

GURNEY TRIAL TOLD OF A SECOND DRIVE

APR 26 1975

Ex-Aide Testifies That He
Was Ordered to Collect
Election Funds in Cash

NYTimes

by MARTIN WALDRON

Special to The New York Times

Tampa, Fla., April 25—The Government's main witness in the extortion trial of former Senator Edward J. Gurney of Florida testified today that he was hired by Mr. Gurney as a special aide in January, 1971, and almost immediately was given an assignment to raise re-election funds in secret and in cash.

The witness, Larry E. Williams, 30 years old, said that the orders to act as a fund raiser had come from two former Florida Republican leaders, Earl Crittenden of Orlando and George Anderson of Winter Park, and not from Mr. Gurney.

Mr. Crittenden and Mr. Anderson had masterminded Mr. Gurney's surprise election in 1968 as the state's first Republican Senator in 100 years and were expected to play a major role in his re-election campaign in 1974.

Mr. Williams said that Mr. Crittenden and Mr. Anderson, who have been named as undicted co-conspirators in the case, had told him that "the Senator is not to know about the money being raised."

Senator Gurney will be told about it "further down the line," Mr. Williams said that he was told.

"I was told there should be no record kept of the money, that the money was to be in cash, not to put anything in writing, don't gouge anyone and don't promise more than you can deliver," Mr. Williams testified.

Mr. Williams, who was a car rental agent before he became a political fund raiser, pleaded guilty last year to income tax evasion in connection with his money raising activities and served five months of a one-year sentence.

Although he said that he had not been given any special favors by the Government in return for his testimony, Mr. Williams reported that when he pleaded guilty last year, the Government laid out a variety of charges and allowed him to choose the one that he wanted to plead guilty to.

Mr. Gurney and four other men are being tried in Federal District Court on charges that they conspired to extort money from homebuilders. The Government accused Mr. Gurney of ordering Florida officials of the Federal Housing Administration, whom he had recommended for their jobs, not to approve F.H.A. insurance for builders who had not contributed to his campaign fund.

Mr. Gurney is also charged with perjury.

The Government said that Mr. Williams raised more than \$300,000 from 1971 to 1974 from homebuilders in Florida.

'Places to Raise Money'

In his testimony today, Mr. Williams said that Mr. Crittenden, chairman until January, 1971, den, who was state Republican had told him to get to know the three regional F.H.A. directors in Florida, that "we had only two or three places to raise money, and the F.H.A. was certainly one."

Earlier in the trial, which began last February, several homebuilders testified that they had given money to Mr. Williams after he told them that they would have trouble getting F.H.A. insurance commitments unless they contributed.

Mr. Williams testified for an hour and 20 minutes today before court was adjourned for the weekend. He said that the decision to raise campaign funds for Mr. Gurney's re-election three years in advance came from the feeling of Florida Republican leaders that the party in Florida "was falling apart."

The money he raised, the witness said, was kept in a safe-deposit box at Mr. Anderson's bank in Winter Park. He said that a report was made to Mr. Anderson and Mr. Crittenden on the amount raised and who had given the money.

Mr. Gurney's lawyers have said that Mr. Williams raised the money on his own volition and kept most of it. They said that the former Senator ordered a stop to the fund raising when he heard about it.

Mr. Williams is scheduled to resume testifying at 9:30 A.M. Monday.

Being tried with Mr. Gurney are two of his former aides—James L. Groot and Joseph Bastien—and two former F.H.A. officials, Ralph N. Koontz and Wayne Swiger.