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Text of Letter From the Vice President

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 3—
Following is the text of a
letter to The Washington
Post yesterday from Vice
President Agnew:

On Tuesday, Oct. 2, your
staff writer, Mr. John P. Mac-
Kenzie, spread forth a cute
little vignette critical of my
attributing to Assistant At-
torney General Petersen the
quote, "We've got the evi-
dence. We've got it cold."

Mr. MacKenzie refers to
C.B.S. News as reporting the
quotation from "a source
close to the negotiations" and
not from Mr. Petersen. He
goes on to say how the story
changed a little in the re-
telling.

One of those organs chang-
ing it in the retelling was
The Washington Post, which
said on Sunday, Sept. 23:
"According to the C.B.S.
report, Petersen, with Rich-
ardson's approval, rejected
the offer, insisted that Agnew

plead guilty to a charge that
could possibly mean a jail
sentence, and said, "We've
got the evidence; we've got it
cold'."

But I do not want to single
out The Post as the solitary
violateur. The New York
Times of Sept. 23 said:

"The network quoted Mr.
Petersen as saying "We've
got the evidence. We've got
it cold'."

The Baltimore Sun of the
same date said:

"The hardest report on the
plea-bargaining sessions came
from C.B.S. News, which
quoted Henry E. Petersen,
the Assistant Attorney Gen-
eral in charge of the crimi-
nal division, as having said:
'We've got the evidence.
We've got it cold.'"

And the Washington Star-
News of Saturday, Sept. 22,
said:

"Petersen was quoted as
saying, 'We've got the evi-
dence, we've got it cold.'"

The Justice Department is
now making the assertion
that the leak of Petersen's

comment came from my at-
torneys. This is nothing more
than a pitiful attempt at a
cover-up. My attorneys are
willing to sign affidavits that
they did not discuss any-
thing concerning the meet-
ing with the news media. Mr.
Graham of C.B.S. should be
decent enough to confirm
that his source was not my
attorneys.

Now, it doesn't make a
great deal of difference who
in the Justice Department
dropped this little morsel in
the hands of Mr. Graham.
The fact remains that four
newspapers of considerable
circulation left the distinct
impression with their readers
that Mr. Petersen made this
improper, unprofessional and
highly prejudicial comment.

The American people are
not going to be confused by
Mr. MacKenzie's tricky at-
tempt to make it look as
though I was trying to create
a misimpression. The point
remains that the Justice De-
partment is wrong and has
not denied that wrong.