

# Pickup Man Named in Agnew Case

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BALTIMORE, Oct. 18—J. Walter Jones, a wealthy Annapolis banker and a close associate of former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, was publicly identified by U.S. prosecutors here today as the collector of some illegal kickback payments made to Agnew when he was Baltimore County executive and governor of Maryland.

Jones' alleged role in collecting kickbacks from engineering firms that got contracts from the county and state had been reported by informed sources since last year when Agnew pleaded no contest to a federal tax charge and resigned the vice presidency.

Agnew admitted to no other illegal acts when he pleaded no contest to the tax charge plea on Oct. 10, 1973, but federal prosecutors released at the time, a 40-page document charging that Agnew had received thousands of dollars in illegal kickbacks in return for lucrative engineering contracts.

Jones was not named in the government document.

See PROBE, D2, Col. 1

## PROBE, From D1

Federal prosecutors did refer to an unnamed "close associate" of Agnew who served as middle man for some of the payments. Jones, who has been notified by the U.S. attorney's office here that he is under investigation, could not be reached for comment today.

In the past, Jones has denied any wrongdoing in connection with Agnew.

The reference to Jones' role as middle man came during

the sentencing of John Hocheder Jr., an engineer who pleaded guilty last June to falsifying corporate income tax returns. Hocheder is the executive vice president of George W. Stephens and Associates of Towson.

Hocheder was sentenced to two months in jail, 22 months on probation and fined \$2,000 by U.S. District Court Judge Alexander Harvey, II.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Barnett D. Skolnik told Judge Harvey at the sentencing that Hocheder had falsified the tax

returns to hide money used for kickbacks.

Skolnik said that Hocheder began making the illegal payments to Jones and Agnew in 1963, shortly after Agnew took office as Baltimore County executive, and stopped the payments to them after Agnew was elected Vice President in 1968.

Hocheder continued to make similar payments to Dale Anderson, Agnew's Democratic successor as Baltimore County executive, until early 1973, Skolnik told Judge Harvey. Anderson was convicted earlier this year of 32 counts of extortion, tax evasion and conspiracy for accepting kickbacks from engineers doing business in Baltimore County.

At the sentencing hearing, Skolnick said that Hocheder had lied to the U.S. attorney's office when Hocheder was first subpoenaed in January, 1973, but later began to fully cooperate with the U.S. investigation.

Skolnik told Judge Harvey that Hocheder provided "detailed documentary evidence to the government" about his payoffs to Jones and Agnew over the five-year period between 1963 and 1968. Agnew served as Baltimore County executive from late 1962 to 1966 and as Governor from 1967 to early 1969.

Hocheder told the prosecutors, Skolnik said, that "between 1963 and 1968, he personally made payments in cash to an individual whose name is J. Walter Jones, for Spiro T. Agnew."

Hocheder pleaded guilty to falsifying the George W. Stephens Company tax returns for 1970-71, years when, according to Skolnik, Hocheder was paying off Anderson.

According to information presented in court by prosecutors last June when Hocheder pleaded guilty, Hocheder admitted that he had falsely accounted for \$13,000 in corporate funds on income tax returns by reporting that the money had been spent for salaries. In fact, prosecutors said, that money had been used to pay illegal kickbacks.

A federal grand jury hearing more evidence in the continuing probe of Maryland political corruption, met here for a second day this week.