

TV Fee For Nixon Rejected

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NEW YORK—Richard M. Nixon's literary agent has been turned down by CBS News in an attempt to negotiate a paid television appearance by the former President in which it was proposed that he would talk about his White House years but not the Watergate scandal.

The network, mindful of charges of "checkbook journalism" it touched off last March when it paid at least \$25,000 to former Nixon chief of staff H. R. Haldeman for the televised interviews by Mike Wallace, rejected the proposal, according to CBS News President Richard Salant.

The approach has learned from a knowledgeable source who declined to be identified and Salant confirmed it Friday in a telephone interview.

He said that the agent, Irving Lazar, Salant said the offer was that Nixon would be willing to discuss his years in the White House, but "Watergate would be excluded." The talks never reached the stage of a possible format for Nixon or what the fee would be. Salant said he thought it would be proper to pay for a presidential memoir, "but I don't think there could be a memoir without Watergate." Conversely, he added, "if he talked about Watergate, that would be current news, and we don't pay for current news."

News executives at ABC and NBC said that they had not been contacted by Lazar in connection with a possible Nixon TV appearance. ABC News President William Sheehan said he would have turned down an offer because "Nixon remains a news story." NBC News President Richard Wald, however, said his network would like to interview Nixon, preferably without paying for it, but would be willing to discuss "with him or his agents" the question of a fee for his memoirs.