

Head of GOP 'Majority' Drive Quits

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The man picked by the White House last month to direct President Nixon's drive for a "new majority" in the mid-term congressional elections of 1974 quit suddenly yesterday.

Ken Rietz, the 31-year-old head of Mr. Nixon's 1972 youth campaign, sent a surprise letter of resignation to Republican National Chairman George Bush.

Bush had named Rietz as director of the committee's "New Majority Campaign for 1974" only last March 1. The selection of Rietz to head the semi-autonomous campaign unit had been understood at the committee and in the Republican Party leadership to have been suggested by Mr. Nixon and White House chief of staff H.R. (Bob) Haldeman.

Committee sources said there had been no indication of an impending resignation late last week, when Rietz left Washington for a business trip to the West Coast. He returned Monday and personally handed Bush a letter of resignation, effective immediately.

The letter said only that he had received a "quite extraordinary" offer from private industry that would enable him to begin the kind of business career he had always wanted.

Rietz reportedly left Washington again yesterday morning, before his resignation had made public, and his secretary said he was traveling and unavailable for comment yesterday afternoon.

There were unconfirmed reports that his new job was with a West Coast entertainment industry firm, but

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Robert Rousek, spokesman for the Republican National Committee, said Rietz had told Bush the firm wanted to make its own announcement, and he furnished no further details.

Asked if there were any connection between Rietz's resignation and developments in the Watergate case, Rousek said, "None that we know of."

The only time Rietz's name has surfaced in connection with the political espionage charges against Republican campaign officials was in a March 11 story in The Washington Post. George K. Gorton, the national college director of the Nixon re-election committee and Rietz's deputy in the youth drive, confirmed that he had paid a George Washington University student \$150 a week to spy on radical groups.

Gorton told The Post, "Rietz knew that I could supply him with information on what radicals were thinking. I supplied the information, but Rietz didn't ask where I got it."

In his 1972 campaign assignment—which included staging the nomination-night youth rally at which Sammy Davis Jr. gave Mr. Nixon his celebrated bear-hug—Rietz worked closely with both Haldeman and his representative on the re-election committee, Jeb Stuart Magruder.

It is Magruder's testimony to federal prosecutors in the past 10 days that has helped precipitate the rush of developments in the Watergate case.

The "new majority" assignment, created for Rietz at the behest of the White House, was supposed to involve the recruitment and grooming of top-flight candidates for 1974 Senate and House races. Although no official announcement had been made, House and Senate Republican campaign officials had been told Rietz would have access to much of the \$4.9 million in surplus funds of the Nixon re-election

committee for the candidates he selected.

Rietz first came to prominence as the manager of the 1970 campaign of Sen. Bill Brock (R-Tenn.) Brock, the chairman of the Senate cam-

campaign committee, said he had been "surprised" by Rietz's sudden decision to quit.

Similar shock was expressed by Harry Treleaven, partner in the political con-

sulting firm with which Rietz was associated between campaigns. Treleaven said he had had no indication his former partner was considering leaving politics for a business offer.