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Schorr Job Still a Mystery

UNLESS Sen. Sam Ervin uses the congressional subpoena, the full story of how CBS newsmen Daniel Schorr almost got a mystery job with the Nixon administration will remain shrouded in secrecy.

This week, John Wesley Dean, counsel to the President, told Sen. Ervin that no White House aides will appear at hearings in February to discuss the illusive high government job that prompted an FBI investigation into Schorr's background last August.

Dean said the refusal was in line with a long-standing policy of the Nixon administration and its predecessors that prohibits advisers to

the President from testifying before Congress.

Ervin is all too familiar with this hesitancy of the Executive branch to explain its actions. For a year now, the North Carolina Democrat has been trying with the same lack of success to prod the Army into detailing publicly why and how it spied on civilians, including some senators and congressmen.

Three Army generals closely involved in the civilian surveillance which started in the Johnson administration have been sought to testify before the subcommittee on constitutional rights. The Defense Department has refused on behalf of the generals and has turned down a request to declassify surveillance documents.

Sen. J. W. Fulbright has also run afoul of the same policy in his continuing efforts to force Henry Kissinger, foreign policy adviser to the President, to testify before Fulbright's Senate panel. Out of frustration, Fulbright has offered a bill that would at least force Kissinger and other White House aides to come to Congress and publicly invoke the no-talk policy before the television cameras.

SENATOR ERVIN hasn't decided whether to kick off the flap that would surely ensue if he tries to subpoena those involved in the Schorr incident.

He has requested appearances by Frederic V. Malek, chief White House talent scout; Charles W. Colson, special counsel to the President, and Herbert G. Klein, director of communications for the Executive branch.

Malek had admitted that it was someone in his operation who triggered the FBI background investigation of

Schorr last August, a few days after the television newsmen had a confrontation with the White House over one of his reports.

Colson has complained to CBS about the quality and accuracy of the reports of Schorr and other CBS newsmen. It came as somewhat of a surprise to the reporters, however, that the complaints were solicited from the White House by top CBS executives.

Ervin has been trying to get Klein for the past year

to discuss his liaison-promotion role between the administration and the top executives of the nation's media empires. The senator, who may be even more of a strict constructionist than Mr. Nixon, wants to learn if Klein's media management role in any way infringes on freedom of the press.

MEANWHILE, the illusive government job for which Schorr was considered carries over into the new year as one of the mysteries of 1971.

To Schorr, of course, it was always a mystery because the first he knew about the potential offer of employment came during interrogation by a friendly FBI agent. Schorr, a suspicious fellow, said later he didn't think the mystery job ever existed even though the White House said it was a crackerjack post "in the environmental area."

Presidential Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler even offered to identify the job, in due time.

That was on Nov. 11.

In a community that delights in such political puzzles as Schorr's nonjob, the mystery has been grist for the cocktail mill and another valley in the arc of credibility.

The White House missed an opportunity by turning Ervin down.