

4-Count Indictment Returned In Manipulation of GOP Funds

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A grand jury in Anne Arundel County returned yesterday a new four-count indictment growing out of its investigation into the manipulation of Nixon campaign funds to inflate the reported proceeds from a 1972 testimonial dinner for Vice President Spiro T. Agnew.

The indictment was believed to involve charges against several prominent Maryland Republicans, although Anne Arundel County State's Attorney Warren B. Duckett refused to release the names of the persons who were charged.

Duckett said he hoped to release the names today after the defendants were notified of the charges by their lawyer.

The indictment charged each of the defendants in the case with four counts of conspiracy to violate the Maryland fair election practices law. Specifically, the defendants were charged with:

- Accepting campaign funds and reporting them as contributions from persons who did not actually give the money.
- Failing to maintain accurate campaign reports.
- Failing to file full and accurate election reports with state officials.
- Failing to issue campaign

contribution receipts to donors of more than \$50.

Conviction on each of the counts in the indictment is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 or imprisonment of up to one year, or both, according to Duckett.

The indictment was the second growing out of the 1972 "Salute to Ted Agnew Dinner" in Baltimore and the latest blow to the beleaguered Maryland Republican Party.

On June 13, Blagden H. Wharton, a vice president of the Maryland National Bank who served as treasurer of the committee that sponsored the Agnew dinner, was indicted on charges of perjury and election fraud in connection with the use of a phony list of contributors to the affair.

The fund manipulation became known in early June when Alexander Lankler, chairman of the Maryland Republican Party, acknowledged that he obtained a \$49,900 loan from the Finance Committee to Re-elect the President and reported the funds as legitimate proceeds from sales of tickets to the Agnew dinner.

The true source of the funds was concealed by listing them as ticket sales to 31 persons who in fact had not purchased tickets. Wharton, as treasurer of the Agnew dinner

committee, signed campaign reports that contained the list of phony contributors.

Lankler, who since has announced he will resign as Maryland GOP chairman next month, said the scheme was approved by top state Republicans after it appeared ticket sales to the Agnew dinner were lagging. The \$49,900 was later returned to Nixon campaign officials, according to Lankler.

Lankler is a prominent Washington lawyer who lives in Montgomery County. Others connected with the Agnew dinner committee included Lynn Meyerhoff, a Baltimore socialite, and Tilton H. Dobbin, a former president of the Maryland National Bank who is now an assistant secretary of commerce in the Nixon administration.

The charges contained in the indictment handed down yesterday were different from the charges made in June against Wharton. Wharton, who has pleaded innocent to all charges against him, was accused of filing a false affidavit, unlawfully reporting details of the Agnew dinner receipts, failing to identify the source of funds and failing to report the receipt of "valuable things."

State's Attorney Duckett said no more indictments are expected in connection with the Agnew dinner and that the county grand jury would now give top priority to an investigation into the handling of \$140,000 contribution of Nixon campaign funds to the 1970 campaign of Sen. J. Glenn Beall (R-Md.).

Beall has acknowledged that his campaign received the funds, which were raised by President Nixon's former personal lawyer, Herbert Kalmbach, and distributed by White House aides.