

WARD CHARGES 'DEAL' ATTEMPT

Claims Petre Associate

T. J. Made Contact
9/14/69

Charles R. Ward, candidate for district attorney, charged Tuesday that he was asked to become part of a "political deal" by mayoral candidate John Petre's campaign manager.

Speaking at a press conference, Ward stated that last Friday John Cummings contacted him; Ward said that Cummings, an attorney, was Petre's campaign manager.

"He told me that Mr. Petre was considering endorsing a candidate for DA, but that the endorsement would have to be reciprocal or that I would have to make a substantial contribution to Mr. Petre's campaign," Ward stated. "He urged me to get in touch with Mr. Petre. This I refused to do because I do not want any part of a political deal."

Connick said in a news release Tuesday night that he "noted with a m u s e m e n t" Ward's reaction to his endorsement by Petre for district attorney, but added: "I resent Mr. Ward's unfounded and nasty implication to cheapen such an unselfish action."

He said, "I feel that Mr. Petre's action was quite explicit. I am an independent candidate, and I would hope that other candidates for mayor would endorse me. The overall solution to the problem of crime in our streets requires, as Mr. Petre says, a vigorous prosecutor in the District Attorney's Office. I am personally grateful to Mr. Petre for attributing to me, on the basis of experience as a prosecutor and a defender, those capabilities required by the office."

Connick said he had hoped Ward would have addressed himself to some of the issues he (Connick) has brought out in the campaign such as bail bond jumping, narcotics and crime in the streets.

"Instead of touching on these matters which became aggravated during his seven and a half years in the DA's office, he chose to attack the first mayoral candidate to express an understanding of the need for mayor-DA action against crime," Connick said.

Ward said that "naturally"

he would expect Harry Connick who received Petre's support, and Petre to deny a deal was made. He said "Mr. Petre is too good and too smart of a politician not to have gotten something in return for his endorsement of Harry Connick."

Meanwhile, Petre said Cummings is not his campaign manager but has helped in the campaign. Petre, a councilman at large, said Cummings was never consulted in the matter of endorsements and had no voice in Petre's decision to endorse Connick.

Petre said he felt when Ward resigned recently as first assistant district attorney to run against incumbent Jim Garrison, "it was a despicable act by someone who had been an integral part of the DA's office now running against his former boss."

However, Cummings said that he actually did call Ward last Friday but that he did it without Petre's knowledge or permission. He said that Ward is a friend of his and he hoped Ward would call Petre in an effort to get Petre's endorsement.

Ward said that he will not accept endorsements from any mayoral candidates because it would impair his independence.