

A Safire Book Settlement

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NEW YORK—The publishing industry won't have former presidential assistant William Safire's book on Richard Nixon to kick around anymore. After a six-month search for a new publisher, Safire has signed a contract—for considerably less money—with Doubleday and Co. for publication of virtually the same manuscript that was put in arbitration last December after publishers William Morrow and Co. rejected it on grounds that it was editorially unacceptable under specific terms of their publishing contract.

Describing the Safire work as the only "pre-Watergate" look at Mr. Nixon's presidency, Doubleday is calling it a major book for its winter list and plans to publish it during the first week in February.

"I think this book will be the only pre-Watergate look at Nixon and his administration," said Safire's new editor, Sandy Richardson, "and it's by no means an unvarnished portrait." Richardson is vice president and editor-in-chief of the publishing house.

According to Morton Janklow, Safire's lawyer-agent, the contract was negotiated at the same time that Morrow and Safire had reached agreement on the makeup of the arbitration panel. The arbitration,

likely to begin Aug. 1, centers on Morrow's demand that Safire return \$83,000 already paid him out of a guaranteed advance of \$250,000, on grounds that Safire had failed to deliver a complete and acceptable manuscript.

At the time of the Morrow rejection announcement last December, Safire, charging that Morrow's decision not to publish was "the worst kind of censorship," not only refused to return the \$83,000 but demanded payment of the \$167,000 balance.

Safire said at that time that the main reason Morrow wanted out stemmed from Mr. Nixon's slide in public opinion polls—a drop of 40 per cent in the six months following the March, 1973, contract signing. He contended that Morrow was backing out in the belief that what Safire termed a balanced book on Mr. Nixon wouldn't sell.

While Janklow admits that he didn't get anything like the Morrow advance from Doubleday, he says he could have gotten more money than he did from a "lesser quality" publisher but decided to go with the Doubleday offer because of the firm's reputation.

According to Janklow, Safire signed the Doubleday contract before he left for a European vacation early last month. Janklow said Safire, a presidential assistant from 1969 to January, 1972, and now a columnist for The New York Times, is with Mr. Nixon in the Soviet Union.

Janklow also said Morrow has released all claims it had under its contract with Safire, though the money is still in dispute.

The book had been tentatively titled "A Hurry to Be Great." According to Janklow, Doubleday's Richardson already has suggested a title change.