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# White House Mystery

Since so much of the case for re-electing President Nixon is being built on the supposed efficiency of his Administration, it is instructive to examine the dents put in that business-like image by the strange shenanigans surrounding James R. Hoffa's effort to become a diplomatic courier to Hanoi.

The mastermind behind this whole bizarre operation appears to have been a New York confidence man named William L. Taub, who has at various times passed himself off as a lawyer, a film distributor and an intimate of the President. It has been no secret to Taub or anyone else that one towering interest has consumed Mr. Hoffa since Mr. Nixon freed him from Federal penitentiary last December in an act of executive clemency that could hardly be disassociated from the budding love affair between Mr. Nixon and the two-million-member International Brotherhood of Teamsters, of which Mr. Hoffa is former president.

Now that Mr. Hoffa is out of jail, his supreme desire is for removal of the legal inhibition that currently bars him from resuming the driver's seat in the giant truck union. Capitalizing on this ambition, Mr. Taub evolved a scheme under which Mr. Hoffa was to get full clearance in exchange for his intercession with Hanoi to seek release of American prisoners of war. Despite the thunderous wrath the Administration has displayed at "negotiations" with North Vietnam by all outsiders, the dexterous Mr. Taub was able with ease to schedule interviews with Attorney General Kleindienst and Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, out of which came a special dispensation to permit Mr. Hoffa to travel to Hanoi—later repudiated by Secretary Rogers only after the matter finally came to public attention.

As in the case of the strange transfer of \$114,000 in Nixon campaign funds in connection with the Watergate affair, there is a conspicuous lack of official explanation of how Mr. Taub managed to insinuate himself into the White House circles or who his sponsors are in the Presidential entourage. The voters are entitled to more illumination of this administrative mystery than they have yet been granted.