

Kleindienst Didn't Embarrass Wallace



Jack Anderson

TO SPARE Alabama's Governor George Wallace from the embarrassment of having his name dragged through a long trial, Attorney General Richard Kleindienst personally intervened last week to stop the prosecution of the ex-commandant of the Alabama Air National Guard.

Major General Reid Doster, the former Guard commander, had been charged by a federal grand jury with squeezing illegal political donations out of Guard officers. The indictment said he had turned over \$1700 of the illegally raised money to the 1970 gubernatorial campaign of George Wallace, whom Doster has called his "personal friend."

By the time the case was scheduled to be tried last week, federal prosecutor Ira Dement had lined up 40 witnesses to testify. But on the day the trial was to begin, Dement suddenly dropped the charges. Doster agreed, in return, to resign his commission. Three other defendants, subordinates of Doster, were let off Scot free.

★ ★ ★

WE HAVE now learned that the decision to call off the trial was made personally by Kleindienst. When my reporter Mark McIntyre demanded to know why the charges were dropped, a Justice Department spokesman blurted: "Because Governor Wallace was involved."

It wasn't the first time that the Nixon Administration suppressed a criminal action embarrassing to Wallace.

Our stories four years ago about Wallace's political payoff system led to an-

investigation by the Internal Revenue Service. In a confidential summary of the case made available to us, the IRS charged that the Wallace law firm, then operated by George and his brother Gerald, had been used as a conduit for kickbacks from state contractors.

Yet the federal tax case against Gerald Wallace was suddenly abandoned after a private conference between President Nixon and Governor Wallace last year aboard the presidential plane. Not long afterward, George Wallace announced his candidacy for President as a Democrat.

★ ★ ★

WHITE HOUSE aides, discussing the political outlook with us later, said they had assurances Wallace would not run as an independent. They regarded this as a significant advantage for the President.

For in 1968, Wallace's third-party candidacy prevented Richard Nixon from carrying Southern states that would clearly have chosen him over Hubert Humphrey had Wallace not been in the race.

Again this year, Wallace as a third-party candidate might have threatened the President's chances of winning the Deep South and several border states.

Footnote: General Doster told us he raised the money for Wallace on orders from Wallace's finance coordinator, Jimmy Faulkner. Faulkner admits only that he asked Doster for a "personal contribution." Both versions would have been embarrassing to Wallace if the case had been tried. Wallace and Kleindienst refused to comment.