

White House Visitors Are

By Carroll Kilpatrick
Washington Post Staff Writer

Every social or political event in which a President participates presents the Secret Service and the FBI with a challenge, as H. R. Haldeman's testimony before the Senate Watergate Committee disclosed to millions of viewers yesterday.

For years, it has been the practice of the Secret Service to collect the names of persons expected to meet with the President or to sit with him at a head table and to run a check on them.

Haldeman testified that "in the case of any entertainer at the White House and for that matter I believe any guest at the White House there is automatically a check made of his FBI file to determine whether he poses any security threat or any potential embarrassment in any other sense."

Sen. Joseph M. Montoya (D-N.M.) questioned Haldeman on why checks were run on entertainers such as Frank Sinatra and Helen Hayes and on CBS reporter Daniel Schorr.

While White House officials are reluctant to talk about the procedures, it is known that both the Secret Service and the FBI investigate persons under consideration for appointments as well as persons expected to meet the President.

All reporters covering the White House, for example, undergo an FBI investigation before passes are issued to them. The reports go to the press secretary, who has authority to accept or to overrule the FBI recommendation.

After the press secretary

approves an applicant for a White House press pass, the Secret Service photographs and fingerprints him and issues a press card.

In a previous administration, the FBI recommended that a Washington Post reporter who had applied for a pass be rejected because it had been found he had associated with a suspected subversive group.

But the press secretary promptly approved the application because he knew the reporter in question and knew that he had been assigned to do a story on the group of alleged subversives. He "associated" with them for a short period to obtain information for his story.

When the President invites a group to dinner or invites entertainers, the Secret Service runs the names

through its computer to see if there is any adverse information. If it has no information, it can ask the FBI to check. The same procedure is followed when the President is invited to a meeting; the head-table guests are checked.

Eric F. Goldman, a former aide to President Johnson, has written in his "The Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson," how the late President ordered an FBI investigation of persons invited to attend a White House Festival of the Arts in 1965.

Mr. Johnson "ordered an FBI check of everyone on the list—not the routine inquiry to identify potential physical danger to the President and his family, but one that looked into beliefs and associations," Goldman said.

Presidential assistant Marvin Watson was authorized to decide which names

to approve and which to disapprove. When he received the FBI reports, he struck six names off the list, much to Goldman's irritation. Goldman said he had a long argument with Watson, with the result that the six were finally invited.

The most sensational confrontation of its kind in the Johnson administration came in January, 1968, when singer Eartha Kitt sharply attacked the Vietnam war.

It was at a luncheon Mrs. Johnson gave for 50 women in the private family dining room to discuss what could be done to insure safe streets.

When Mrs. Johnson asked the women to express their views, Miss Kitt arose and, pointing a finger at Mrs. Johnson, bitterly denounced the administration for sending "the best of this country off to be shot and maimed."

Checked

In late 1970, after President Nixon presented Young American Medals to four persons, Debra Jean Sweet, 19, of Madison, Wis., one of the winners, turned to the President and questioned his sincerity about wanting to end the war.

And in early 1972, a 30-year-old Canadian woman denounced the war from a stage in the East Room following a dinner the Nixons gave for Mr. and Mrs. DeWitt Wallace, co-founders of the Reader's Digest.

Carol Feraci, a member of the chorus line of the Ray Conniff singers, suddenly pulled a sign from her dress. It read "Stop the Killing." She stepped forward, and said to a startled President who was sitting just below her: "President Nixon, stop bombing human beings, animals and vegetation."