

Jury Probes Agnew Home Purchase

By Douglas Watson
Washington Post Staff Writer

The federal grand jury investigating Vice President Spiro T. Agnew has subpoenaed records relating to the Agnews' purchase of their \$190,000 home in suburban Maryland, according to the real estate agent who handled the transaction.

Peter Burr, the realtor, also said yesterday that he did not receive any commission for negotiating the Agnews' house purchase, and thereby reduced the price they paid by \$4,000 to \$6,000.

Vice President and Mrs. Agnew bought the 12-room fieldstone house in the fashionable Kenwood area of Montgomery County with the help of a \$160,000 mortgage obtained from the American National Building

and Loan Association of Baltimore.

According to land records, the Agnews made a \$30,000 down payment for the house at 6415 Shadow Rd., where they moved in June from their apartment at the Sheraton-Park Hotel in Washington.

Records relating to the Agnews' mortgage apparently have been subpoenaed from American National. Howard I. Scaggs, president of the building and loan association, declined yesterday to either confirm or deny this.

Burr, a partner in the real estate firm of Burr, Morris and Pardoe, said that his records of the Agnews' purchase were subpoenaed on Sept. 25 by the Baltimore grand jury investigating

allegations of kickbacks to public officials, including Agnew.

Burr said that he gave up the usual 2 to 3 per cent commission for selling the house to the Agnews when it became clear that the Agnews and the seller, Dorothy Bennett Prather, might not otherwise be able to agree on a price. Burr also said he was given written assurance that he will handle sale of the house at any time the Agnews want to sell.

The Agnews' mortgage amounts to about 85 per cent of the house's \$190,000 purchase price. Scaggs said that because of the size of the loan, the Agnews also pledged as security in addition to the Kenwood house, a Baltimore County house valued at \$25,000 that the

Vice President inherited from his parents.

Local savings and loan officials said yesterday that presently few home purchasers could get a mortgage for more than 75 to 80 per cent of a home's sale price, although money was less tight when the Agnews bought their home last spring.

Scaggs said the \$160,000 mortgage loan to the Agnews was in line with the total of \$215,000 in real estate they pledged as security and they did not benefit from any special favoritism on the mortgage. He said the Agnews' mortgage is not the largest approved by American National.

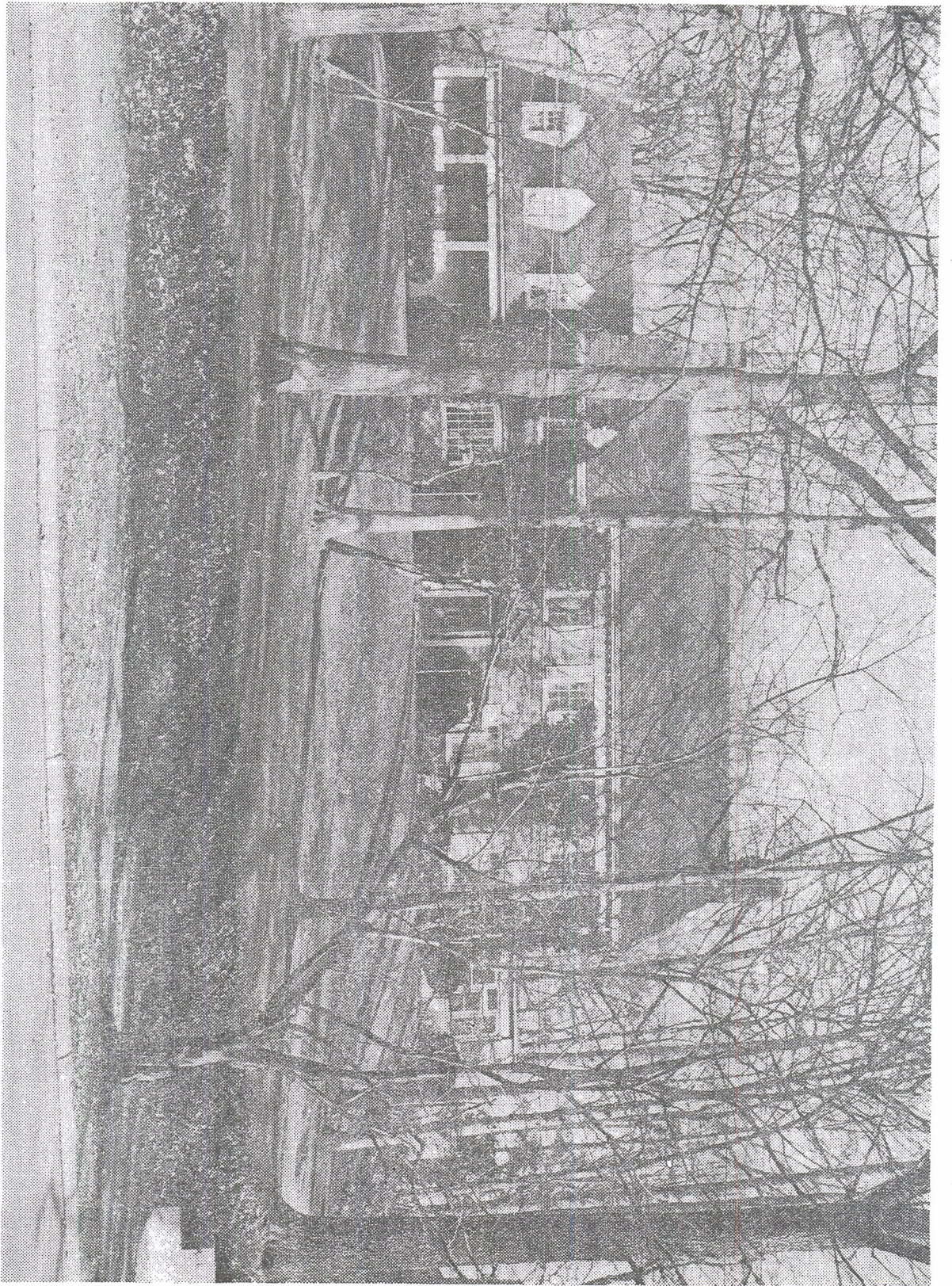
The Agnews are required to make monthly mortgage payments of \$1,118.72. "They make monthly payments

just like anyone else," said Scaggs.

Since August, the federal grand jury in Baltimore has subpoenaed many of Agnew's financial records in connection with its investigation of the Vice President on alleged bribery, extortion, conspiracy and tax charges.

Agnew has repeatedly declared his innocence of the charges. He recently moved to block the grand jury investigation on constitutional grounds and because of his contention that leaks to the press have made it impossible for him to obtain a fair hearing.

A spokesman for the Vice President declined comment yesterday on the subpoenaing of the house-purchase
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The home of Vice President and Mrs. Agnew is in the fashionable Kenwood area of suburban Montgomery County, 6415 Shadow Rd.

By Harry Natohavan—The Washington Post

Jury Is Probing Agnew Purchase of Md. Home

HOME, From B1

records and confirmed that the purchase price was \$190,000. Asked the amount of the Agnews' down payment and mortgage, she said, "It was substantial and can be determined from the public records."

The purchase price was \$35,000 less than the original asking price of \$225,000 for the 33-year-old house, Burr

The previous owners of the Agnew house, Alfred V. J. Prather and Dorothy B. Prather, purchased it in 1966 for \$150,000, according to county land records. After the Prathers' subsequent divorce, Mrs. Prather became full owner, according to Prather, a Washington attorney.

Charles S. Bresler, a real estate developer and close friend of the Agnews, said yesterday that when the Agnews began house-hunting, he looked at a number of houses on their behalf.

Bresler said that when in December, 1972, the Agnews agreed to buy the Kenwood home, the house was purchased in the name of George W. White Jr., Agnew's personal attorney, to avoid publicity. Bresler said that for the same reason, he signed a \$5,000 promissory note as a deposit on the house to hold it until final settlement in April.

Bresler said, however, that the promissory note was never cashed and to the best of his knowledge, no one but the Agnews paid

anything toward the purchase of the house.

Scaggs said that White negotiated with American National to obtain the mortgage loan for Agnew. In 1970 White got a \$160,000 loan for himself from the same building and loan association to buy property on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Agnew's spokesman said the Vice President was motivated "only by the same considerations" that motivate any loan-seeker in going to American National. Scaggs said he is not a close friend of Agnew, though he has met him several times.

Agnew's Kenwood house is assessed at \$76,100, considerably below the 60 per cent of value level at which all Maryland property is supposed to be assessed. George Filsinger, field supervisor of Montgomery County assessments, said this was because homes in the Agnew's neighborhood were last reassessed in 1971.

As Vice President, Agnew is paid a \$62,500 annual salary and \$10,000 for expenses. Burr said, "We have no reason to believe anything but that he could perfectly legitimately afford to buy that house."