

Millionaire Got Refund, but

By Morton Mintz

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Multi-millionaire sportsman Cornelius V. (Sonny) Whitney has told Senate Watergate committee investigators of making a secret \$250,000 contribution to President Nixon's re-election campaign when Whitney was expected to be nominated as ambassador to Spain. The Washington Post learned yesterday. Whitney did not get the nomination, but did get a refund.

A Senate source said that Whitney, who operates a race horse stable in Lexington, Ky., and is president of Whitney Industries, appeared unasked on Oct. 19 to volunteer his account to committee staff members.

The Finance Committee to Re-elect the President disclosed the contribution and refund without comment, on Sept. 28, when, under a court order, it filed the names of persons who gave to Mr. Nixon before a disclosure law became effective in April, 1972.

The finance committee

said it received the \$250,000 on June 8, 1971. Four months later, Spanish Ambassador and Mrs. Jaime Arguelles gave a reception at the Spanish embassy at which they were repeatedly asked if Whitney was to be nominated.

"That's what everybody is telling us," Arguelles replied, according to a story on the party published on Oct. 13, 1971, in The Washington Post.

Reporter Dorothy McCordle said State Department officials confirmed that Whitney was "very much in the running."

The story disclosed that Whitney, reached in Lexington, said his name had been put forward for the post and that "they are checking me out." He also was reported to have been seeking a diplomatic appointment for some time.

The date the \$250,000 was returned was given by the finance committee as Dec. 2, 1971. Several weeks later, a news report from Madrid told of "the general disappointment" that Whitney



CORNELIUS V. WHITNEY

... volunteer witness

would not become the American ambassador.

Although his expected nomination had been "hush-hush in the United States,

many of the Whitneys' friends in Spain had heard the news and were looking forward to their arrival," the story said.

Yesterday, reliable sources said that then-Secretary of State William P. Rogers had rejected a request by unidentified persons to recommend Whitney's nomination. Rogers' reasons were not learned.

Rogers told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last April 30, however, that the common practice of awarding ambassadorships to large campaign contributors was of concern. The President "agrees," he said.

Later, committee Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.) sent Rogers a set of proposed ground rules under which anyone who contributed more than \$5,000 to a political candidate automatically would be rejected by the committee for an ambassadorial post, unless he had special qualifications. "Ambassadorial nominations should not be for sale," the draft guidelines say.

Whitney could not be

Not Ambassadorship

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reached yesterday. His secretary in Lexington told a reporter that he had gone to Washington last month to clear up the matter.

According to the Senate source, Whitney said he was asked if he wanted to contribute by a fellow Kentuckian, Lee Nunn, then director of the Senate Republican Campaign Committee. Nunn could not be reached yesterday.

Whitney, according to the source, said that only after he had offered and given the \$250,000 was he selected for the nomination as ambassador to Spain. It was because he was a prospective nominee that the money was returned, Whitney reportedly said.

The source said Whitney understood he finally was

turned down because of his age. He will be 74 in February. In 1950 he was special envoy of the President to Italy, Luxembourg and Spain. He was under secretary of commerce in the Truman administration.

If a refund was made to Whitney because of an intent to make him an ambassador, the situation would be unusual, if not unprecedented.

A more ordinary sequence is illustrated in the case of Ruth Lewis Farkas and her husband, a New York department store owner.

Before the presidential election a year ago, the couple pledged \$300,000 to Mr. Nixon's campaign. They delivered \$200,000 after the election and the balance early this year. Soon after

the final \$100,000 was delivered, Mr. Nixon nominated Mrs. Farkas to be ambassador to Luxembourg.

Whitney was said to have told the Senate Watergate investigators that he subsequently contributed \$9,000 and \$41,000, for a total of \$50,000. Most of the money was contributed to the finance committee and its affiliates in September, 1972, according to the public records.

A month later, The Washington Post's Maxine Cheshire reported that sources close to Whitney were reviving talk that he might be nominated as ambassador to Spain.

She said that California Gov. Ronald Reagan had been so successful in selling Whitney to the Nixon ad-

ministration that the President had phoned Whitney to invite him to the GOP National Convention in Miami, Mrs. Cheshire said.

Reagan's office had no comment yesterday.

Protest in Barcelona Dispersed by Police

BARCELONA, Spain, Nov. 9 (UPI)—Police dispersed on estimated 1,000 persons protesting on the university campus against the banning of a Flamenco concert; the news agency Europa Press reported Thursday.

The concert, by Manuel Serena, was to be held in a hall on the campus. Police gave no reason for forbidding the concert, but some of the performers have sung anti-government protest songs recently.