

BEN WEIDER'S BOOK

Nicholson buys Napoleon movie

MONTREAL (CP) — Body-building magnate Ben Weider has sold the film rights for his controversial book on the poisoning of Napoleon Bonaparte to actor Jack Nicholson for \$250,000.

So confident is Weider about the popularity of the subject that his contract with Nicholson will earn the Montreal industrialist a \$500,000 bonus should the film based on The Murder of Napoleon win an Academy Award.

"They're working on the film scenario now," Weider, president of the International Federation of Body Builders and a nominee for this year's Nobel Prize for contribution to fitness, said in an interview Monday.

"Nicholson himself will be the producer and the main star. The film will have the same team as (Academy Award winner) One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest."

Weider said Nicholson, a fellow Napoleonic history buff, bought the rights for \$250,000 and has agreed to give Weider a percentage of box office receipts, plus the \$500,000 if it's an award winner.

Actor Marlon Brando was also interested in the film rights, but Ni-

cholson's agent Sandy Bresler got there first.

The Murder of Napoleon, now being translated into eight languages, including Japanese and Swedish, offers what Weider calls "conclusive evidence" the French emperor was murdered by arsenic and did not die of stomach cancer as recorded in most history books.

Weider, owner of a number of companies which sell bodybuilding and health-care products and president of the Napoleonic Society of Canada, said the money he makes from promoting his idol is not important.

"The money is secondary, really," he said. I make money from my (fitness) empire."

"My great satisfaction is that I was able to satisfy (Napoleon's) dying wish" in his British-imposed exile on the isolated island of St. Helena.

Paranoid and suspicious of foul play, Napoleon, six days before his death in 1821, instructed his doctor to closely examine his remains when he died.

Weider and co-author Sten Forshufvud, a Swedish doctor, point an accusing finger at Charles-Tristan de Montholon, a French aristocrat

who had links with France's restored Bourbon rulers.

Washington's Smithsonian Institute supports Weider's research — based largely on a nuclear-radiation analysis on locks of Napoleon's hair — and the Encyclopedia Britannica recently decided to publish some of his findings on the famous Frenchman in its next edition.

The book has been on Canada's

bestseller list and was the U.S. History Book Club's main selection last October, billed as a "spellbinding whodunit about one of history's greatest crimes."

Reader's Digest also bought the world rights and has published excerpts in its 21 foreign editions.

Weider has published another book called La Sagesse de Napoleon (The Wisdom of Napoleon).

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Singer Philippe Wynne, a former member of the Spinners soul group, collapsed during a performance at a nightclub and died early today at a hospital. He was 40.

Wynne, who sang with

Soul singer dies

the Spinners from 1971 to 1977, died at 12:27 a.m. from a heart attack.

In 1977, Wynne left the Spinners, which performed such hits as I'll Be Around, Could It Be I'm Falling In Love and The Rubberband Man.

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