

Nixon: No TV Interviews

By John Carmody

A business associate of Richard M. Nixon said yesterday the former President "is not at all interested" in submitting to a television interview "either now or in the foreseeable future."

Nixon recently told some associates to "lay off" their informal overtures to network TV and independent producers, said the California source, who declined to be quoted by name. "He's just not listening to any offers at this time."

Reports published earlier this week indicated there had been a low-key but persistent effort recently by California friends of Nixon to obtain at least \$250,000 in fees for a taped interview, subject to the former President's approval and guidelines.

The large fee would be applied to Nixon's mounting legal expenses, which may reach as much as \$400,000 by the end of this year.

"Actually," the California source said later in the same conversation, "nobody with any authority ever talked to the networks or anybody else, so it would be a little strong to say Mr. Nixon told them to 'lay off.' It never even got that far."

News executives at both CBS and NBC yesterday confirmed they had never

been approached by anyone in Nixon circles. They confirmed, however, that "as a matter of routine" their networks had written to the former President on several occasions asking for interviews.

On Thursday, ABC News president William Sheehan reported he had rejected a deal offered by Rabbi Baruch Korff, the strong supporter of the former President, last February for an exclusive interview with Nixon for a fee of \$250,000.

It was that offer, made Feb. 8 on a sidewalk in San Clemente to an unidentified ABC correspondent, that apparently sparked reports of a concerted effort by Nixon associates to seek TV exposure and a large fee for him.

Rumors apparently began circulating that February weekend after CBS correspondent Robert Peirpoint flew to San Clemente to interview former White House press secretary Ronald Ziegler.

ABC, these sources indicate, feared Peirpoint was about to obtain an interview with Nixon instead and immediately dispatched a crew to the former Western White House.

That afternoon the ABC crew found Korff walking from the San Clemente com-

pound back to his hotel room.

Korff has raised thousands of dollars for Nixon through his Nixon Justice Fund based in Washington.

The ABC newsman reportedly asked Korff if he could arrange an interview with the former President "I told him," Korff said yesterday, "that the only way I would try to arrange an interview would be if ABC paid \$250,000 for the Justice Fund."

Korff said yesterday he received two subsequent calls "from the newsman's superiors in New York" (presumably Sheehan), but nothing came of them.

He said he never notified Nixon of the conversations.

The California source said yesterday that "Rabbi Korff isn't authorized to make any such negotiations."

This source pointed out that Nixon is currently engaged in writing his memoirs and is bound by an exclusive contract with Irving P. Lazar, the West Coast agent, in all such matters.

Lazar has received the "routine interview requests from 'a number of people,' including the American networks and the BBC, forwarded to him by Nixon's staff, but has taken no action.