

Witness Says Agnew Got Road Contract Kickbacks

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BALTIMORE, Jan. 23 — A former Maryland Roads Commission chairman testified in Federal Court here today that he was involved in the extortion of cash kickbacks from 1967 to 1969 with former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew and a Baltimore mortgage banker.

The witness, Jerome B. Wolff, 55 years old, served as commission chairman while Mr. Agnew was Governor of Maryland and later became the Vice President's science adviser. Mr. Wolff's description of the alleged kickbacks came on the 10th day of a political corruption trial of N. Dale Anderson, Baltimore County Executive. Mr. Wolff said that most of the kickbacks took place while Mr. Agnew was Governor but that some payments were made after he became Vice President.

Mr. Wolff said he had personally received \$36,000 in cash on arrangements with concerns receiving roads commission contracts without bids.

The plan was set up for him to get 25 per cent of the money, I. H. Hammerman 2d, the mortgage banker, 25 per cent, and Mr. Agnew 50 per cent, Mr. Wolff said. On that basis, the arrangement would have netted Mr. Agnew at least \$72,000.

Mr. Wolff's testimony before the seven-man, five-woman jury provided new details on information described in a 40-page statement of evidence made public by Federal prosecutors on Oct. 10, the day Mr. Agnew pleaded no contest to a tax violation and resigned as vice President.

That statement said that seven unnamed engineering concerns and an unnamed financial institution were victims of the extortion plan, but no money figures were given. Today, Mr. Wolff, who is testifying under a grant of limited immunity, said that nine engineering concerns and a financial institution were involved.

Mr. Wolff, who began testifying Monday afternoon, said, under cross-examination by Norman P. Ramsey, Mr. Anderson's attorney, that Mr. Hammerman, a long-time Agnew associate, came to him early in 1967 with the plan to extort kickbacks.



United Press International

Jerome B. Wolff

Under the system, he testified, Mr. Hammerman made arrangements with concerns about to receive the roads contract, solicited kickbacks, collected the money and then delivered Mr. Wolff's share in plain white envelopes.

About \$10,000 of the \$36,000 that went to Mr. Wolff under what he called the "state road commission arrangement" actually was given to him after he joined the Vice President's staff in 1969, Mr. Wolff testified. He was appointed roads chairman in March, 1967, five months after Mr. Agnew was elected Governor, and left early in 1969 to join Mr. Agnew in Washington.

The witness said that the \$10,000 was in "residual" kickbacks from contracts awarded before he left the state roads chairmanship.

He also testified that Mr. Agnew had dealt directly with officials from two concerns seeking state roads contracts. These officials were identified by Mr. Wolff as Lester Matz, Childs & Associates, Inc., and Allen I. Green, president of Green & Associates.

"They [Mr. Matz and Mr. Green] were doing their own thing, if you will, in getting state roads commission work," he said. "To be specific, they were dealing directly with the Governor [Mr. Agnew]."

The October statement of evidence included information

about the Matz and Green connection with Mr. Agnew, saying the two men had paid kickbacks directly to him while he was Baltimore County Executive, Governor and finally Vice President.

Mr. Wolff said that some of the money he received had been used to make payments to Mr. Anderson, 56, who succeeded Mr. Agnew as Baltimore County Executive. Mr. Wolff said the payments had been made through an intermediary in return for contracts awarded to three Wolff-related engineering concerns.

Mr. Anderson is on trial for allegedly extorting more than \$46,000 from eight concerns receiving nonbid contracts from 1968 to 1972. He was indicted on 43 counts of extortion, conspiracy, causing the illegal use of interstate facilities and income tax evasion.

Mr. Wolff said he had paid \$11,000 in kickback money to Mr. Anderson, through William E. Fornoff, Mr. Anderson's former County Administrator, who has already testified as the prosecution's star witness under a grant of immunity.