

It has been no secret that the GAO has been dragging its feet on issuing a report on the Republican campaign filings under the new law, effective 4/7/72. For several days the papers have reported its appearance, then several delays, the last being yesterday, when two GAO people were flown to Miami to interview Maurice Stans, ostensibly for further or new information. With them in Washington and him in Washington until the last few days and with this matter going back to the very moment of the arrests, what "new" information ~~SEEMS~~ Stans might have had - especially after FBI interrogation and grand-jury testimony - would seem less than immediately apparent, not first-hand or information he had earlier withheld (and when he says he had the check in his hand for but three minutes and then gave it to his treasurer, can it be about the check?). Or, a dodge, a stall, a ~~strick~~ trick.

There have been a number of news stories printed on the delays in releasing the report.

I was taking a swim with Lil just before supertime, just before the beginning of the local TV news. I had a letter I wanted to finish, so I left Lil in the pool, returned to the house, turned on the local NBC station in Washington just a bit after the news began. There was a sequence showing and voicing Larry O'Brien in the last few words of some rather serious charges, this time, for the first time, against both Nixon and Agnew. After the end of that local news show the NBC net news came on. No mention, but enough trivia. Then we can get the CBS net evening TV news, where there was even more "news" less than hot, like a sequence on the testing of cat food by Consumers' Union (most inadequate, cat-lovers), something surely not dated and not even new. But in neither case, no mention of this at all.

So, at 11 p.m., just a few minutes ago, I played the odds ~~in~~ and tuned in the news on the same NBC station and it began with the same item. I have no way of knowing if they shortened it, but the end was the same. O'Brien was making an appearance at Annapolis. He was specific in charging a coverup and the intent to coverup to the GAO. That, when I wrote it, would have been news. The GAO is supposed to be under the Congress. (If something isn't done soon I suspect some committee with a Democratic majority may hold a hearing.) He then went further and among the charges he made was that this was the biggest mistake in Richard Nixon's political career and that when the investigation and the case was over the trail would lead to him and Agnew.

I don't think there is a competent reporter who can dismiss this out of hand. Entirely aside from O'Brien's present role and his former Demo. Party Chairmanship, he has been in a succession of important roles in ~~three~~ two administrations, including cabinet level. This is a campaign year. There was a convention just ended. There is not and never has been any doubt of the irregularities in the Republican reporting under the law. The GAO itself has been quoted as calling it a mess. Mishandling of funds is without denial and with confirmation, including those not properly reported under the law. There has been a minor flap over the Republican collection of \$10,000,000 in unaccounted funds. And Republican committees and a White House employee have been implicated in a crime, multiple crimes, including (uncharged) federal (FEC-not mentioned yet, misuse of licensed equipment), one was caught red-handed and fired, another refused to talk to the FBI and was fired. All this and more already reported, but nothing on the first charge laying it to the White House and charging not only a coverup but a deliberate one to the watchdog agency?

So, aside from reporting what may be in your papers, what I really am asking is if in your professional opinions, this was not news worthy of at least mention on TV newscasts?

Now, when the two major nets both fail to mention it, unless by current standards it was unworthy of mention (whether or not in competition with useless cat food), I ask if it is unreasonable to wonder if both could naturally suffer the same poor news judgement on the same story and at the same time.

No rush in answering, but I would like an independent judgement on newsworthiness. I'll see what the Post does with it in the a.m., if anything. I'd hope they would use it.