

Taxpayers Were Stuck for the Bills



Jack Anderson

PRESIDENT NIXON'S people tried to stick the taxpayers, apparently, for every possible petty bill at his estate in San Clemente, Calif., and Key Biscayne, Fla.

We have gone through a stack of bills and memos and these show the taxpayers were charged for everything from stamping his golf tees with the presidential logo to furnishing his private San Clemente restroom with his favorite soap.

The usual explanation out of the White House has been that the government pays for renovations involving the President's security. The documents in our possession, however, show that the taxpayers were soaked for dozens of improvements never requested by the Secret Service.

This has also been established by Representative Jack Brooks (Dem-Tex.), after a thorough investigation by his House Government Operations Subcommittee.

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THE SECRET SERVICE was persuaded to restore Pat Nixon's favorite gazebo, although it had been rejected as a security outpost. The First Lady's social secretary, Constance Stuart, explained the problem in a February 15, 1971, memo to Mrs. Nixon.

"I've looked into the matter of the restoration of the gazebo at San Clemente," Ms. Stuart reported. "The gazebo in question is the one closest to the ocean overlooking the point and it evidently is in sad need of repair."

"The Secret Service will not be taking this gazebo over as one of the posts. They

would like to place some small electronic scanning devices in an already existing cabinet . . .

"The gazebo would be restored to its original condition . . . I have been assured this work would be done in good taste and that the ultimate result would be as close to the original as possible."

The First Lady scratched an "OK" to this proposal and Ms. Stuart referred it to the General Service Administration's special projects officer, John F. Galuardi.

"Jack," she noted. "As you can see PN has OK'd the work."

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AT KEY BISCAYNE, the taxpayers have paid for fixtures in the homes not only of the President but also his friend, Bebe Rebozo, next door. One work sheet calls for a "booster transformer" for "the existing kitchen . . . and for the existing air conditioning and sauna bath" at the Rebozo residence.

Special helipad and docking equipment was also requested by the Secret Service for the Coco Lobo, a boat owned by Rebozo.

Dozens of other miscellaneous items, including an ice machine that makes square ice because the President "does not like ice cubes with holes in them," were also billed to the taxpayers.

A White House spokesman complained that the documents were part of a "partisan, unethical" campaign to embarrass the President. The spokesman said that the Secret Service had gone ahead with plans to renovate the San Clemente gazebo before Mrs. Nixon was consulted.