

GOP Rep. in Fund Probe Kills Himself

Examiner News Services

EASTON (Md.) — Rep. William O. Mills (R-Md.) was found dead of an apparently self-inflicted shotgun wound early today, five days after disclosures that he had received secret financial aid from the Nixon campaign organization in 1971 and was accused of failing to report it.

Mills was found by a caretaker in a barn where he kept his horses on a farm near here. He normally went to the barn early every morning to feed the horses.

A hospital official said Mills suffered a large shotgun wound in the lower middle chest and was dead on reaching Easton Hospital.

Powder Burns

There were powder burns on his clothes and county state's attorney William Horne said "At this time there is no evidence of foul play."

A hospital spokesman, asked if it was suicide, said: "He was shot at close range. He was by himself, what else could it be?"

Mills, 48, was an administrative assistant to Interior Secretary Rogers Morton when he was a Maryland congressman and succeeded Morton in a special election in 1971.

Disputed Funds

Mills had been under investigation for failing to report to state election officials a \$25,000 cash contribution to his 1971 campaign that allegedly came from secret funds obtained by the Finance Committee to Re-Elect the President.

Hugh W. Sloan, former treasurer of the Nixon cam-

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paigned organization, has told congressional auditors that the \$25,000 given* to Mills was part of \$1.7 million which was secretly raised and disbursed before the federal election campaign act went into effect April 7, 1972.

The law requires disclosure of all financial transactions after that date.

The Washington Post, in a story yesterday, quoted several sources as saying they helped deliver the \$25,000 cash contribution to Mills' campaign manager the day before the special election.

After the special election in 1971, Mills signed a notarized statement in which he reported a total \$9395 "received by me or by any person for me with my knowledge or consent, from any source."

Denies Wrongdoing

Mills denied several times this week that he had done anything wrong.

Last night he called Easton radio station WEMD and reiterated the denials. He added that he was aware of the money but had been told that "all spending approvals and all reporting were being handled by a committee in Washington."

"I wish to assure everyone that I have done nothing wrong," he said in his last



REP. WILLIAM MILLS

Gunshot wound fatal

—AP Photo

known public statement.

The Post said the \$25,000 contribution was relayed by a series of intermediaries before it reached Mills' campaign manager, James Webster, now deceased.

The newspaper gave this account:

Robert J. Hitt, executive assistant to Morton, said Tuesday he received the \$25,000 in cash from Sloan.

Hitt said he kept the cash only briefly before turning it over to Mary D. Beall, an Interior Department secretary.

Campaign Funds

Mrs. Beall said she turned the money over to Allison, Trealeaven and Rietz, Inc., a campaign consultant firm which worked for Mills in 1971.

Jim Allison, a partner in the firm, said Ken Rietz, a former partner, gave the money to Webster.

Maryland law requires the reporting of any funds received outside the state if they result in campaign expenditures within the state, said Deputy Attorney General Henry R. Lord.

State Election Administrator Willard A. Morris said Tuesday the apparently unreported \$25,000 had not been brought to his attention.

Jack Shaum, Mill's press secretary, said Mills was at the Washington office yes-

terday "and it was pretty much business as usual."

Shaum also said "we knew he was worried over the reports about the \$25,000 contribution, but there was no indication that it would lead to anything like this."

However, Rep Bob Wilson (R-Calif.) said today in Washington that Mills was very distressed about the Wilson talked to him Wednesday.

Wilson, a friend of Mills, was chairman of the Republican Congressional Campaign committee in 1971.

Wilson said he asked Mills if he was telling the truth when he denied the reports. Mills said he was, and Wilson said he told him, "Then you don't have anything to worry about."

Wilson said Mills again referred to the "bad publicity" and added, "I hate to have it."

Wilson said Mills, who once was an aide to former U.S. Rep. Rogers C. B. Morton, also was upset by a Post article last week that referred to "a former aide to Morton receiving campaign contributions."

Mills succeeded Morton when he became Secretary of Interior.

Wilson said Mills said at that time he was thinking of resigning his seat.

Mills was married and had two children.

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