

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

Jacobsen-Connally Scene Described

By Jack Anderson

Dairy lobbyist Jake Jacobsen has described as sordid a scene, if his secret confession is true, as ever has occurred in the Treasury Department's highest office.

Among Watergate investigators privy to Jacobsen's account, the episode has become known as the "toilet incident."

It happened when John Connally was Secretary of the Treasury. The bold, booming Texan—"Big John," his friends called him—was then the rage in Washington. Almost everyone agreed he was presidential timber.

He let everyone around him know he was serving at a sacrifice. His government salary didn't provide him with enough pocket money, he complained, to live in the high style to which he had become accustomed. He would have to start selling off his investments, he bemoaned, if he stayed around Washington for long.

His lament did not go unheeded. His close friend Jake Jacobsen picked up \$10,000 from the Associated Milk Producers, Inc., stashed half of it in a safe deposit box and brought the remaining \$5,000 to the Treasury Department.

As Jacobsen has described the incident to Watergate investigators, he handed over the cash in five crisp, \$1,000 packets to Connally. The smiling secretary carefully removed the wrappers, strode into his private bathroom and flushed the telltale wrappers down the toilet. Jacobsen has alleged.

When we reached Connally for comment, he listened in uncharacteristic silence to the account of the toilet incident. Then he quietly repeated the denial he has made in the past. He said that he was twice offered the \$10,000 milk payment but that he twice rejected it.

The reluctant Jacobsen has told Watergate prosecutors, quite to the contrary, that he delivered the money to Connally in two \$5,000 installments.

After the milk scandal came under investigation, Jacobsen has related, a repentant Connally brought back the hot \$10,000. The two friends agreed upon a cover story. Jacobsen promised to say the milk money had been rejected by Connally and had been kept in a safe deposit box.

But in his later confession, Jacobsen has now alleged that Connally became nervous that the bills could be traced. So he allegedly arranged to bring Jacobsen a second, substitute bundle in Austin, Tex.

Meanwhile, Jacobsen was called before a grand jury where he loyally repeated the cover story. But the FBI broke down his story, and the grand jury indicated him for perjury. He was also indicted about the same time in an unrelated savings-and-loan case.

Jacobsen has an ailing wife who needs his constant attention. So in a bid for leniency, he offered to cooperate with the prosecutors and gave them the incriminating details against Connally.

The FBI has now confirmed many of the details from bank records, travel vouchers and witnesses, such as the chauffeur who drove Connally in a limousine from Houston to Austin for the rendezvous with Jacobsen.

The FBI has also established that Connally intervened in behalf of the milk producers both with the White House and with former Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

THE RAINMAKERS—There were flat denials when we reported on March 18, 1971, that Air Force rainmakers were seeding the clouds over the North Vietnamese spy trails "in an attempt to concentrate more rainfall upon the trails and to wipe them out."

Melvin Laird, who was questioned about this after he became Secretary of Defense, tes-

tified before Congress on April 18, 1972: "We have never engaged in that type of activity over North Vietnam."

This was a barefaced lie. The Defense Department has now admitted that the Air Force, indeed, conducted top secret rainmaking operations over the supply trails from 1967 to 1972.

In response, a sheepish Laird has corrected his testimony, explaining that he had been misinformed. He is claiming, in other words, that we had better Pentagon sources than he did.

In our story three years ago we gave specific details of the hush-hush rainmaking project including its code name "Intermediary-Compatriot." We reported that the rainmaking experiments had started in 1967 and that the participants believed they had "increased the precipitation over the jungle roadways during the wet seasons."

Our Pentagon sources say these details, which have now been officially confirmed by the Defense Department, were available to Laird. The public ought to demand an end to official lying, even if it takes a few more perjury prosecutions to do it.

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