

Recipients of \$4 Million From Gulf Unidentified

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Recipients of almost \$4 million in cash handed out by Gulf Oil Corp. vice president Claude C. Wild, Jr., from a \$5.4 million campaign slush fund remain unidentified despite two several federal agencies and years of investigation by two law firms specially hired by Gulf, itself.

Dozens of national, state and local officials and campaign organizations have already been named in court records as getting Gulf cash, between 1961 and 1973, but the total amount they are said to have received is less than one-third the money Gulf's own records show Wild was given for distribution.

In 1973, for example, Gulf records show Wild received and passed out \$170,000 in cash until July of that year, when the program was halted. Only one \$5000 contribution, to the campaign of Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) has been identified.

The remaining \$165,000 in 1973 contributions are of particular interest to Watergate special prosecutor Charles Ruff. A 1974 amendment to the campaign fund laws, reduces the statute of limitations for bringing an indictment for use of illegal corporate campaign funds to three years from five.

Thus Ruff has only three months left to track down Gulf money that went to House or Senate candidates if he wants to prosecute congressional offenders.

Wild is the key to any criminal case since, according to one federal investigator, "there are no records" of the cash transactions which almost always were "one on one situations" where corroboration is necessary.

A shrewd, long-time lobbyist, Wild has been playing cat-and-mouse with federal, congressional and corporate investigators, attempting to keep himself out of jail while at the same time protecting the names of politicians and aides who took the possibly-illegal cash he distributed.

While Wild has been maneuvering to protect himself, open competition has developed in the inquiry between Special Prosecutor

Ruff and the Securities and Exchange Commission over the former Gulf official's testimony.

The SEC, according to officials, has wanted to give Wild immunity so that he could relate in full what he did with the entire \$5.4 million fund without facing further prosecution. The SEC interest, according to one official, "is to get a public accounting."

The Watergate prosecutor, however, has a special situation with Wild.

In October, 1973, Wild and Gulf made a voluntary disclosure to the Watergate special prosecutor of \$125,000 in illegal contributions to the 1972 presidential campaigns of Richard Nixon, Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.) and Rep. Wilbur Mills (D-Ark.).

In November, 1973, the prosecutor accepted a guilty plea from Wild and Gulf on a relatively minor charge arising out of those 1972 contributions.

However, as part of that agreement, Wild was supposed to make a full disclosure to the prosecutor of all contributions to federal elections made between 1968 and 1972.

Wild came forward with records from a previously unpublicized Gulf Good Government Fund which raised money from Gulf executives, and sent checks to political candidates for the House and Senate. That fund, like other voluntary contributing groups, was legal.

Wild did not disclose that he also made contributions from his then-secret illegal cash fund. And the prosecutor, overwhelmed at the time with other corporate cases, did not fully investigate Gulf.

It was only after the SEC entered the case that the prosecutor's office discovered Wild had not told all.

In September, 1975, Wild's former assistants at the Gulf Washington office went before the grand jury for the first time and told how they delivered envelopes with cash to various members of the House and

Last January, Wild appeared before the grand jury with limited immunity and, according to informed sources, named several members of Congress and

Senators to whom he had given cash in 1973. Some, reportedly had deficits from the 1972 election, and, others like Inouye, were getting ready to run in 1974.

At some key points, however, Wild's "recollection got fuzzy," one informed source said. Wild again failed to account for all the funds he had been given.

Last month, the prosecutor indicted Wild on a new charge of making illegal corporate fund contributions to Inouye's campaign in 1973 and the election of Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) in September, 1972.

Wild's lawyer had several months earlier agreed to waive the three-year limitation on the \$2,500 Nunn contribution in an effort to prove his client would tell grand jury.

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