

Campaign Figures

The exchequer of the Watergate boodle, Hugh W. Sloan Jr., has told Senate investigators that he got the run-around when he tried to tell White House aides about all the \$100 bills he had been passing out.

"I don't want to know any details," he quoted John Ehrlichman as telling him. Ehrlichman added reassuringly that the financial details would be covered by executive privilege "at least until after the election."

Sloan was so "overwrought," he recalled, that presidential appointments secretary Dwight Chapin suggested he "take a vacation." Chapin also stressed that "it was important to protect the President."

As the campaign treasurer, Sloan said he received \$1.7 million in cash during the last-minute rush to beat the financial disclosure law which went into effect on April 7, 1972. He deposited less than half of this, approximately \$800,000, in various bank accounts. This left about \$900,000 which he "distributed among a variety of persons mostly in \$100 bills," he told the Senate sleuths.

He said \$199,000 was paid to Watergate ringleader G. Gordon Liddy in lump sums beginning in January 1972. This is also the time the Watergate plotting began. Once Liddy asked for \$83,000, which Sloan wouldn't pay without consulting Liddy's boss, Jeb Magruder. But even Magruder's approval didn't satisfy Sloan, who also checked with his own boss, Finance Committee Chairman Maurice Stans. As Sloan related it, Stans "said he would have to check with John Mitchell." Later, Stans reported back to Sloan: "I don't want to know, and you don't want to know."

Liddy collected two more \$12,000 payments, with Magruder's approval, after the April 7 deadline. A summary of Sloan's confidential interview with the Senate investigators also notes: "Sloan gave Stans typed reports on about three occasions, including a final report on June 23, that listed in summary fashion all of the cash paid out . . . The books and records that Sloan kept concerning these payments were destroyed by him after he gave the final report to Stans."

Next day, Sloan was scheduled for questioning by the FBI about his knowledge of the Watergate bugging. Before he met with the agents, he anxiously approached John Mitchell and campaign official Fred LaRue for advice. He told the investigators sadly that he "had hoped to get some guidance from Mitchell in terms of being told to tell the truth but did not get any."

He quoted LaRue, on the other hand, as suggesting he lie to the FBI. "You know, there's a problem here," Sloan claimed LaRue told him. "We have got to agree on a figure of what was given to Liddy, one that was not very high."

Sloan also charged that Magruder had asked to lie about the amount of cash delivered to Liddy. "Magruder told Sloan," according to the Senate summary, "that they would have to

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agree on the figure of \$40,000 or \$80,000 as the sum that Sloan had given to Liddy." Sloan claimed he replied: "I've no intention to perjure myself." Magruder's response, according to Sloan, was: "You may have to."

Early in July, Sloan took the vacation Chapin had suggested after LaRue also urged him to leave. "LaRue told Sloan," states the summary, "that he didn't want Sloan to go before the grand jury until after they had resolved certain matters."

After Sloan returned from a trip to the West, he allegedly "told LaRue he was unhappy because people wanted him to perjure himself or plead the Fifth Amendment, and he wanted to tell the truth. At one point, LaRue said that Sloan should consider taking the

Fifth because he had campaign law problems, but said 'fine' when Sloan said he was going to testify fully."

The Senate report claims Sloan met with Assistant U.S. Attorney Earl Silbert on July 18 and "gave him the entire story. Sloan also went before the grand jury and told them the truth, including Magruder's attempt to have him commit perjury, although not in the detail he told Silbert."

We spoke to Silbert who recalled that Sloan had been less specific in his charges against Magruder and LaRue. Nevertheless, Silbert brought out the charges during the questioning of Sloan before the grand jury. In response, both Magruder and LaRue denied under oath that they had asked Sloan to commit perjury. This left Silbert, in each case, with one man's word against another. He concluded that "it certainly wasn't a prosecutable case."

In addition to the \$199,000 in \$100 bills that Liddy received, Sloan said he also delivered unaudited cash to the following: (1) approximately \$250,000 to the President's personal attorney, Herb Kalmbach; (2) another \$350,000 "in a briefcase" to White House aide Gordon Strachan; (3) \$100,000 to campaign official Herbert Porter; (4) a "single payment of \$20,000" to Magruder; and (5) approximately "five small additional payments to individuals, probably in the hundreds-of-dollars-each range."

Apparently, the President's campaign aides were scattering \$100 bill around like autumn leaves. Senate investigators have heard that many of the contributors were promised specific government favors in return for their campaign cash. It seems that campaign contributions have become the new form of bribery.

Politicians of both parties are reluctant to investigate campaign contributor and to look the political gift horses in the mouth. But the Senate Watergate Committee owes it to the American people to subpoena every known contributor and to ask him under oath what promises were made in return for the contribution. This is the best way we know to clean up politics.