

# White House Leaked to Our Column

By Jack Anderson

The White House howls about news leaks have moved us to relate for the first time how those same horrified gentlemen have tried to use our column to leak unfavorable stories against their political foes.

First, the White House tried to establish a direct pipeline into our office. This was shut down after our exposes of the Nixon administration landed us on the White House "enemies list."

Thereafter, the President's men used indirect approaches to plant stories with us, once routing information through the Virgin Islands.

Here are the details:

Early in 1969, President Nixon's political tutor, the late Murray Chotiner, called on us to say that the new President wanted friendly relations and that the resources of the White House would be available to us for hard-to-get information.

We don't know whether Nixon himself was a party to this arrangement. But former White House aide Clark Mollenhoff has told us that he learned from the President's former staff chief, H. R. Haldeman, of Chotiner's secret relationship with our office.

Through the Chotiner channel, we received only half-a-dozen stories, including the Justice Department's file on the tax investigation of George Wallace and his brother, Gerald. This was at a time when the White House feared the Alabama gov-

ernor would run for President as an independent in 1972 and drain votes away from Mr. Nixon.

We always doublechecked the White House leads and seldom gave the facts the emphasis Chotiner wanted. When we also started publishing Nixon scandals, the olive branch was withdrawn and the Chotiner leak dried up. But we learned that the White House still kept trying to plant stories with us indirectly. We have obtained the confidential White House file, for example, on Sen. George McGovern's campaign treasurer, Henry Kimelman. The file shows how the White House tried to slip us derogatory information about Kimelman.

On May 12, 1972, presidential aide W. Richard Howard wrote to a White House colleague, Fred Fielding, alleging that Kimelman "was nearly indicted last year because he is a liquor importer in the Virgin Islands and apparently he really rakes off the profits."

The allegation, it turned out later, was erroneous. But the memo continued: "We believe there must be material at Justice and Interior on this sleazy character that we would like to obtain through your fantastic sources."

"We could, of course, control the release of this material but need your help in getting what apparently is some pretty good stuff." The memo was stamped "Confidential/Eyes Only."

Not long afterward, the White

House received a memo from Interior Secretary Rogers Morton's executive assistant, Bob Hitt. This one was stamped "Very Confidential/Eyes Only."

Hitt provided a rundown on Kimelman, telling about an investigation into alleged irregularities but concluding: "The investigation turned up nothing sinister that I am aware of."

By an interesting coincidence, we received a communication about this time from William N. Greer of the Virgin Islands. He enclosed a two-page summary of allegations against Kimelman, which we investigated but couldn't substantiate.

We were startled to find this letter in the White House's confidential Kimelman file. It was accompanied by a letter from Greer's wife to White House aide Harry Dent. "Enclosed herewith," wrote Nellie Greer, "is a copy of information sent by my husband to Jack Anderson."

We have learned that Greer, a former U.S. marshal, is a security specialist who does undercover work for commercial firms in the Virgin Islands. His wife in 1972 was a minor Republican appointee working in the Government House.

Reached in the Virgin Islands, Greer denied that the White House had instigated his letter to us. He had obtained the detailed accusations against Kimelman, said Greer, from local law enforcement agencies.

The Kimelman file shows that several Watergate figures—former Attorney General John

Mitchell, former White House counsel John Dean, former presidential aide Charles Colson and a few others—tried to dig up dirt on Kimelman.

The results can be summed up in a June 5, 1972, memo from Dean to Howard. "To date," wrote Dean, "we have been unable to come up with any material on Kimelman that might be used to illustrate the true nature of the money man in McGovern's life."

**Ziegler's fish**—A year ago, we revealed that the National Aquarium was forced to spend 10 per cent of its meager budget to maintain fish tanks for senators, representatives and other pampered poohbahs. Our story shortly put an end to the government's door-to-door guppy service.

There is, however, one lone fish fancier holding out. The President's press secretary, Ron Ziegler, has stubbornly refused to give up his Bleeding Heart Tetras.

Rumor has it that Ziegler gains great inspiration from his fish. He is about as communicative as his finny friends.

**Footnote:** The federal fish-tank tender, who must still service Ziegler's aquarium, isn't permitted to enter the office while the great man is present. Not until Ziegler slips out does his secretary notify the aquarist he may enter.