

Taxes Probed In Illegal Gulf Contributions

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The Watergate special prosecutor is investigating possible criminal tax-law violations by recipients of illegal Gulf Oil Corp. cash campaign contributions, according to documents filed in U. S. District Court here.

Among those involved, according to the records, are "individuals, corporations and political committees or organizations."

On April 7, according to the papers filed, Special Prosecutor Charles Ruff obtained court approval to give Internal Revenue Service agents access to grand jury testimony and the records of his investigation of Gulf's contributions to federal campaigns that began last August.

In making the motion in court to bring IRS agents into the case, Ruff wrote that "criminal tax violations fall within (the) purview" of the grand jury investigation.

The help of the IRS was needed, he continued, because the investigation had "involved attempts to trace numerous payments, possibly part of illicit ventures, through foreign and domestic corporations, committees and individuals."

Ruff wrote that his attorneys did not "possess sufficient expertise in all relevant areas to conduct a complete investigation."

The prosecutor's office also is somewhat short-handed. Ruff works part time, and his staff, which once had 15 attorneys, has been down to three since last October. The Gulf investigation began to heat up last fall.

IRS agents have helped in analyzing the complex transactions surrounding the illegal contribution investigation, according to court papers.

In addition to extending the inquiry to include alleged tax violations, the

prosecutor in his motion, listed obstruction of justice as another specific new area of investigation.

The three-year statute of limitations for prosecutions on illegal campaign contributions from corporate funds made by former Gulf Washington lobbyist Claude C. Wild Jr. is about to run out. Tax law violations have a six-year statute of limitations.

Between 1959 and 1973, Wild directed the distribution of some \$5.4 million in cash to local, state and federal political candidates, according to an internal Gulf investigation.

Wild, according to court records, made his last illegal cash contribution in June 1973.

According to court records, Wild received some \$1.1 million in cash for political candidates in the years covered by the tax inquiry. At least \$400,000 of that, according to informed sources, went to still unidentified members of Congress.

One focus of the prosecutor's investigation has been the allegation that Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott (R-Pa.) received corporate money from Wild from 1963 to 1973.

A court deposition filed last November, alleged Wild gave Scott \$5,000 each spring and fall "for a personal matter or for some office matter."

Scott has maintained that any funds he received were for political purposes and "no corporate funds were so received" to his knowledge.

Last January, Wild was given immunity from prosecution for his testimony before the grand jury on the alleged payments to Scott.

The transcript of that grand jury appearance has been sealed and a court order bars any discussion of it by Wild or his lawyer.