

Nixon Probed and Courted Meany

Even as President Nixon was courting political support from George Meany, the White House "dirty tricks" crew was conducting a back-door probe to see whether the crusty, then 77-year-old AFL-CIO boss would survive a serious chest hernia.

As part of the snooping, according to "dirty tricks" chief Jack Caulfield, the White House used a management consultant posing as a doctor to try to squeeze medical data out of Meany's personal physician.

Meany's doctor denies he furnished medical information. The consultant agrees, saying, he told Caulfield he obtained the information from two labor officials. But Caulfield nevertheless fobbed the "medical" reports off on President Nixon as coming straight from Meany's doctor.

According to Caulfield, the clandestine operation on Meany was ordered by former White House counsel John W. Dean III, probably at the direction of ex-Nixon aides H. R. (Bob) Halde-man or John D. Ehrlichman.

In a room locked to the public and the press Caulfield told the Senate Watergate committee of the Meany caper and previously undisclosed details of his other White House chores.

These, he reluctantly confessed, involved presidential nephew Donald Nixon, former Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, the Ford Foundation, the newsmen who revealed the My-lai slaughter, the Nixon campaign's chief of Jewish affairs, Newsday and many others.

To carry out his probes, the "dirty tricks" impressario got the willing help of a New York FBI agent; the White House resident Jesuit, Father John McLaughlin, who recently defended the President's foul language, and presidential secretary Rose Mary Woods, to name a few.

The once ruddy Caulfield, who has been weakened by serious abdominal surgery, turned out to be a slippery witness, the classified transcript of his testimony reveals.

"Do you know for a fact that the President was interested in getting some discreet information on the condition of George Meany" in 1971, Caulfield was asked by committee lawyer Terry Lenzner.

"Apparently a memorandum went from Dean to the President," said Caulfield, a former New York City detective. "There was intense interest, I do recall . . . on the part of many people at the White House. (Meany) had a (chest) attack . . . The thrust of the inquiry was how serious . . ."

When Lenzner pressed him on how he got his information, Caulfield weaved and dodged.

"I received it from a friend of mine," he said.

"Who was that?" demanded Lenzner.

"Mr. James Juliana," Caulfield finally acknowledged, naming a Washington management consultant and ex-investigator for the late Sen. Joseph McCarthy (R-Wis.).

"Do you know how he got it?" persisted Lenzner.

"I think he got it from a physician friend of his."

"Your memorandum indicates that Dr. Marvin Fuchs, who was George Meany's personal physician, was talked to on a very discreet basis by another physician."

"Yes," said Caulfield.

"Was that Mr. Juliana?"

"Yes," swore Caulfield.

Both Fuchs and Juliana deny this as a baseless whopper. Juliana told us he was advised the attack was serious by two friends in the labor movement. He gave Caulfield a full report of his talk, he said, adding that the President should visit Meany in the hospital or send flowers. Within a few days, sure enough, not flowers, but cigars reached Meany from the White House.

In another case Caulfield probed the Long Island paper Newsday which was preparing an expose of presidential crony C. G. (Bebe) Rebozo.

"The forthcoming Newsday article was a matter of constant conversation around the White House," recalled Caulfield. One day, he said, "I bumped into (Rebozo) in the hall of the White House." Rebozo was "concerned." But Caulfield assured Rebozo he was already on the case.

As Caulfield recounted under oath, he and FBI agent Pat Henry were drinking in New York when Henry said, "there is an article coming out on Mr. Rebozo . . . Would you be inter-

ested if there's any information?' and I said, 'I sure would.'"

Although Caulfield first tried to withhold Henry's name from the record, he finally admitted that Henry passed on information about Newsday. "Mr. Henry, as I recall, had friends at the newspaper (and) spoke to those friends about the publication date of the article," Caulfield testified.

The White House gumshoe dutifully relayed this information to Dean.

Caulfield said he also believed that Newsday reporters in Florida who worked on the Rebozo story were under Secret Service surveillance. The Secret Service and FBI deny they ever authorized any probes of Newsday.

Even some White House friends drew suspicion from the President's inner circle, Caulfield testified. Dean once ordered a probe of Mr. Nixon's chief campaign aide on Jewish affairs, Lawrence Goldberg.

Caulfield was worried about "a potential question of loyalty" to the campaign on the part of Goldberg. Caulfield suggested the issue had been raised to him by Father McLaughlin. The staffer-priest refused to return our repeated calls.

Footnote: A spokesman for Meany said the tireless old labor warrior had "absolutely no idea" he was being probed. Caulfield could not be reached.