

Nixon Unit Reveals \$150,000 Md. Gift Led to Dinner Loan

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(compare with look)

By Edward Walsh
and Bill Richards

Washington Post Staff Writers

An unexplained \$150,000 contribution to President Nixon's campaign led to the agreement to use \$50,000 in Nixon campaign funds to inflate the reported proceeds from a 1972 testimonial dinner for Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, the Finance Committee to Re-Elect the President said yesterday.

In a report to the General Accounting Office, the committee said the \$150,000 came from "a Maryland resident" whom it did not identify and that the donation was solicited by Alexander Lankler, the chairman of the Maryland Republican Party.

Although the source of the \$150,000 could not be learned immediately, Republican figures familiar with the transaction said they believe it was not a single contribution as reported by the committee, but the sum of contributions by several donors solicited by Lankler in Maryland. Lankler was not available for comment early last night.

The report said that Lankler turned over the \$150,000 contribution to the finance committee in March, 1972, and that at that time "Lankler exacted a commitment . . . that \$50,000 of these funds would be transferred" back to Maryland for use in the Maryland portion of the presidential campaign.

The report was the first mention of the \$150,000 contribution or of the March, 1972, agreement to return one third of the funds to Nixon campaign officials in Maryland.

A new federal law requiring full disclosure of campaign contributions and expenditures took effect on April 7, 1972. In its report to the GAO, the finance committee stated that the loan

of \$50,000 to the sponsors of the Agnew dinner after April 7, did not have to be reported because the funds were committed to Lankler in March, before the law took effect.

In interviews last week, Lankler made no mention of a March agreement. He said the sponsors of the Agnew dinner, held May 19, 1972, in Baltimore, sought the \$50,000 from national Nixon campaign officials because ticket sales were going slowly and they wanted the affair to "look like a success."

The \$50,000—all of it in \$100 bills—was given to Lankler after April 7 by Maurice H. Stans, then chairman of the finance committee, after Lankler contacted him with the request. The money later was returned to the national finance committee.

The sponsors of the "Salute to Ted Agnew Night" dinner concealed the use of the \$50,000 loan of Nixon funds by listing the money as proceeds from ticket sales to 31 persons in reports to both state and

federal authorities. Federal and state agencies are now investigating apparent violations in campaign financing laws in the use of a list of non-existent contributors to hide the true sources of the funds. Many of those listed said last week they had not bought tickets or given money to the Agnew dinner.

The finance committee's report to the GAO said that some time between March and May 19 "Lankler requested that \$50,000 be advanced or loaned to a Salute to Agnew event . . . with the definite understanding that this amount would be fully repaid to this committee . . ."

The report noted that the funds were returned to the finance committee on July 26, 1972, and "properly reported" to federal authorities. It said the payment of the loan to Lankler was not reported "because it had been committed prior to April 7, 1972."

The finance committee's report was filed with the GAO yesterday in accordance with the federal elections law that took effect April 7, 1972.

Maryland Republican fund-raisers reached last night said they knew of no single \$150,000 contribution to the President from the state.

It would be unusual for a contribution of that size to be made in one lump sum. Maryland law prohibits individual contributions of more than \$2,500 to any political candidate running in the state.

Moreover, even the largest contributors to the 1972 Nixon campaign generally made their contributions in separate, relatively small donations to scores of campaign committees throughout the nation in order to avoid paying federal gift taxes.

For example, the Maryland Committee to Re-Elect the President received contributions from Nixon supporters from throughout the country and then turned the funds over to the national committee.