



Manhattan Transfers

BY KATE KELLY

UPPER WEST SIDE

NICHOLS AND SAWYER LOSE CENTRAL PARK WEST PENTHOUSE TO ANOTHER BUYER

Despite their stalwart attempts to buy Calvin Klein's penthouse at 55 Central Park West, Mike Nichols and Diane Sawyer have officially lost their \$8.5 million deal, according to real estate sources. In late January, the building's co-op board approved Steve Gottlieb, the 41-year-old owner of TVT Records and a resident of the building for several years, as the buy-



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS



JUDITH MIZRACHY

er of the 4,500-square-foot penthouse for about \$8.6 million.

Real estate sources said Mr. Gottlieb's hefty deal will include the rooftop terrace, whose ownership was a bone of contention between Mr. Nichols and Ms. Sawyer and the co-op board. The board turned the media power couple down twice, even after they upped their offer of \$7.5 million by \$1 million in order to secure the rights to the terrace. A source close to the deal said that Mr. Gottlieb's \$8.6 million purchase broke down in the same fashion, with \$1 million being paid directly to the board in exchange for the terrace.

A source with knowledge of the building's inner workings said residents were confused by the board's actions. "They're not prominent rock-and-roll people," said the source, of Mr. Nichols and Ms. Sawyer. "They're conservatively prominent. The kinds of people visiting them will be people the building should be proud of.... Steve is already in the building, so it's not like [going with Mr. Nichols and Ms. Sawyer] is losing him," as a resident.

More likely to explain the board's preference for Mr. Gottlieb, said the source—and several real estate brokers familiar with the sale—is that Mr. Gottlieb was represented by Jeff Lamb, who with his brother, Craig Lamb, owns the company that manages 55 Central Park West, J.&C. Lamb Management Corporation. In 1993, the brothers purchased the management arm of William B. May Company and took it over. The Lambs are still permitted to use the William B. May name, however, and work out of a William B. May office on Park Avenue and 33rd Street. Calvin Klein and Mike Nichols and Diane Sawyer were represented by William B. May broker Roger Erickson.

A source familiar with the deal said that Jeff Lamb had circumvented Mr. Erickson by presenting Mr. Klein's attorney with an \$850,000 down payment in late 1998, when the Nichols-Sawyer deal was still alive—and that through their role as the building managers, the Lamb brothers may even have persuaded the co-op board to reject the couple in favor of Mr. Gottlieb.

"If true, it's shocking," said Stephen Rabinowitz, the attorney who represented Mr. Nichols and Ms. Sawyer on the deal, "because Calvin's people all along were apparently aboveboard. That's surprising to me. It's the first I'm hearing of it."

Robert Di Paola, the attorney representing Mr. Klein on the sale, could not be reached by press time.

Mr. Gottlieb would not comment on the sale. Craig Lamb said on the advice of the corporate counsel of 55 Central Park West, he did not wish to comment; Jeff Lamb did not return calls for comment.