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Rockefeller Explains Book Gift

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A campaign biography of former Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg—described by him as "shabby, dirty campaign trickery"—was financed by Nelson A. Rockefeller's brother Laurance when Goldberg ran for governor of New York in 1970.

The Rockefeller brothers stated yesterday that Laurance secretly put up $60,000 to underwrite a quick biography of Goldberg by Victor Lasky, called "Arthur J. Goldberg, the Old and the New." Lasky is the right-wing author who received $20,000 from the Nixon campaign in 1972 to write speeches and articles for it and has done critical books on John F. and Robert F. Kennedy.

FBI agents, investigating Vice President-designate Nelson Rockefeller for congressional confirmation hearings, have been exploring how a dummy corporation was formed to get money from Laurance Rockefeller to Arlington House, a conservative book publisher which issued the book in mid-campaign.

Under questioning from the press, the vice presidential nominee and his brother issued statements in New York yesterday afternoon acknowledging the episode. But Nelson Rockefeller insisted he had no knowledge of how the book was financed or his brother's role in it.

"Had he only told me about it at the time," Nelson Rockefeller said, "I would have been totally opposed to it and would have strongly advised against his participation in any form. As it was, in all the

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years since, he has never even mentioned the situation to me."

Goldberg, now a Washington lawyer, said he was never even interviewed by Lasky for the 1970 book and never read it himself, but members of his family told him it was a "hatchet job."

Goldberg unsuccessfully opposed Nelson Rockefeller for governor in 1970.

Goldberg said he was shocked by the disclosure that Rockefeller money was behind the book—concealed by a dummy corporation called Literary Properties Inc. Goldberg was skeptical of Nelson's denial of any part in the arrangement.

"I could not conceive that Gov. Rockefeller would have engaged in such shabby dirty campaign trickery," Goldberg said. The explanation "simply does not wash."

Furthermore, the former associate justice said the episode and explanation "in my mind, raises the serious question of whether such a person was fit to be a Vice President of the United States."

The disclosure of the secretly financed campaign book adds a new and jarring dimension to the congressional inquiries into the Rockefeller fortune. The recent revelation of large gifts which Nelson Rockefeller made to public figures such as $50,000 to Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger were explained in benign terms, as gestures of friendship from a very wealthy man. But the book project is reminiscent of secret arrangements in the 1972 Nixon campaign which turned into a "dirty tricks" scandal.

The Lasky book will also add strength to those congressmen who are insisting that the investigators must examine not only Nelson Rockefeller's finances and gifts, but those of his brothers in order to take a full measure of Rockefeller political influence and economic power.

Lasky, who lives in Washington, insisted in a telephone interview that he had no knowledge of how the book was financed, particularly the Rockefeller involvement. He received an advance from Arlington House—identified as $10,000 by House sources—and that's all he knew, Lasky said.

"I don't know Laurance Rockefeller or anything about this set-up," Lasky said. "It's a complete surprise to me. That's the truth."

According to reliable sources, the book was produced through a tangled chain of New York and Philadelphia lawyers, who created a corporation which received its cash from 30 Rockefeller Plaza—with at least one check for $40,000 issued by J. Richardson Dilworth, the Rockefeller's senior financial manager who handles investments for the entire family.

Nelson Rockefeller, however, insists that he knew nothing about all those arrangements to aid his campaign for re-election. The only notice he was given, he said, was a brief mention by New York lawyer Jack Wells early in the 1970 campaign to the effect that Victor Lasky was at work on a Goldberg biography.

When FBI agents first asked the vice presidential nominee about rumors that he had financed the book himself, Rockefeller told them he knew nothing about it. Later, the FBI informed him that it had tracked the financing to his younger brother, Laurance, who is best known to the American public as a conservationist.

When he first heard about the project in 1970, Nelson Rockefeller said in his statement, "I really didn't pay any attention because I never felt that such books coming out during campaigns cut much ice one way or the other. I never heard any more about it until the book was out and someone showed me a copy which I never even opened."

According to congressional investigators, however, a total of $65,000 was passed through Literary Properties Inc., a Delaware corporation with one stockholder, Philadelphia lawyer Joseph Jocovini. LPI, in turn, contracted with Arlington House of New Rochelle, N.Y., to put out Lasky's book.

According to sources, a campaign committee called "Citizens for the Rockefeller Team" ordered 100,000 copies, though it is not clear whether that many books were printed and distributed. Arlington House, according to one source, had destroyed its invoices on the transaction and was not able to supply FBI agents with all of the details.

Lasky, likewise, said he couldn't remember the details of the project, even the amount of his advance or who first proposed the book. "I don't know anything about it," the author said. "I did a book. I'm getting all kinds of flak and nobody ever read it."

The book came out in paperback form and did not cause much of a stir in the 1970 campaign which Rockefeller won by a landslide. That year, the governor spent a reported $7.7 million on his re-election campaign—about $4.5 million of it contributed by his family and himself.

The biography relies heavily on what other publications had already written about Goldberg's career and stressed the theme that Goldberg took strikingly contradictory positions during his career as labor lawyer, Secretary of Labor under President Kennedy, Supreme Court justice and ambassador to the United Nations.

"Not even his most ardent admirers," Lasky wrote, "will claim that Mr. Goldberg knows anything about New York."

At another point, Lasky wrote:

"As we have seen, for the first 52 years of his life Arthur Goldberg had no experience in government. Nor did he have any experience as an executive. He was an excellent labor lawyer and as such was a middle-man, a conciliator, a manipulator. But he never ran anything."

This sort of stuff reinforced the theme of Nelson Rockefeller's campaign — a man with 12 years of experience managing the affairs of New York State.

According to Nelson Rockefeller's statement yesterday, Laurance invested around $60,000 in the company set up to produce the book and "heard nothing more about it until the book came out and was told it was a flop. Laurance found himself stuck with a net loss of around $52,000. While this was a business loss, he did not take a tax deduction."

Laurance Rockefeller could not be reached for comment, but Nelson Rockefeller's press secretary issued a one-sentence statement from him:

"My brother's statement accurately reflects the facts and I have nothing to add to it."

The confirmation of Rockefeller to be Vice President, already postponed until after next month's election, is likely to take still longer because the House Judiciary chairman, Rep. Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.), has asked Rockefeller for additional tax returns going back to 1957 before he became governor of New York.

Rockefeller's press secretary, Hugh Morrow, said the additional data will be supplied to House and Senate committees next week, along with answers to questions already raised by the Senate Rules Committee on a series of public gifts.

Meanwhile, the Boston Globe reported another Rockefeller gift to a public figure—$31,300 to Edward J. Logue, former head of the Boston Redevelopment Agency, who was hired by Gov. Rockefeller in 1968 to head the New York State Urban Development Corp. Logue also received a loan of $100,000 at another unspecified time, according to the Globe.