

Danice Bourdet, Pacifica, Washington:

The Washington Post charged today that, while serving as Attorney General, John Mitchell was in personal control of a secret Republican fund used to gather information on the Democrats. Quoting sources described as law enforcement officials and staff members of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President, the Post said it was unable to determine exactly what projects were funded through the secret account. Investigators were told that the only record of the fund was destroyed by Nixon campaign officials after the June attempt to bug Democratic headquarters at the Watergate. Post sources did say that more than \$50,000 was withdrawn from the fund by Gordon Liddy, one of the men indicted in the Watergate case.

During the Senate confirmation hearings on Richard Kleindienst, Mitchell repeatedly said he knew nothing about Nixon's campaign finances when he was serving as Attorney General. According to the Post Mitchell personally approved withdrawals from a secret fund, at one time as much as \$700,000, for almost a full year before he left the Justice Department to head the Re-Election Committee. The Post sources said four other men were subsequently authorized to make withdrawals from the fund, former Commerce Secretary Maurice Stans, who is now working with Nixon's campaign, former campaign manager Jeb Stuart Magruder,* and two people

*Magruder is described (by WXPost Svc, SFC 29 Sep 72) as "interim manager of the Nixon campaign prior to Mitchell, and now a deputy director of the campaign."

identified only as a high White House official now active in the Nixon campaign, and a campaign aide outside Washington.

Last night, Mitchell was informed of the Post story, and said, "All that crap - you're putting it in the paper? Good Christ - that's the most sickening thing I've ever heard." The former Attorney General, now also retired from the Nixon campaign, said Washington Post publisher Katherine Graham would, quote, "find herself in a big fat wringer" if the story were published.

Powell Moore, of the Re-Election Committee, first refused to comment on the charges but later denied that Mitchell or Stans knew anything about such a fund. Moore would not answer specific questions.

[Last month the General Accounting Office] said the secret fund was a possible and apparent violation of the new election reform law. The GAO said the fund contained \$350,000 as of May 25th and that its receipts and expenditures had not been publicly reported as required by law.

[Complete.]