

Apparent Violations In Agnew Gala Cited

REPORT, From AI

ber of the Salute to Ted Agnew Night Committee who was specifically named in the GAO report. The GAO said Wharton lied in attesting to the validity of the committee's report, which showed \$50,000 contributed to the Agnew committee by 31 persons who in fact had not made the donations.

The report also said that Wharton apparently lied again when he attested to the truth of his original report during a routine GAO audit of the records of the Agnew committee.

Lankler and other Republicans say the \$50,000 was borrowed from the Finance Committee to Re-Elect the President to exaggerate the proceeds from a May, 1972, testimonial gala for Agnew held in Baltimore. They say they were worried that the event would look like a failure, and that the Agnew committee borrowed the money and listed it as donations. The money was subsequently returned and an apparently false report filed with both GAO and state officials.

The \$50,000 contribution came to light when former Finance Committee treasurer Hugh W. Sloan Jr. told Watergate investigators of the money transfer. Sloan also disclosed an unreported \$25,000 gift of Nixon money to Rep. William O. Mills (R-Md.). Mills committed suicide May 24 after the gift was made public.

The Agnew Night committee amended its report to delete the names of the phony donors after Mills shot himself and it became apparent that the true source of the committee's \$50,000 would be made public.

In its report, the GAO listed the following apparent violations of federal law:

- A false report by the Salute committee for "falsely reporting contributions" and for "failing to keep a detailed and exact account of contributions received..."

- Participation "by persons acting for the Agnew committee

who knowingly and willfully participated in the effort to falsify, conceal or cover up the committee's receipt of \$50,000 . . ." This violation could result in a 5-year prison term and a \$10,000 fine or both to members of the committee or others convicted of this charge.

- False statements by Wharton when he signed his name to the report and again when he told the GAO the report was true. The GAO said Wharton may have violated two federal statutes that carry prison terms upon conviction of up to 10 years and fines of up to \$20,000, or both.

- The acceptance of corporate contributions and the committee's failure to report the corporate contributions to the GAO. The GAO said \$47,600 in corporate contributions were received by the Agnew committee.

- Failure of the Finance Committee to Re-elect the President to report the \$50,000 transfer to the Agnew salute committee.

State GOP Chairman Lankler, who received the money for the Agnew group, was not singled out by the GAO and his name appears only in an account of the events surrounding the transfer of the money. The GAO report says committee members "contacted friends and acquaintances, soliciting names to be shown as contributors . . ." Among those who solicited the names, the GAO said, was Roy Pfautch, a professional campaign consultant who was hired as an adviser to the committee.

According to a GAO spokesman, everyone involved in the alleged scheme could be prosecuted, including persons who simply allowed their names to be used, although such an extensive prosecution is unlikely.

The GAO spokesman said the corporations also could be prosecuted. The corporate contributions were reported to Maryland officials. Corporate donations to campaigns for state offices are legal in Maryland.

Appar
Violations
In Agnew

The GAO report
and 21 different
reported violations
Department of
have resulted in
of fines
Wharton was the
see REPORT A-3, Co