

## OUTSPOKEN COACH

*Voice consultant William Rush helps mumblers make music*

**BY E. M. BURY** Along with all but ensuring his political downfall, President Richard Nixon's famous "I am not a crook" statement on national television violated two cardinal rules of effective on-camera speaking.

"When Nixon made that statement, he didn't say it with much conviction," says Chicago voice consultant William Rush. "And you should never repeat an accusation because it gives it credibility."

While Rush has never had a U.S. president as a client, he has coached corporate presidents and top executives on how to show grace under pressure when appearing before hostile television camera crews, starring in a corporate video or hitting the speaking circuit.

With the increasing number of executives being thrust into the spot-

light these days, buttoned-down executives comprise a bigger portion of Rush's clientele than ever.

His objective is straightforward: Make the client's voice match the message he plans to convey.

"The premise I start with is that you have to use the voice you have," Rush says. "I once had a client with a naturally high voice who said he wanted me to help make his voice sound lower. That just can't be done effectively.

"You can get authority with the instrument you have," he adds. "The



William Rush

quality I look for is depth in the sound, which is a qualitative thing, not a pitch thing."

Sessions are flexible to fit an executive's often hectic schedule, and face-to-face meetings are kept short. Most clients receive "homework" in the form of taped vocal instructions as well as coaching on proper breathing techniques, body language and other tactics designed to create a clear

conduit from speaker to audience.

"I assemble the instructions like a Berlitz tape," Rush notes. "I'll give the client phrases to repeat, for example, if we're trying to establish a certain pitch.