

# Hoffa Presenting China Film at White House

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 12—

The White House disclosed today that William L. Taub, the mysterious figure who acted as "legal counsel" for James R. Hoffa in his recent attempt to visit North Vietnam, arranged and attended a White House showing of a film on China shortly before President Nixon's China trip last February.

Mr. Taub was then in the role of a film distributor and not of a lawyer, so that although it was discovered then that the Secret Service had a voluminous file on his activities reaching back 40 years, he was still able to meet with high-ranking officials as "attorney" for Hoffa.

Herbert G. Klein, director of communications for Mr. Nixon, explained today that he had set up the White House screening of the film, "Mao's China," for staff members who were to bone up on China before the trip.

He said that Mr. Nixon had not been present and that Mr. Taub had been told that the White House showing should not be taken as an endorsement of the film.

Court papers in a New York lawsuit over the rights to the Yugoslav-made documentary film allege that Mr. Taub was a "clever confidence man" who said he was a close friend of the President and used Mr. Nixon's name in efforts to put pressure on the major television networks to buy the film.

The court suit, plus investigative records obtained by The New York Times, pictured a bizarre series of incidents in which Mr. Taub allegedly invoked the names of numerous famous men without permission starting with Mayor James J. Walker of New York in 1932

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and including President Truman, Eisenhower and Nixon.

His activities passed virtually unnoticed until last week, when it was disclosed that he had managed to hold meetings in recent weeks with Henry A. Kissinger, Mr. Nixon's foreign policy adviser; Deputy Attorney General Ralph Erickson, and other high officials who thought he was a lawyer trying to arrange for Hoffa to negotiate with the North Vietnamese for the release of American prisoners of war.

### Rogers Blocked Effort

That effort collapsed when Secretary of State William P. Rogers opposed it as private interference with international negotiations. There was also criticism over the disclosure that Mr. Taub's purpose was to persuade the Government to drop the probation restrictions that bar Hoffa from returning to his post as president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

White House spokesmen insisted today that nobody in the Administration had smoothed the way for Mr. Taub's meetings with officials on behalf of Hoffa.

Mr. Klein, reached by telephone in Las Vegas, said he and others in the White House had not known that Mr. Taub the film distributor was also acting as Mr. Taub the lawyer and that Mr. Kissinger had been told of the Secret Service's black dossier on Mr. Taub. \*

From various sources, the following picture of Mr. Taub's past emerged:

In 1932 he was accused of trying to get free passes to Atlantic City by posing as secretary to Mayor Walker. The same year, charges were filed that he obtained stationery of the Mayor of Atlantic City and wrote letters praising himself, which were given to business associates.

### Moves to Park Avenue

He soon moved to New York City and acquired a fashionable Park Avenue address. By 1960 he had also acquired upwards of 50 suits, judgments, Federal tax liens and other court actions against him.

In some of them, plaintiffs complained that the 5-foot-2-

inch, stocky man, who is now in his early 60's, had gained their confidence by using the names of such people as former Attorney General J. Howard McGrath, Maurice Chevalier, Charles de Gaulle, President Pompidou of France, and Popes Pius, John and Paul.

He became active in the entertainment world. Two actresses, Margaret Sullivan and Joseph Baker, signed contracts promoted by him and later sued him, saying they had been duped. Calling himself the coproducer of the film "02," he was awarded the Foreign Press Club's "Golden Globe" award in Los Angeles in 1970 but was denounced as an "imposter" by the film's French producer, Eric Schlumberger.

Mr. Taub remained interested in politics. In 1956, Washington newspapers mentioned that he had been seated in the box adjacent to President Eisenhower's at an inaugural ball, and in 1968 he attempted to rent a room of Los Angeles hotel room that he said would be used as headquarters for Governor Rockefeller's Presidential campaign.

In April, 1971, Mr. Taub was hospitalized with injuries in Geneva, Switzerland. The local press, after interviewing him, reported that he was an associate of President Nixon's and that an attempt to assassinate him had been made. He later used the clipping to impress business associates.

### Beating Alleged

The French daily, France-Soir, published a different account. It quoted him as having said he had been beaten and robbed of a promissory note for \$2.5-million. It also quoted the police as having said that documents found on him included photographs of him with Presidents Truman and

Eisenhower and the Pope. All of these appeared to have been faked.

The White House film incident came to light in an affidavit filed in New York Supreme Court by Peter Gettinger, a New York lawyer and film producer, who said he had produced "Mao's China" from newsreels obtained in Yugoslavia.

He asserted that Mr. Taub had said that he had interested President Nixon in the film, and that the White House would use its influence to see that it was shown on television before Mr. Nixon's trip.

Mr. Taub took a copy of the film to the White House for the screening before 10 to 20 staff members, but did not return it to Mr. Gettinger who sued to get the film back and to bar Mr. Taub from further efforts to promote the film, saying that his heavy-handed efforts had offended the network.

Mr. Gettinger said he had been told by Patrick O'Donnell, a White House assistant, that the Secret Service had an enormous file on Mr. Taub but that it was the service's conclusion that he "was clever but harmless to the life of the President."

Reached in Detroit today by The Associated Press, Hoffa said that he was startled to learn of the apparent misrepresentation by Mr. Taub and that he had taken Mr. Taub at face value after "he sought me out in April."

Hoffa said he had an agreement to pay Mr. Taub for his services but declined to say if any payment had been made.

In New York, Mr. Taub's lawyer, Hiram Shields, said that he talked with Mr. Taub today in Paris and that Mr. Taub said he intended to fly to Hanoi tonight.

\* Essentially the same story by Graham, as carried by New Orleans States-Item, same date, says Kissinger was not told of the dossier. Corrections are regularly noted by the Times in space set aside for this; editions of 14 and 15 Sep show no correction of this statement, so cannot tell which version is correct.