

Agnew Told of 'Terrible' Pressures

By Jack Anderson

Spiro Agnew grimly told aides after his abdication last October that the White House had brought "terrible" pressures on him to give up the vice presidency.

The White House feared he would lose his fight to stay in office, said Agnew, thereby setting a bad precedent for President Nixon's own struggle against impeachment. Agnew felt compelled to resign in exchange for a deal to keep out of jail.

Only a few hours after the high drama in a Baltimore courtroom, we have now learned, he discussed his action individually with trusted aides.

"There are things you don't know about and pressures that were brought on me that you may never know about," he told one aide, who has now recounted the conversation to us.

To another aide, Agnew described the White House as "ruthless" and the pressure it brought on him as "terrible."

What pressures? For one, the White House staff chief, Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., had called Agnew's top aide, Art Sobmer, and had warned brutally that the Vice President could end up behind bars if he continued his fighting tactics.

But the Agnew aides were familiar with this incident; they knew the President was maneuvering to ease their man out.

What, then, were the terrible, unknown pressures?

One former aide told us he had learned from Agnew's Secret Service bodyguards that the pressures were "personal." Another former aide said he "understood" that Agnew wanted to protect his family from embarrassing revelations.

Washington Post reporters Richard Cohen and Jules Witcover in their carefully researched Agnew book, "A Heartbeat Away," alluded cautiously to "spicy insights into Agnew's personal life."

They report that "several witnesses had volunteered very damaging information about aspects of Agnew's personal life." These findings, they assert, were "ruled out of bounds" by the prosecutors.

The suppressed statements to the prosecutors, we have learned, dealt with allegations that a Maryland contractor had provided Agnew with a call girl in exchange for government favors.

Agnew told us that the call girl charge was "laughable" and "ridiculous" and played no part in his decision to resign as Vice President. He knew who had told the prosecutors these stories, he said, and the contractor was a "congenital liar . . . a wild man."

Agnew said he had told his wife all about the sex charges and, therefore, any threat to reveal these charges couldn't pos-

sibly have been used as a weapon against him.

Another story linked Agnew with a friend of Blaze Starr, the famed, fiery burlesque queen. She acknowledged to us that Agnew was a "steady customer" at her Baltimore strip joint, the Two O'Clock Club, during his county executive days. But she recalls him as a quiet man who sat in a corner, minding his own business.

Footnote: We obtained a draft copy of an autobiography Blaze Starr is writing for the Praeger publishing house. She doesn't mention Agnew, but recounts a romantic interlude with Philadelphia's law-and-order Mayor Frank Rizzo.

According to her account, she met Rizzo about 20 years ago when he was a police captain. He arrested her, she related, for her "Panther Woman" strip act in Philadelphia. This led eventually to a rendezvous with Rizzo in the apartment of one of his friends, she wrote. For awhile thereafter she met him frequently.

Reached at his office in Philadelphia, Mayor Rizzo fumed that the story "absolutely is not true . . . All I ever did to her was arrest her."

The publishers told us that they gave Blaze Starr a lie detector test about the Rizzo revelations before accepting her manuscript. She passed the test completely, they said.

In contrast, the mayor made news recently when he offered to take a lie detector test about a political deal and then failed the test.

Washington Whirl — President Nixon identifies more and more lately with people who fight against the odds. During a recent White House discussion on the Middle East, according to the secret minutes, he suddenly blurted: "I admire those Israelis. They've got guts. How they will fight!" House Speaker Carl Albert advised us privately to disregard speculation about how the House will vote on President Nixon's impeachment. Albert said he was convinced from cloakroom conversations that the majority are waiting for the House Judiciary Committee to lay out the evidence . . .

Sources close to the impeachment inquiry say the grand jury evidence, which was delivered to the committee in such great secrecy, contains little new material. But the compilation of all the existing evidence, say our sources, adds up to a "devastating case against the President" . . . Anatol Michelson, a Soviet Jew who defected to the West in 1956, has been trying for nearly two decades to get his wife and daughter out of the Soviet Union. Now 55 and in failing health, he has given up hope of ever seeing his family again after a personal plea to Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin was disregarded.

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