

PACT IS REPORTED ON NIXON MEMOIRS

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Paperback Publisher Said
to Have Acquired Rights
—a Ziegler Role Seen

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By ERIC PACE

Irving Paul Lazar, a Beverly Hills literary agent, said yesterday that Warner Paperback Library, a New York publisher, had acquired the rights to publish former President Richard M. Nixon's memoirs in paperback.

Reached at his New York office, Mr. Lazar said he had negotiated the acquisition on behalf of Mr. Nixon, but he declined to discuss how much Warner would pay, saying the arrangement was "very involved, and it has not been altogether ironed out." He said the hard cover rights had not yet been sold.

Asked whether Mr. Nixon could earn \$2-million by writing his memoirs, as other literary agents have said, Mr. Lazar replied, "Who knows, it just depends on what kind of book he writes; if he writes an interesting book, I think it'll sell a lot."

"But I don't know what he's going to write yet, and he doesn't know what he's going to write," Mr. Lazar continued. "For one thing, he's sick, and I don't know when he's going to work on it."

Executives of Warner Paperback Library, a division of Warner Communications, could not be reached for comment yesterday evening. They have occasionally paid large sums for the paperback rights for promising books, including \$1-million for "All the President's Men," the best seller about Watergate by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward.

Well-placed publishing sources said yesterday that Ronald L. Ziegler, Mr. Nixon's aide, had also been involved in the negotiations concerning the Nixon memoirs, and they said that Warner would leave it to Mr. Nixon to decide whether to disclose the details.

On Sept. 87 Mr. Lazar, whose clients include Truman Capote and Vladimir Nabokov, reported that the former President had authorized him to sell his unwritten memoirs.

Mr. Nixon "wants to be a part of things; to make a contribution in the quest for peace, to make his voice heard loud and clear," Mr. Lazar told a reporter at the time.

Yesterday Mr. Lazar reported that after he had met for an hour with William Sarnoff, Warner Paperback's board chairman, and Howard Kaminsky, its president, "we shook hands that they will be the publishers, and they will be."

"We have a modus operandi whereby the price will be determined by the number of books, the content and so on," he said, with the understanding that a one or two volume autobiography was involved.

Asked who might help Mr. Nixon in preparing the book, Mr. Lazar said that "no editor has been appointed because there's nothing to do yet." He added that the editor might be from the eventual hardcover publisher's staff.

Asked who the hardcover publisher might be, he replied "probably a major house" without elaborating. And when asked whether he had an asking price, he replied "I just start out with who wants to pay the most money."

But Mr. Lazar said he would not stage what publishers call a literary auction for the hardcover rights. "I find it repellent to find a literary work being auctioned," he said. "You auction a horse."

In addition to his California headquarters and his New York office, Mr. Lazar has offices in Paris and London. Among his clients are Alan Jay Lerner, Irwin Shaw, Françoise Sagan and Garson Kanin.