

Should He Profit?

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Book World Furor Over

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"It's history," said Harold Roth, president of Grosset & Dunlap, the publisher of "RN: The Memories of Richard M. Nixon." "You don't have to buy the book, but shouldn't the guy have a right to be heard?"

Esther and Sidney Kramer, the proprietors of The Remarkable Book Shop in Westport, Conn., have a different point of view: "Not one copy will be ordered or sold in our store unless he's willing to sign a statement in advance giving all the proceeds to his victims or charity."

After three years of writing, ghost-writing and editing, the former President's memories are to be published May 15 by Grosset & Dunlap at \$19.95 for the regular edition, \$50 for a deluxe edition and \$250 for a leather-bound, signed edition.

Just as controversy dogged Nixon in his public life, it follows the 1184-page book that begins with his early recollections in California and ends with his departure under fire from the White House.

In the Congress and in the courts, in bookstores and in publishing houses, the publication of Nixon's recollections has aroused angry debate.

Publishers and booksellers compare the Nixon book with H. R. Haldeman's "The Ends of Power," recently published by Times Books, and ask whether Nixon and Haldeman should profit by their misconduct, whether books by the former President who barely avoided impeachment and by his former chief of staff who was imprisoned should be published and handled with

enthusiasm.

Doubleday & Co. turned down the opportunity to take on the Nixon and Haldeman books as well as works by John D. Dean and by John D. Ehrlichman.

Stewart Richardson, Doubleday's vice president and editor-in-chief, said that the company had made it a policy not to publish books by those implicated in Watergate criminality.

Other publishers have said that they tried to balance their lists, publishing books on both sides of the Watergate controversy. Simon & Schuster, for example published both Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's "All the President's Men" and Dean's book.

By the same reasoning, the Book-of-the-Month Club, which took on the Woodward-Bernstein, Dean and Haldeman books as main selections, has agreed to distribute the Nixon Memoirs, but only as an alternate selection.

After making an early bid, the Literary Guild, part of Doubleday & Co., declined to acquire the Nixon book, mainly on the ground that the work did not add significantly to what was already known about Nixon and Watergate.

The Nixon book was read by only one Book-of-the-Month Club judge, Clifton Fadiman, who reported to his colleagues before the group decided against the Nixon book. Thereafter, Al Silverman, the senior vice president and editorial director of the club, took it on as an alternate.

Unlike a main selection, which

requires a positive act of refusal by book club members, an alternate can simply be ignored.

"There are less complaints from members with alternates," Silverman said. "We got a lot of mail against the Dean book and there was some against the Haldeman, but there is no telling yet on the Nixon book. Whatever one thinks of Nixon, we feel it's a historical document."

Warner Books, which bought world rights to the Nixon memoirs, and Grosset & Dunlap encountered difficulty in arranging foreign book publication, but had more success in selling syndication rights to newspapers and magazines through the New York Times feature service.

The Times and other newspapers began publishing excerpts from the book Sunday.

In reaction to the Ehrlichman, Haldeman and Nixon books, bills have been introduced in Congress to prevent the authors from profiting by their wrongdoing.

Representative B.F. Sisk (Dem.-Calif.) is trying to move through the criminal justice subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee a bill that would give profits from publications by convicted criminals to their victims.

Since Nixon has not been convicted of any crimes, a lawyer for the subcommittee said, he would not be affected by such legislation, and with the other Watergate participants who have written books, there would be a problem of an ex post facto law.

Nixon

In an effort to prevent Haldeman from receiving royalties from his book—and with the hope that such action would affect Nixon—a suit has been filed in a Manhattan court by Debra Jenkins, a 24-year-old legal secretary with the firm of Berney & Cousins in New York.

Jenkins contends that she has been damaged "as a citizen and a taxpayer of the United States" because Haldeman withheld information from official investigators only to release it in his book. The suit asks that Haldeman's royalties "be turned over to the General Treasury of the United States."

Using the slogan, "Don't Buy Books by Crooks," a Committee to Boycott Nixon's Memoirs was formed as a partnership in Virginia

three months ago by Tom Flanigan, the 26-year-old owner of a carpet cleaning company, and William Boleyn, 29-year-old owner of a Washington restaurant. Both men are on leave from their businesses.

"Four years ago, Nixon had a chance to tell the truth for free," Flanigan said. "Now he's charging \$19.95 a copy to tell the same old story."

Flanigan and Boleyn have raised \$39,000 to distribute literature, T-shirts and bumper stickers, some of which say, "Erase the Memoirs," and "The Book Stops Here."

Despite such opposition, the Nixon memoirs will be available in most bookstores, according to a check of wholesale distributors and book chains.

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