



Out of office and in the money: Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford stand to earn millions through books, television appearances and lectures. Jimmy Carter is also expected to be flooded with lucrative offers when he's an ex-President.

Open to Discussion:

Should the Presidency Be Used for Profit?

by Lloyd Shearer

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Several weeks ago Jerry terHorst, former President Gerald Ford's first press secretary, wrote an article for *Free Enterprise* magazine.

terHorst, who resigned after Ford pardoned Nixon without first telling him, wrote that Ford stands to earn as much as \$3 million in the next three years "huckstering and hustling and merchandising the Presidency.

"Many of us," terHorst wrote, "expected honest, decent Jerry Ford to set a higher standard for ex-Presidents than

has been the case in the past."

Does terHorst have any realistic right to such expectations? Are ex-Presidents to be excommunicated from enjoying the money-making opportunities of Senators, film stars and famous athletes?

Is it all right for superstar John Wayne to do a TV headache commercial for a reported fee of \$450,000? How about Joe Namath plugging everything from Dingo boots to panty hose?

Are we outraged at O.J. Simpson for

earning \$250,000 from Hertz, at Lord Olivier for garnering more than that from Polaroid? And how about golfer Jack Nicklaus, Goldwater's 1964 running mate William Miller and ex-Sen. Sam Ervin of Watergate fame doing spots for the American Express Co.?

Are we to condemn Sam Dash, Leon Jaworski, John Dean, Jeb Magruder, John Ehrlichman and all the rest of the Watergate authors?

Richard Nixon was the first ex-President to hire a Hollywood agent—in his case, Irving "Swifty" Lazar—to market his wares. Lazar has done fabulously well for Nixon with his Warner paperback, his Grosset & Dunlap hardcover deals and his David Frost TV bonanza. Nixon will gross more than \$3 million.

Gerald Ford was the second ex-President to hire a Hollywood agent. In Norman Brokaw of the William Morris Agency, he has one of the best—not only for himself, but for his wife Betty, sons Jack and Steve, and daughter Susan. The oldest Ford son, Mike, has to date resisted the agent's call.

Kissinger, too

But former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has not. He, too, has hired a theatrical agent, Marvin Josephson of International Creative Management, to represent him in a variety of money-making deals with Little, Brown—the publishing company owned by Time, Inc.—and NBC, the TV network owned by RCA. They total about \$5 million.

At a recent press conference in San Diego, Cal., Lester Crystal, NBC's executive vice president in charge of news, was asked to explain and justify his network's policy of hiring two partisan politicians like Ford and Kissinger.

One newsman asked if it was prudent for NBC to "abrogate the American tradition that a former President, having been honored with the highest citizen's post in the country, offers his advice for a lifetime free to his fellow citizens?"

Crystal's reply was that NBC had hired Ford and Kissinger for their experience and expertise. "We think," he said, "that they have the opportunity to be heard and questioned. They are not going to be presented as commentators or journalists. That is not going to be their role." Exactly what is, nobody seems to be able to clarify at this point.

Carter and Vance?

At the Hillcrest Country Club south of Hollywood, where most of the film colony's leading talent agents gather, a current apocryphal gag has the former secretary of state signing a contract to plug "Kissinger's Knishes" for a chain of delicatessens. Could anyone have joked thus of Dean Acheson or Elihu Root or Cordell Hull? Is there any possibility that Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Jimmy Carter will offend the public if

they follow in the commercial footsteps of Kissinger and Ford?

Jimmy Carter's family is one of the most commercial in Presidential history. His brother Billy makes personal appearances at \$5000 a day. His sister Ruth has written two books, is working on a third. His mother Lillian and his sister Gloria signed book contracts with fat advances from Simon & Schuster. Jimmy himself has already earned more than \$75,000 in royalties from his pre-Presidential autobiography *Why Not the Best?* and has another book, a collection of campaign speeches, on sale.

Donates royalties

The question of Presidential propriety in commercial ventures was also raised at a Carter press conference in which he explained that he would keep the first \$20,000 of his book royalties and donate the remainder to a trust that would supervise the building of a public library to hold his papers.

"I think," Carter said, "that this is a policy I would like to pursue after I go out of office. I don't know what my financial circumstances might be then. I might find a need on occasion to derive some financial benefit from writing or from appearances of some kind. So I can't close the door completely to what I will do after I am out of this office. But I can describe to you what I have already done voluntarily to make sure that there's no financial reward coming to me because I happen to be in the White House. . . . I don't want to benefit financially from this status."

Age of television

The ancillary rights to the Presidency consist of more than Presidential memoirs. We take those for granted. But this is the age of television and the spoken word, and if some organization wants to pay Gerald Ford \$5000 for a 30-minute speech and an hour of answering audience questions, is there any good reason why he should be accused of huckstering or of hiring the best agent he can find?

Basically, taste, principle and proportion are involved. Some celebrities—like Robert Redford, Marlon Brando and Paul Newman—will generally refrain from endorsing any product except their own. Others will endorse pretty nearly anything. They have no qualms about selling their celebrity to the highest bidder.

Perhaps Jerry terHorst is correct in writing that "all this huckstering and hustling and merchandising of the Presidency robs the office of something fine and decent." But the truth is that the American Presidency has long been tarnished or commercialized by some of its occupants. It has never been sinful in the American ethic "to make a buck" and who is wise enough to tell an ex-President where to draw the line?

Two top agents who got top money for two ex-Presidents



Irving "Swifty" Lazar and wife Mary. He arranged Nixon's \$2.5 million book deal and the \$700,000 David Frost interviews on TV, says Nixon came to him.



Gerald Ford with Norman Brokaw, who is getting the ex-President and wife an estimated \$1 million for biographies and about \$1.5 million in TV deals.

In today's million-dollar book and TV market," declares Irving Lazar, "you can sell more than ex-Presidents.

"You can sell the memoirs of anyone who's had sufficient public exposure—Idi Amin, Leon Jaworski, Lauren Bacall, Sen. William Fulbright. The publishing business has become a branch of show business. It's a matter of economics. Big money—that's what's involved."

Irving "Swifty" Lazar, a lifelong Democrat, is the veteran Hollywood agent who engineered Richard Nixon's \$2.5 million deal with Warner Paperback books and Nixon's \$700,000 TV interview deal with David Frost.

"It wasn't I," he explains, "who went to Nixon. It was Ron Ziegler, Nixon's ex-press secretary, who called me from San Clemente a couple of Augusts ago. He said Nixon had some business to discuss, so I drove down to his place at San Clemente. Nixon and I had a long lunch. When it was over, I had the rights to sell his memoirs, which I did."

A small (barely more than 5 feet tall) man of 70, bald, bespectacled, and always immaculately groomed, Lazar is known as "Swifty" in Hollywood because, in the words of the late Humphrey Bogart, "he puts together a fast deal for a fast buck. He's a swifty."

Lazar is also a lawyer, the art-loving owner of some \$2 million worth of Picassos, Chagalls, Dalis, Rouaults and Diebenkorns, and head of his own talent agency.

Famous clients

"I now represent," he says, "or have in the past, such clients as John Huston, Truman Capote, Clifford Odets, Irwin Shaw, Herman Wouk, L.B. Mayer, the Gershwins, Doc [Neil] Simon, Edna Ferber, Art Buchwald, Noel Coward, Lerner and Loewe. I was the fellow who sold the movie rights of *My Fair Lady* to Warners for \$5.5 million and got another \$350,000 for George Cukor to direct.

"The book-selling business," he explains, "and all its subsidiary rights has mushroomed into a giant. In many

cases non-fiction outsells fiction. U.S. Presidents, once out of office, have almost all written their memoirs—but until recently for very small markets. Now it's coming to the point probably where U.S. Presidents are going to sign up with an agent before they leave office—not only for themselves but for their families as well.

"As I told you before, what's involved is money—millions, not peanuts, but millions. Why do you think Jimmy Carter's mother, Miz Lillian, put together a book? Why do you think his sister or sisters are doing more books? Because they want to explain the peanut plantations of Plains?"

"I think that with the Nixon deal I started the million-dollar trend for ex-Presidents. And now it's spread to other people of prominence. But for big money, the personality who writes a book can't afford to be shy or timid. The book's got to be revealing or shocking or startling. It's got to tell some truths, some information the book-buying public was unaware of.

Go West, young man

A New Yorker who started out in the agency business in the 1930's as a nightclub-booker for MCA, Lazar says his life changed dramatically as a result of World War II. He joined the Army Air Corps as a private, talked playwright Moss Hart, whose protégée he later became, into writing a play for the Air Corps. Hart wrote *Winged Victory*, which was later sold to the movies. Lazar was promoted to captain, and when the war ended he followed Moss Hart's advice and established his own agency in Hollywood.

Over the years, "Swifty" developed an expanding and loyal clientele of actors, actresses, directors, and writers.

In 1963 he married former model Mary Van Nuys, who looks after him with great tenderness. They have an art-laden apartment in midtown Manhattan but live most of the year in Beverly Hills, in an exquisitely furnished house high on Carla Ridge in the Trousdale Estates.

Norman Brokaw is a blue-eyed, stocky, cherubic little man of 50 who has spent the last 35 years working for the William Morris Agency, of which he is now a vice president.

He started in Hollywood as a William Morris mail boy, worked his way up to handling the careers of movie stars.

Late in 1976—through the intervention of Don Penny, a gag writer who had joined Gerald Ford's speechwriting staff in the Presidential campaign—Brokaw moved in to augment Ford's \$96,500 annual pension via a variety of literary and TV deals.

Ford family deals

To date, Norman Brokaw has arranged the following deals for members of the Ford family, who will pay a 10 percent commission to the agency:

(1) For an estimated \$1 million, Gerald and Betty Ford are writing their autobiographies in a joint venture which will be supervised by Harper & Row and Reader's Digest. Christine Chase, author of *How To Be a Movie Star*, is helping Mrs. Ford in her literary creation; Trevor Armbrister, author of books on the Pueblo incident and the Yablonski murders, is similarly assisting Mr. Ford. Chase and Armbrister are reportedly each receiving \$100,000.

(2) For a sum "very, very close to \$1 million," Gerald Ford has signed with NBC to star in one documentary or news special per year for the next five years and to grant NBC the first option on his published memoirs.

(3) For \$500,000, Betty Ford has agreed to make occasional appearances on NBC's *Today* show and participate during the next two years in two specials on dance, mental health or other subjects on which she has expertise.

(4) Steve Ford was originally signed to act in Quinn Martin TV productions as a rodeo performer and actor, but he has found that acting is not his forte and has chosen to work part-time for CBS as a rodeo event commentator.

(5) Jack Ford, Steve's older brother, according to Brokaw, "not only works

for *Outside* magazine, a new publication sponsored by Rolling Stone, but is trying his hand at acting. I've booked him for several TV shows. He's already taken a screen test and is currently reading for movie parts."

(6) Susan Ford, who recently left the University of Kansas, has been signed as the still cameraperson for the film *Jaws II*. Brokaw says, "I made that deal on a plane trip back from New York, and I can tell you the studio is immensely pleased with her."

Brokaw is also immensely pleased with himself. "This is the first time in American history," he says, "where a theatrical agency has handled the post-Presidential media affairs for a President and his family. And I believe we've started a trend.

"Take someone like Jimmy Carter, who's a natural TV performer. When Carter leaves the White House, he's not going to retire. He'll be swamped by offers for all sorts of appearances, speeches and memoirs. He'll need someone to book him, to get him the best possible deals. A whole new career will open for him."

'Jimmy and Rosalynn show'

Brokaw points out that although Carter has been in the White House for less than a year, his brother, mother and two sisters "have already become involved in the media whirl, and the President has two books on sale."

Brokaw feels that "a Jimmy and Rosalynn show would be an easy TV sale once they leave the White House because they are both personable, warm and charismatic.

"The world of show business," Brokaw asserts, "now encompasses politicians as well as performers. If a politician has a pleasing, photogenic personality, he can be packaged and sold."

Norman Brokaw was born and reared in New York City, arrived in Hollywood in 1943. He is the father of five—three boys by his first wife and two girls by his current wife, the former Suzanne Weintraub. Like the Lazars, they live in the Trousdale Estates.