

Leasco, Oil Executives Gave to Nixon

By Morton Mintz
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Saul P. Steinberg, 33-year-old founder, board chairman and president of Leasco, a New York-based conglomerate, has acknowledged giving \$250,000 to the Nixon re-election campaign.

He told a reporter he had phoned Maurice H. Stans, the finance committee chairman, to say he wanted to donate the money, and had then done so, spreading it among 84 pre-April 7 committees. Stans, he said, had not solicited the money but was "very happy" to get it.

Contributions from Steinberg and others, including three top officials of a large oil company, were revealed. The oil executives gave at least \$33,000 to the President's re-election campaign — 10 months before the White House altered oil import quotas in a way that benefited the firm.

The White House action, taken in the wake of fuel shortages, increased considerably the quota for refined oil permitted to enter the continental United States from the Virgin Islands. The only refinery in the islands is owned by the Amerinda Hess Corp. of New York City.

"No relationship" exists between the White House action and the total of 11 contributions of \$3,000 each made by himself and two fellow executives, Amranda Hess president Philip Kramer told a reporter.

There could not possibly be a connection between contribution checks dated March 30

and 31, 1972, and a White House action taken on Jan. 8, 1973, Kramer insisted.

He refused to comment on whether the \$3,000 he is listed as having given to each of two Nixon committees was all he gave.

The committees were among 14 that received \$988,508 from numerous sources before the Finance Committee to Re-elect the President closed out their accounts last April 6, the eve of the effective date of the election-financing disclosure law, according to records of the National Savings and Trust Co.

The contributions were revealed in bank records filed in U.S. District Court yesterday in connection with a lawsuit brought by Ralph Nader's Public Citizen, Inc., and allied consumer groups.

Amerinda board chairman and chief executive H. W. McCollum of Houston, listed for \$21,000, did not return a reporter's phone calls on three successive days. He is reported to have said that he gave an additional \$29,000 to committees other than the 14 whose records now have become public.

The company's executive vice president, J. D. Callender, refused to comment either on the possibility of a link between the contributions and the White House action or on why he contributed. Like Kramer, he would not disclose if he had given more than the listed sum, \$6,000.

The 14 committees were indicated to be in a group of 50 for which bank accounts were opened in late 1971 by the Fi-

nance Committee to Re-elect the President. Up to now, information about the remaining 36 committees is fragmentary.

The same is true of at least 500 additional committees set up to enable super-contributors such as insurance tycoon W. Clement Stone, who gave a reported \$2 million, to avoid gift taxes by giving each unit no more than \$3,000 (\$6,000 for a married couple).

The lawsuit that disclosed the bank records of the 14 committees was filed against the Agriculture Department. The complaint was that the department reversed a decision to deny an increase in dairy subsidies after dairymen made large contributions to the Nixon re-election campaign.

The records of the 14 committees disclosed some large contributors who hitherto had escaped public attention, while pinpointing contributions by such known super-donors as Stone, Richard Mellon Scaife and Arthur K. Watson.

At the same time, the records shed no light whatever on the sources of \$347,856 in stock and \$61,572 in cash provided by the finance committee or its parent, the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

Several contributors gave \$3,000 to each of the 14 committees (\$6,000 in the case of Clement Stone and his wife). The donors include:

- Saul P. Steinberg, founder, board chairman and president of Leasco, a New York-based conglomerate. He told The Washington Post that he had given \$250,000 in all.

- Florenz R. Ourisman, a former part owner of the local Ourisman Chevrolet dealership. "I don't know anything about it," he told a reporter. "I have no comment whatsoever. I wish you'd leave me alone."

- Ambassador to Britain Walter H. Annenberg. He was in Washington for the inauguration but did not return a reporter's phone call.

- John H. Safer, an Arlington, Va., real estate developer, investor and sculptor. Aides reported him to be out of the city.

- Loren M. Berry of Dayton, Ohio, board chairman and executive officer of a phone directory advertising company bearing his name. He refused to say if he had contributed more than \$42,000. He said he gave because he knew the GOP "needed money," and that all he asked in return was "good government." President Nixon is "an old friend," Berry said. "I am proud of him as President and glad I had some money to give."
- Daniel J. Terra, chairman

of Lawter Chemicals, Inc., of Northbrook, Ill. He could not be reached.

The brokerage firm of Hornblower & Weeks-Hemphill, Noyes sold \$306,189 worth of stock for the finance committee, in multiple units, none valued at more than \$3,000. Efforts to determine the original contributors were unavailing.

Robert D. Street, a former salesman for the firm who signed checks totaling \$47,625 made out to the finance committee, said, "I don't know who the donors were." He personally gave \$100, he said.

Another Hornblower & Weeks employee, O. Ray Vass, who signed 95 checks transferring \$253,564 to the finance committee, could not be reached. Vice president William H. G. Fitzgerald declined to discuss the matter, saying that something like a "lawyer to client relationship" was involved.

Thomas P. Hoppin, who signed checks for \$41,667 at Thomson & McKinnon Auchincloss, Inc., said, "I haven't contributed one nickel to Mr. Nixon."

Bank records of the 14 committees also showed that:

- Andre Meyer, a partner in the New York investment house of Lazard Freres and a director of numerous major corporations, gave each of the 14 committees \$1,250, for a total of \$17,500. An aide, asked if that was the actual total, said Meyer regards this matter as "personal."

- C. Arnhold Smith, a San Diego banker who is a close personal friend of President Nixon and owner of the San Diego Padres baseball team, was listed for five contributions of \$3,000 each. However, James R. Polk of the Washington Star-News reported last month that the Nixon campaign had returned a reported \$50,000 in donations from Smith because he was the subject of investigations by the Justice Department's Antitrust Division, the Civil Aeronautics Board and the Securities and Exchange Commission. The finance committee referred inquiries to Smith, who did not return phone calls.

- Contributions of \$9,000 were listed for Roy L. Ash, former president of Litton Industries, but he said on Nov. 28, when his appointment as director of the Office of Man-

agement and Budget was announced by Mr. Nixon, that in 1969 and again in 1972 his contributions were in "five figures."

- Alexander J. Barket, chairman and president of Civic Plaza National Bank in Kansas City, Mo., was listed for \$2,500, as was bank vice chairman Tudie L. Path.

- The late Leonard Schoff-

man, who was assistant to the Lefrak Organization whose apartments are occupied by one out of every 16 residents of New York City, made 39 gifts of \$90 each and one of \$70, for a total of \$3,580. The checks were drawn on 23 separate leasing companies. The law then in effect was not violated, a spokesman said, because it permitted contributions by single proprietor-

ships and partnerships.

- Joan Whitney Payson, president of the New York Mets Baseball team, was listed for \$6,000; after April 7, she and her husband, Charles, board chairman of Vitro Corp., gave a listed \$80,500.

- John W. Rollins of Wilmington, Del., a broadcaster with other business affiliations and ties to the DuPont interests, was listed for eight \$3,000 gifts.

The National Savings & Trust bank records were attached to a deposition by vice president Donald L. Scott. Under questioning by Andra L. Oakes, a lawyer for the Nader group, he said that Hugh P. Sloan Jr., treasurer of the finance committee, sent in a charter for each of the 14 committees, along with signature cards and opening deposits, in November, 1971. Sloan made it Scott's responsibility "to provide a treasurer for each one of the organizations," Scott said.

Scott, who said he did not know the names of the committees, testified that he asked fellow bank officers and em- for add 12

Last June, the Internal Revenue Service ruled formally that for gift tax purposes political committees supporting a single candidate will be considered separate entities if one-third of their officers are different. The ruling was retroactive. The Nader group is seeking through a lawsuit to find out the origins of the ruling.

The 14 committees had such names as Dedicated Volunteers for Effective Government, Dedicated Friends of a Balanced Society, Active Volunteers for Government Reform and United Friends of Good Government.

As a result of litigation initiated by Common Cause, a citizen's lobby, the finance committee shortly before the November election released a list of contributors through March 9, 1972, but withheld identification of those who gave in the period March 10 through April 6. The National Savings and Trust records filed in court yesterday disclose some of the contributions made in the March 10 through April 6 interval.