

Poor Richardson's Almanac

By JOYCE ILLIG

AN AGREEMENT HAS BEEN MADE for Elliot Richardson's new book with "a very substantial" bid, according to Julian Bach, the literary agent handling the property. Holt, Rinehart & Winston will be signing the contract. The advance will be well over \$50,000 in an auction situation that started with 36 editors at 28 publishing houses and ended in a final round of bidding from four houses.

Bach says Richardson's book was sold from a very long, detailed outline and that it will concentrate on the power problems of government and on isolation of the individual citizen.

Richardson said that he will be writing about a subject he's been thinking about for a long time: "The preservation and the sense of significance for the individual in the face of all of the forces in modern society that tend to submerge people and make them feel helpless and unable effectively to control the forces that influence their lives."

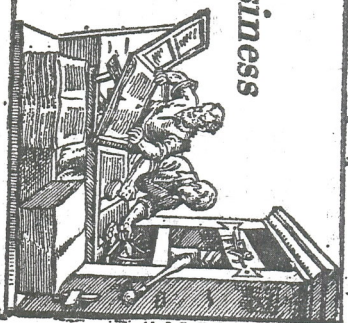
JOYCE ILLIG reports frequently on the publishing scene for Book World.

Richardson was reached for comment at his office in the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars at the Smithsonian where he is a fellow. "I came here to work on this very book," he said, "and to help organize a program in state and local government."

Richardson's work and writing are related. "The problem of the sense of individual dignity and significance derives in part from the remoteness and impersonality of the central government, and the sense that government is both powerful and beyond the reach of the individual. This suggests, then, that the way to deal with the problem is to disperse power and to subdivide it and to make its exercise more accessible to people. For me, the subdivision of power, the reliance on state and local government is one of the ways in which to deal with the overall problem."

When asked if his book would include any of his personal experiences during the time that he was attorney general, Richardson replied, "There may be some material drawn from my period of service at the Department of Justice, to the extent that that helps to bear on either problems of power or confidence in government. If you begin with a conservative individual as I do, then that takes you not only to the question of the individual sense of effectiveness but of confidence. And of course Watergate is central to all of that. The problems of the centralization of power lead to the potentials of the abuse of power, and Watergate is illustrative of the kinds of dangers inherent in that. So,

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to that extent these things naturally come into the book. But there won't be a description of the week that was, leading up to my resignation. And it's not a book of reminiscences."

Richardson's subject is an important one, and he plans to have the manuscript completed by March 1. "I've got to try to make it readable and interesting," he concluded. "I may move out of here though, just to get away from the telephone."

BARBARA HOWAR's novel *Making Ends Meet*, about a Washington woman "getting it together," will be published by Random House next year. It's reported that Random House paid a \$100,000 advance.

Three other publishers were in on the bidding, with one of them offering a larger advance. Howar, who had the final say-so, will be working with an old friend at Random House, Bob Loomis, one of their top editors. □