

Nessen Confirms Agnew Pardon Call

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The White House said yesterday a lawyer called recently to talk about a pardon for former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew and was told to contact the Justice Department.

Press secretary Ron Nessen said deputy White House counsel Edward Schmults spoke to the lawyer and "it was basically handled in a very routine way" by referring the inquiry to

the Justice Department, normally responsible for such matters.

Nessen declined to name the lawyer and said he did not know when the attorney called or if the attorney was acting at the request of Agnew because "I didn't make any detailed effort" to get that information.

Agnew resigned as Vice President Oct. 10, 1973, and then pleaded no contest to a charge of income tax evasion. His sentence of three years' probation expired Oct. 10.

Columnist Jack Anderson reported Friday that an attorney for Agnew telephoned White House counsel Philip Buchen shortly after Oct. 10 to discuss a possible pardon from Ford. Nessen said Buchen did not talk to the lawyer.

In response to Anderson's column, Agnew's secretary was quoted as saying, "Mr. Agnew did not authorize anyone at all to see" a pardon for him. He has no idea what is the source of the story."