

Dell, Bantam Rush Tapes Paperbacks

By B. D. Colen

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Dell Publishing Co. and Bantam Books know a real comer when they see one.

The two paperback book publishers are racing feverishly to see who will be first to deliver a commercial paperback version of President Nixon's transcribed telephone and office conversations to the book rack in your neighborhood drug stores.

The publishing giants decided yesterday that the President's conversations are one of the hottest literary properties in years, as the Government Printing Office sold more than 2,000 copies of the 1,308 page transcripts as fast as they could be carried from the bindery to the GPO book store yesterday.

Those who wait for the publication of one of the two paperbacks will not be able to read the transcripts as soon as those who buy the original at the GPO, but those who buy the commercial book will save themselves a good deal of money.

A spokesman for Bantam said yesterday the Bantam version will sell for \$2.95, while the Dell Product will retail for \$2.45, compared to \$12.25 for the GPO version.

Each of the paperback firms is collaborating in the production of its book with a major American newspaper: Dell with The Washington Post; Bantam with The New York Times and Quadrangle Books, The Times' book division.

While all profits from the GPO version of the transcripts must be returned to the U.S. Treasury and not the President, the two newspaper-book publisher combinations share their profits, and do not have to pay any royalties for the transcript

because they are considered part of the public domain.

Bantam, no newcomer to the publication of "quickie" news-related books, hopes to have its book on the stands within 10 days. Bantam also published the Warren Commission Report and the Kerner Commission Report and 47 other, such books.

William Dickinson Jr., director of The Washington Post Writers Group, said the Dell product should be out "some time next week."

Dickinson said the Dell-Washington Post book will include related articles that appeared in The Washington Post the first few days after the release of the transcripts.

"The book will be about 700 pages in length, and will be called 'The Presidential Transcripts.' The first printing tentatively has been set at 400,000 copies."

As workers at Dell's St. Louis plant labor 24 hours a day to prepare the book, Bantam is racing to get out its book, "The White House Transcripts."

According to Esther Margolis, a Bantam vice president, the Bantam book, too, will be about 700 pages. The initial press run has been set for 300,000, she said.

"It's going to be a paperback edition of the complete transcripts, with editorial material prepared by the editors and writers of The New York Times," said Miss Margolis. The book will include several essays, introductions to each transcript and an index of names that appear in the transcripts," she said.

"This is the biggest publishing sweepstakes of the year," said Dickinson. "It puts The Washington Post and The New York Times in a head-on race to get out the same book."

When the transcripts first went on sale Tuesday, the 720 available copies were grabbed from the GPO display table in three hours and 21 minutes.

The sales pace was even faster yesterday, despite the \$12.25 price tag on the book and the fact the GPO limited sales to one to a customer.



By Charles Del Vecchio—The Washington Post

William Lee, white shirt, hands copy of tape transcripts to buyers in line at GPO Book Store yesterday morning.