

The Weather

Today—Partly cloudy and windy, high in the mid 30s, low near 15. The chance of precipitation is near zero through tonight. Sunday—Sunny, high near 40. Yesterday—3 p.m. AQI: 16. Temp. range: 33-29. Details C2.

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SPIRO T. AGNEW
... couldn't be saved

The Agnew Memoranda Offer Mountains of

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Washington Post Staff Writers

He had just celebrated his inauguration to a second term as vice president when Spiro T. Agnew gave some generous advice to a friend.

"Keep the faith," Agnew told I. H. Hammerman, his Baltimore real estate friend, according to a federal prosecutor's memo made public yesterday along with hundreds of other documents from the investigation of Agnew five years ago.

"The vice president told Hammerman that he knew all about the (criminal) investigation and that he was doing everything that could be done to attempt to stop or limit it."

Five months later, according to the prosecutor's memo, "Hammerman remembers the vice president as being

quite upset. The vice president told Hammerman that the president of the U.S. couldn't save John Mitchell and Maurice Stans."

And President Nixon could not save Agnew either. The vice president's slide from cocky self-assurance to disgrace is documented in the stacks of inter-office government memoranda made public yesterday.

The charges stemming from his years of allegedly accepting kickbacks as Baltimore County executive, then as Maryland governor and finally as vice president are explored in scraps of paper from deposit slips from secret bank accounts to typed summaries of Agnew's relationship to friends and money collectors, like Hammerman.

For the sake of the nation, then in the midst of Watergate, Agnew was

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Papers Information, but Few Revelations

allowed to plead nolo contendere to only one felony count to avoid trial and save the country from having a suspected criminal succeed a president close to disgraced resignation himself.

The more than 2,500 pages of documents released by the Justice Department late yesterday afternoon cover the Agnew case from the beginning of the investigation of him by prosecutors in the Office of the U.S. Attorney for Maryland to the vice president's plea on Oct. 10, 1973.

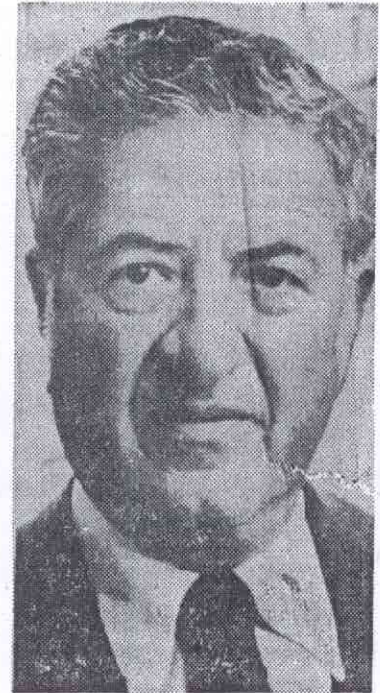
Although nothing of great importance was revealed that had not been previously known or widely believed, the internal memoranda of the prosecutors, the copies of testimony from lie detector tests, the notes taken during prosecutors' interviews and the detailed memos of the plea bargaining

process brought to life the events that led to Agnew's plea and resignation.

The public release of the documents was prompted by a suit filed under the Freedom of Information Act by two George Washington University Law School students nearly three years ago. Compliance was delayed at the request of the federal prosecutors in Baltimore who handled the Agnew case and said information in the papers were pertinent to their then-going investigation of Maryland Gov. Marvin Mandel.

Agnew's plea of nolo contendere to a one-count felony charge for tax evasion was the most momentous criminal plea bargaining settlement in our history. The documents, particularly the memoranda covering the private meetings in which the deal

See AGNEW, A2, Col. 1



I. H. HAMMERMAN
... told to "keep faith."

AGNEW, From A1

was negotiated, show that every participant understood the enormity of the occasion.

When accused by Agnew's lawyers of being heavy-handed in his push for a plea, then Attorney General Elliott L. Richardson retorted that he was not asking for "a groveling confession" from the vice president but at least a "sufficient admission of guilt."

"I don't want an endless series of debates such as that which surrounded the Dreyfus and Sacco-Vanzetti cases," he told Agnew's lawyers.

The documents released yesterday may lead to the realization of Richardson's wish. Through them the weight of the case against Agnew is confirmed. J. Walter Jones, for example, is named as the "close associate," the ubiquitous middleman who arranged for some of the \$87,500 payments in bribes and kickbacks Agnew would have been indicted for had he been brought to trial. Jones' identity had been previously reported but never confirmed by legal documents.

From the prosecutor's notes of their interviews of Lester Matz, a contracting engineer who made kickbacks to Agnew to obtain state business:

July 16, 1968:

- \$20,000 in 100s
- brown manila envelope
- sets up appointment with Agnew
- check
- Balto Gov's office
- both uncomfortable
- received state business and money due or owed—told him 2,000"

What is missing from the stack of documents is almost as fascinating as the details they contain. The Mandel connection is so slim as to be esoteric. His initials appear at the end of one page: "MM Marvin Mandel." On another sheet of paper it is noted that the Tidewater Insurance Company, owned by three of Mandel's codefendants, insured projects of a contracting firm that made kickbacks to Agnew.

Once, Tidewater also contributed \$200 to an Agnew dinner committee.

Little else would tie the Agnew investigation to the one that brought down his successor as Maryland's governor last summer.

Also absent from the documents is any reference to the expensive personal tastes of Agnew that allegedly accounted for his desire to have thousands of dollars of untraceable cash.

The documents also show that other charges could have been levied against Agnew. There was an alleged payola scheme mentioned during Agnew's term as county executive, something the documents said involved one or more vending machine companies.

Other possible criminal charges included conspiracy, interstate travel with the intent to facilitate bribery and/or extortion, violations of federal bribery, graft, and conflict of interest statutes, conspiracy to defraud the United States and tax charges, according to a federal prosecution memorandum.

The seriousness of these charges was not lost on Agnew. When a worried Hammerman visited him that winter he suggested that Agnew see the president, one memo reported.

"The vice president stated that he had already gone to see the president.