

The Nixon Memoirs: Selling Like a Million

By Tom Zito

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Newspaper contracts for the serialization of former President Richard Nixon's memoirs have almost hit the \$1 million mark, according to newspaper and publishing company sources, thereby setting a newspaper industry record for serialization sales.

In England, the London Telegraph has contracted to pay \$100,000 for the series of 12 articles it expects to print next fall; The Chicago Tribune, \$50,000; The Boston Herald-American, \$40,000. James Bellows editor of The Washington Star, which will publish the series here, would only say, "We didn't pay \$50,000. I won't say whether we paid \$40,000."

Warner Books, which reportedly has

paid Nixon a \$2-million advance for his 250,000-word opus, sold the serialization franchise to The New York Times. According to Times sources, the contract gives Warner a guaranteed \$750,000 advance against a percentage of the total serialization gross. If the gross approaches \$3 million, as some newspaper industry sources suggest it might, Warner could recoup its entire investment in the project. Nixon receives none of the serialization fees.

"I wish that figure were true, because we'd make a phenomenal amount of money on it," Times executive vice president Sydney Gruson said yesterday. "Right now we've got less than \$1 million."

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Nixon Memoirs: A Record Sale

NIXON, From D1

John Osenenko of The Times' Special Features division said the Times "at the moment" has sold the serial to 94 domestic newspapers. "We project getting about 200," he said. "It's already the most expensive serial ever published, and has the highest guarantee ever paid."

Newspaper sources say the serialization of Dwight David Eisenhower's presidential memoirs held the previous record for high price. In 1965 in the Boston area, for example, the rights went for \$12,000—a figure unheard of in that day. (1965 dollars

were worth about 60 per cent more than 1976 dollars.) Lyndon Johnson's memoirs brought about \$10,000 in the Boston market.

But most serials go for much less—frequently under \$1,000—because they are usually considered a good form of publicity for a book.

"I have no comment to make, said Irving Lazar, who was Nixon's agent on the book and later represented Warner Books in the serialization deal.

Similarly, Warner vice president Mark Greenberg said, "There is nothing I can confirm at this time. I wish I could give you some information."