

Sign in Velvety Auto Upsets Mandel Staff

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James Richard Velvet has capitulated.

After a visit from the Maryland State Police, a talk with the motor vehicle bureau, several calls to the campaign headquarters of Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace in Montgomery and lots of calls to the Maryland governor's office in Annapolis, he gave in.

No longer will his car—a Cadillac covered with a coating that looks like green velvet—bear a window plaque saying, "Governor's Staff."

It might have been all

right with the governor of Alabama, whom Velvet has occasionally worked for, but the staff of the governor of Maryland did not like it one bit. It offended their sense of esthetics. Besides, the car had Maryland license plates.

"No one in this administration drives a velvet Cadillac," said Mandel's press secretary, Frank A. DeFilippo. "Especially not green."

So when the phone calls started coming into Annapolis asking who on the governor's staff was driving what one person called "a car like that!" Mandel's staff swung into action and asked the Maryland State Police to find out.

The owner, the police discovered, was Velvet, a Glen Burnie resident who is better known, some sources say, as Jimmie Velvet, a country music singer who has at times lent his services for Wallace fund-raisers and once was Wallace's youth director. Velvet, according to a member of Mandel's staff, told the police he was in Maryland on behalf of Wallace. Wallace, who has run well in Maryland in the past, has threatened to enter the state's presidential primary next year.

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Velvety Car's Sign Upsets Mandel Staff

VELVET, From B1

Moreover, Velvet reportedly said, he was Wallace's brother-in-law and was on the governor's staff — not the governor of Maryland, that is, but the governor of Alabama.

Velvet could not be reached for comment yesterday.

But Alton Dauphin, No. 2 man in the Wallace campaign, could be reached. From Montgomery, he said that (1) Velvet was not Wallace's brother-in-law and (2) Velvet was most definitely not on the Wallace staff. Velvet had from time to time worked for Wallace, Dauphin said, but no longer did.

"This is right odd," Dauphin said. "This is the second call we got today asking if we are familiar with Jimmie Velvet."

So Velvet, according to a source at the State Motor Vehicle Bureau, has agreed to remove the plaque and will not longer cruise the streets of Baltimore giving the voters of the city the false impression that a member of the governor's staff drives a green velvet Cadillac, a 1967 one at that.