

Herb Caen column:

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DICK STOUT found this in the June 27, 1964, Saturday Evening Post, while browsing in his dentist's waiting room: "I believe the strongest argument for debates is that they make candidates put on a better campaign, with the result that the man who wins becomes a better President. I am convinced that TV debates are essential." The author of these words: Richard "What, Me Debate?" Nixon.

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White House Rejects TV Debate Offer

SFChronicle
Washington

The chance of at least a semblance of a debate between George McGovern and President Nixon was lost when the White House turned down offers of free television news time for this week, a McGovern adviser said yesterday.

The ABC and CBS television networks offered the two presidential candidates five minutes each on all five nightly newscasts this week.

Frank Mankiewicz, McGovern's chief political adviser, said the offers were

made last Monday and immediately accepted by McGovern. But the networks said the White House rejected the offers on Wednesday without explanation.

McGovern has repeatedly demanded debates with Mr. Nixon similar to those the President had with John F. Kennedy in 1960. The White House has ignored the requests.

Mankiewicz said the offers by the two networks would have given each candidate five minutes to explain his position in taped segments on specific issues each night on their evening news broadcasts.

"These would not have violated the equal time provision" of Federal Communications Commission regulations, Mankiewicz said, because they would have been presented as parts of the nightly news programs.

United Press