

10/12/73 W Post

# Full Revelation

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Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson was prepared to make public the allegations that former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew accepted bribes even if Agnew's lawyers and federal District Court Judge Walter E. Hoffman failed to include them in their final agreement on Agnew's plea, informed sources said yesterday.

The release of the 40-page "exposition of evidence" detailing the money Agnew allegedly extorted and received, became a sticking point in the last days of negotiations between Justice Department officials and Agnew's lawyers, which preceded the former Vice President's resignation Wednesday.

During the negotiations, Richardson, these sources said, insisted that the public had the right to know the nature of the case against Agnew. Moreover, the sources said, Richardson felt that any attempt to keep the allegations secret would result in charges of a cover-up by the Justice Department.

The Attorney General, the sources said, was present at the last negotiating session on Tuesday. By then he already had rejected the suggestion of prosecutors in the Maryland U.S. Attorney's office that the government recommend a jail sentence for Agnew.

It was during these sessions, the sources said, that one of the prosecutors described Agnew as "a terrible man"

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who should go to jail. Richardson overruled that suggestion, insisting only that Agnew plead guilty or "no contest" to a criminal charge, resign his office and authorize release of the statement of evidence against him.

In the end, Richardson apparently worked his will. Agnew agreed to plead no contest to a charge of evading \$13,551.47 in federal taxes for 1967 and resigned. The government, in exchange, dropped the vastly more serious charges against him—extortion, bribery and conspiracy.

The prosecutors apparently took the day off yesterday but are now prepared, sources said, to continue their investigation of alleged political corruption in Maryland.

U.S. Attorney George Beall, appearing at a press conference held by Richardson yesterday, refused to deny reports that his staff would be investigating persons associated with the administration of Marvin Mandel, Agnew's successor as Maryland governor.

"It's a good question," Beall said in response to a question of whether he was investigating the Mandel administration. "The grand jury investigation . . . continues." Beall, who is conducting the Maryland investigation, added that he would not comment on the grand jury investigation since its deliberations are secret.

Asked specifically if he would rule out an investigation of the Mandel administration, he said, "I can't rule anything out at this time because the investigation continues and, as I say, the parameters are impossible to precisely define." Mandel said yesterday at a press conference in Annapolis that he is not under investigation.

Informed sources said yes-

terday that the Baltimore prosecutors have allegations against persons associated with the Mandel administration. These sources add that none of these allegations has yet been verified because of the staff's preoccupation with the Agnew investigation.

The allegations, the source said, have been made by some of the same engineers and contractors who have admitted giving payments to Agnew. These allegations, the sources say, do not concern Mandel directly, but rather involve persons with whom he had been associated.

These allegations, and others concerning a range of political figures from Maryland and other states, have yet to be acted on, said one source. He described the Baltimore U.S. attorney's office as having "the biggest back burner in history."

One source, when asked to comment on the possible investigation of Mandel said: "So far they have nothing on him."

According to informed sources, the latest round of negotiations between Agnew's lawyers and the Justice Department began Saturday when special White House counsel J. Fred Buzhardt called Richardson to inform him that Agnew's lawyers were once again willing to talk.

The negotiations, which had been initiated by Agnew's lawyers, broke off in September when the government insisted that Agnew plead guilty to a criminal charge and authorize publication of the evidence against him. Agnew's lawyers reportedly rejected this offer.

Informed sources could not say yesterday what prompted Agnew's lawyers to reopen the plea bargaining. One legal source speculated that during the Hiatus the Internal Revenue Service, which had been building

a "net worth" case on Agnew, had built a strong case against the former Vice President, indicating a significant gap between his net worth and his reported income. The prospect of even more charges, the source speculated, might have resulted in the about-face Agnew's lawyers made in resuming negotiations.

By Saturday, at any rate, the negotiations were reopened and were being conducted by telephone. On Monday, the face-to-face negotiations began at an Alexandria motel. Present were Assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen, U.S. Attorney Beall, and his chief assistant, Barnet Skolnik.

Agnew was represented by his lawyers—Martin London and Jay H. Topkis of New York and Judah Best of Washington.

By the time of the first meeting on Monday, the prosecutors' case against Agnew was even stronger, the sources said, and the Vice President's lawyers knew this. They had conferred, for instance, with lawyers for some of the persons who alleged that they had bribed Agnew, and apparently became convinced that the case against their client was firm.

Other sources said that Agnew initiated the latest and final round of negotiations out of sincere desire to avoid a protracted court fight that might divide the nation and brutalize his family.

"The defense would have been tremendously time-consuming and burdensome on him and his family," said the source. "He decided to end it, even though he believed he hadn't done anything — feeling I can't do to the country and my family."

In addition, legal sources said, Agnew's lawyers took into consideration the present post-Watergate climate and concluded that any defendant who was a politician

had two strikes against him from the start.

"In today's climate ... prosecutors will tell you, give me a political defendant and I will get you a conviction," one lawyer said. "They are the easiest prosecutorial targets."

On Tuesday, the negotiations shifted from the Virginia motel to the Justice Department, where Richardson joined the government team. It was at this point, the sources said, that what the government referred to as "the full-disclosure" issue became paramount.

Richardson, according to sources, was steadfast on this point. He wanted the public to know the allegations, wanted to protect his department from charges of a coverup and, finally, wanted to do everything in his power to rehabilitate the image of the Justice Department in the wake of Watergate.

Richardson, who conducted the negotiations in utmost secrecy, explained his stand yesterday at his press conference.

"We have had, unfortunately, over recent months, a sense that there has been a cover-up, in some situations, of facts which the public were entitled to know," Richardson said. "In order to achieve and enhance public confidence in our institutions of justice and the administration of justice, it has seemed essential to us in the Department of Justice ... that the American people be in a position themselves to judge the basis on which this matter has been handled."

By Tuesday afternoon, sources said, both sides had reached agreement. Agnew's lawyers were shown an outline of the public statement of the allegations and Beall and Skolnik returned to Baltimore.

At 4 p.m. Beall, Skolnik and assistant U.S. Attorneys Ronald Liebman and Russell T. Baker sat down to

write what was to be a 40-page exposition of the evidence against Agnew. Along with four secretaries, they worked through the night with the final draft written mostly by Skolnik and Baker.

They finished at 7 Wednesday morning.

That same morning, Agnew's lawyers read the document, and at 2:05 p.m. Agnew resigned, pleaded no contest to a tax charge and the document was released to the press.

For now, informed sources anticipate a short lull in the grand jury's activities and then a series of follow-up indictments. These sources say that the grand jury probably will indict some of the persons who allegedly paid off Agnew, at least one of the alleged middlemen and possibly some persons who were not mentioned at all in the document.

In addition, these sources said that the grand jury shortly will indict associates and political allies of Baltimore County Executive Dale Anderson, a Democrat. Anderson already has been indicted on 43 charges of tax, extortion, bribery and conspiracy.

These sources said the grand jury probably will then investigate Anne Arundel County affairs and accelerate the pace of its investigation there. The county's Republican executive, Joseph Alton, already is under investigation, sources said.

From there, the sources say, the investigation may spread to other areas of Maryland and even across the state's borders.

"Maryland appears to be a small-scale New Jersey," one source close to the case said. "It (the method of receiving kickbacks) had variations. Different administrations approached it differently," he said, adding that the federal investigators feel they have uncovered an ongoing and persistent pattern of corruption.