

Haldeman Said to Get \$25,000 For CBS Interview by Wallace

By LES BROWN

H. R. Haldeman, former White House chief of staff during the Nixon Administration whose conviction in the Watergate episode is under appeal, yesterday granted an extensive interview to Mike Wallace of CBS News for a fee reported to be "in the neighborhood" of \$25,000.

CBS has said the interview, which was conducted in Beverly Hills, Calif., would yield at least one hour-long news special and possibly two, which would include amateur movies on Super 8 film shot by Mr. Haldeman of White House events and Presidential trips.

While CBS News would not officially disclose what Mr. Haldeman was paid, sources at the network who asked not to be identified supplied what they termed "the ballpark figure." They said also that if the network should decide to use two programs Mr. Haldeman's fee would be larger.

The film still in the laboratory has not yet been screened by CBS News executives. A spokesman said the decision on scheduling, probably for this month, would be made early next week.

Officials of the other network news divisions—who earlier had expressed some dismay when CBS News paid for interviews with Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, the exiled Soviet author, and G. Gordon Liddy, the convicted Watergate conspirator—deplored the practice of paying for exclusivity with news figures.

"We would not pay Haldeman or anyone else for a news

interview," said William Sheehan, president of ABC News. "Paying for exclusives has gotten out of hand in Britain. Ultimately, it is to the detriment of TV journalism and journalism in general."

Richard C. Wald, president of NBC News, said that Richard S. Salant, his counterpart at CBS News, had once vowed that CBS would never become involved in "checkbook" journalism.

Mr. Wald said, "I have never put us [NBC] above the possibility, because I don't know what peculiar circumstances may arise, but I dislike the idea of buying a news story."

Dispute on Classification

CBS News argued, however, that the interview with Mr. Haldeman, like those with Mr. Solzhenitsyn and Mr. Liddy, comes under a series of personal memoirs it has been doing over the years and is not in the strict sense a news interview.

A CBS spokesman said that President Lyndon B. Johnson had been paid an honorarium by CBS News for his televised memoirs.

Robert Chandler, vice president of public affairs broadcasting for CBS News, likened the Haldeman interview to a magazine article or a book "for which fees are normally paid." He said it was network policy not to buy interviews "for hard-news purposes."

He said that Mr. Haldeman would have no control over the program, in the sense that an author would over a written work. "He has accepted our ground rules for a straightforward news interview, in effect putting himself at our mercy." Mr. Chandler said, "He does not get to see the film in advance, and we will edit it in any way that we see fit."

Mr. Chandler said he understood that the interview contained Mr. Haldeman's reminiscences of his five years in the Nixon Administration and a discussion of Watergate from his perspective, along with comments on other people who were involved.

The Haldeman movies, Mr. Chandler said, "would be blown up to 16-mm." to make them suitable for television transmission.

Mr. Chandler denied that the network was engaging in "checkbook" journalism.

Mr. Sheehan commented: "Haldeman is a news interview under any circumstances. I can see the distinction clearly between that and a memoir. If there is a gray area, I for one would rather err on the side of not paying."