

Suicide in GOP Fund Probe Case

Associated Press

Easton, Md.

United States Representative William O. Mills (Rep.-Md.) was found shot to death in an apparent suicide yesterday following published reports he had failed to disclose a \$25,000 campaign contribution from the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

"At the present time, it appears the cause of death was the result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in the chest, although the investigation in the matter is continuing," Talbot county State's Attorney William S. Horn said.

Horn said a caretaker found Mills' body with a 12-gauge shotgun beside it.

Sources said the body was found in a barn at Mills' Mulberry Hill Farm. The sources indicated one or more notes were found but their contents were not disclosed.

DENIAL

Mills, 48, had called an Easton radio station Wednesday night with a statement denying any wrongdoing in connection with the 1971 campaign contribution.

"I wish to assure everyone that I've done nothing improper," Mills said in the recorded statement.

Representative Bob Wilson (Rep.-Calif.), said Mills was upset about articles that appeared Sunday in the Washington Star-News and Wednesday in the Washington Post reporting the \$25,000 contribution.

"I personally did not receive or disburse any money during my campaign," Mills

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said in a statement released after the Post article appeared.

"My campaign manager advised me that the (Nixon) administration had arranged for funds to be made available. I had no access to the money, nor did I direct or authorize expenditure of any of the money," said.

Wilson said he asked Mills if he was telling the truth in a statement he issued Tuesday, denying any wrongdoing. Mills assured him it was the truth, Wilson said. Then Wilson said he replied, "Then you don't have anything to worry about."

WATERGATE

DeVan L. Shumway, press director of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President, said: "... I don't see any connection between Congressman Mills and anything even loosely connected with the Watergate scandal.

"It is my understanding at this point that no other congressman received direct financial assistance from the committee."

Wilson, Republican Congressional Campaign Committee chairman in 1972, said Mills told him he hated "bad publicity." Wilson said Mills told him he was already disturbed about another Post story last week which referred to "a former aide to (Interior Secretary Rogers C.B.) Morton" receiving a campaign contribution from the Committee for the Re-Election of the President.

Mills had been a Morton aide in Congress and won a May 25, 1971, special election to succeed his former boss when Morton resigned to become Interior Secretary.

SECRET

The Star-News and the Post reported that the \$25,000 came from secret funds

of President Nixon's 1972 campaign finance committee. The Post said the sum was part of \$1.7 million that Hugh W. Sloan Jr., former treasurer of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President, told the General Accounting Office was raised and distributed by the finance committee before the April 7, 1972, effective date of the federal Election Campaign Act.

Robert J. Hitt, executive assistant to Morton, said he received the \$25,000 in cash from Sloan and turned it over to Mary D. Beall, an Interior Department secretary, the Post reported.

Mrs. Beall said she delivered the money to Allison, Trealeaven and Rietz, Inc., a campaign consultant working for Mills' 1971 campaign, the Post said.

CASH

Jim Allison, one of the firm's partners, said Ken Reitz, a former partner, reportedly delivered the cash to Mills' campaign manager, James L. Webster, the day before the special election.

Webster was killed in a traffic accident last year.

The \$25,000 was never reported to the Maryland Board of Election, the Post said.

OFFICIAL

Before serving as Morton's administrative assistant from 1962 to 1971, Mills was an official of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co.

Survivors include his wife, Norma Lea; a son, William O. Mills Jr., and a daughter, Linda Mills Haley, all of Easton.

The House adjourned yesterday in respect for Mills.



UPI Telephoto

REP. WILLIAM MILLS
Fatal gunshots