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**AGNEW DISPUTED
ON BRIBE REPORT**

Former Prosecutor Calls It
'Just a Publicity Stunt'

By DAVID BURNHAM

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BALTIMORE, Aug. 8 — Vice President Agnew's reference at his news conference today to a bribe offer apparently referred to an incident in 1966 when he informed the press that he had been offered a \$200,000 campaign contribution by gambling interests in southern Maryland.

Mr. Agnew, who was then running for Governor, said at the time that the gambling interests had offered the \$200,000 in return for his promise that if he was elected he would not interfere with legislation favoring the operation of pin-ball machines.

But Frank H. Newell 3d, the Baltimore County Prosecutor in 1966, denied that Mr. Agnew had ever officially reported the alleged bribe offer to him.

"I think it was just a publicity stunt," Mr. Newell, now a lawyer in private practice, said in an interview today.

"When I called him down to my office, he was accompanied by his lawyer, and he refused to give me the name of the man who allegedly had made the \$200,000 offer. He also told me he would refuse to give the name to a grand jury if subpoenaed, because he didn't want to hurt innocent people."

Matter Was Dropped

The former prosecutor said that Mr. Agnew's explanation did not make any sense to him, and that he had finally decided to drop the matter because it appeared to him that it had been made up to generate publicity.

In another development here today, the lawyer for one of the men involved in the Federal investigation of alleged kickbacks by Maryland contractors to government officials said that a widely published report that Mr. Agnew had received a lump payment of \$50,000 from his client was untrue.

Joseph H. H. Kaplan, a lawyer for Lester Matz, a consulting engineer identified by the Knight newspaper chain as the source of the \$50,000 reportedly paid to Mr. Agnew, heatedly labeled the article "irresponsible reporting." I spoke to newsmen at his law office here.

The Knight report was by Saul Friedman, the chief of the newspaper chain's Washington Bureau.

"I don't represent the Vice President, but I don't like to see misstatements like that," Mr. Kaplan said, referring specifically to the Knight newspaper account.

The Knight article, as published, did not directly attribute the reported \$50,000 transaction to Mr. Matz. It said "Federal investigators probing the records of Matz and his firm have found evidence that he borrowed \$50,000 from several sources, which allegedly was passed on to Agnew in 1970 or 1971."