

Prestige Cars Smuggled Into U.S.

By Jack Anderson

An international car theft ring, which specialized in prestige automobiles, such as Mercedes-Benz Porsches and Ferraris, is delivering stolen cars into the United States with impunity.

Although several of the alleged thieves have been nabbed, the authorities were forced to release them because the victimized European car owners couldn't come all the way to the U.S. to be prosecution witnesses. Diplomatic complications also prevented their extradition to face charges in Europe.

Some of the victims, however, have been American military personnel overseas. We have seen confidential telegrams from Army criminal investigators in Stuttgart, Germany, to military authorities in this country.

One memo describes how the stolen car ring works. It names three men—Jan Vander Berg, Antonius Houben and Nicolaas Heyer, all Dutch. "Houben supposedly mastermind behind stolen car ring," states the confidential cable, "and cannot be found by Netherlands police. Subject could possibly be in U.S.A. with Heyer and Berg."

The report alleges that Heyer and Berg "both buy old wrecked vehicles and only use the vehicle registration papers. Netherlands police report that Houben has vehicles stolen to match description of registration papers obtained from wrecks... then places appropriate numbers on chassis... of the stolen vehicles." Authorities call this operation the "salvage-switch."

Heyer and Berg were picked up, according to a later memo from California investigators, after they "conspired to bring stolen Mercedes-Benz and Porsche vehicles into California through the port of Richmond (California)."

An estimated 30 stolen cars a month enter the Richmond port alone. But the same car ring has been linked to smuggled cars coming into the country through New York City and Houston.

Falsehood Exposed

A memo, intended for the eyes only of President Nixon's fund raisers, illustrates how they stretched the law during last year's campaign.

The Finance Committee to Re-elect the President refused at first to divulge the names of contributors who gave

money to the President before April 7 when the new elections reporting law went into effect. Not until a law suit by Common Cause forced open the books were some of the names revealed.

The committee tried to get away with this secrecy by claiming it was organized and operated only in the District of Columbia. Then the law, as it was written before April 7, could not apply. We pointed out to a committee spokesman last year that the committee had set up campaign offices in states throughout the nation. But the spokesman insisted that the state committees were autonomous.

We have now obtained an internal memo which proves this statement was a lie. It is clear from the memo, dated Jan. 11, 1973, that the national committee directed and controlled the flow of funds between Washington and the state committees.

The memo, written by Yolanda Dorminy to Lee R. Nunn, both ranking members of the national finance committee, deals with the "status of 3d spread money." It turns out that "spread money" is cash distributed to the state committees to pay local bills.

The memo states that "all

money is IN except the following states." Then it lists Alabama, Arizona, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Oregon and Texas.

Of the eleven states that had turned their excess revenue over to the national committee on Jan. 13, only Arizona and Hawaii still haven't cleared up their accounts. Our sources also tell us that the surplus money from all 50 states may exceed \$500,000, which has been added to the already glutted coffers of the national committee.

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