A book is like a chocolate bar. You experience it. It's not just debating intellectual ideas," Rubin said.

"I have a disdain for my own writing. I don't view myself as an author," Hoffman said. "I just exert a lot of energy. Sometimes I write it down on paper."

He thought a minute.

"It's embarrassing," he said. "You try to overthrow the government and end up on the best seller list."