

3/24/77

## David Frost-Nixon begin interviews

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif. (AP) — Richard M. Nixon sat down Wednesday with British talk show star David Frost to start the first of 12 taped interviews about his life, his career of almost 30 years and the Watergate scandal that drove him from office.

There is tight security around each interview. Only a handful of trusted Frost employes are working on the shows. They say advance disclosure of anything newsworthy that Nixon is certain to say may lessen the impact, and thus the ratings.

Frost, 37, calls the interviews — Nixon's first since resigning — the most challenging of his career, "particularly since Richard M. Nixon is renowned to be an incredibly private person, and we want to see the real Richard Nixon, find out the answer to that enigma."

The two-hour interview sessions, the last set for April 20, will be edited down to four 90-minute programs to be aired in May on television and radio in the U.S. and at least 10 foreign countries.

According to Frost, the tapings are being done at a private home near Nixon's estate in San Clemente, 75 miles south of Los Angeles. He declined to make public the name of the owner of the home.

A spokesman for Frost's Paradine Productions, Inc., which bought ex-

clusive rights to interview Nixon, said Wednesday's opening interview began at midmorning.

The CBS, NBC and ABC television networks earlier declined to pay to interview Nixon, 64, citing policies against paying for "hard news." Nixon's agent, Irving "Swift" Lazar, reportedly had sought \$1 million.

Neither Frost nor his company will say how much is being paid Nixon, who signed with Frost on Aug. 9, 1975, exactly a year after resigning office. But published reports put the fee at about \$600,000.

Frost, in an interview earlier this week, said he had been "marinating" in his mind the questions he wants to put to Nixon ever since signing the former president for the interviews.

Last summer, he opened an office in Washington, D.C., to begin research on the Nixon story. Among those who've helped him are Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, the Washington Post newsmen whose Watergate investigations helped lead to Nixon's resignation.

The two reporters, who've since written two best-selling books on Watergate and Nixon, "are but two of hundreds of people who've given us their help," Frost says.

"We've literally talked to hundreds of

people, had a fulltime staff of four working since July, and they've talked to hundreds of people who participated in the Nixon saga — for, against and in the middle."

Frost reiterated what he's said before, that Nixon "has no right to know any of the questions in advance nor even to preview the edited program before it is broadcast. So he will see it when the rest of America, the rest of the world sees it."

The programs are scheduled for airing on at least 118 American TV stations, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. locally in most areas, on May 4, 12, 19 and 25, and on a same-day basis overseas.