

The 25-Year Rise of a Friend of Agnew

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ANNAPOLIS, Md., Aug. 22 To those chosen to share in its benefactions, keeping up with the Joneses — the J. Walter Joneses of Riva, Md.; Bahia Mar, Fla., and Christiansted, St. Croix—has been one of Maryland's most rewarding growth industries.

Mr. Jones, a 50-year-old packager of lucrative real estate deals, a founder of banks, a fund-raiser to politicians, and a yachtsman, private aviator and collector and connoisseur of wines, has come from nowhere in 25 years to a pinnacle of achievement that has allowed him to enrich the lives of others, among them Vice President Agnew.

Today, Mr. Jones was identified by Warren B. Duckett Jr., the state's attorney for Anne Arundel County, as one of seven members of an Agnew fund-raising committee that was indicted yesterday for conspiracy to conceal a contribution to an Agnew testimonial last year.

Less than 24 hours after Mr. Agnew, on the night of Aug. 6, released a public statement in that he was under criminal investigation by the United States Attorney in Baltimore, Mr. Jones affirmed that he, too, was a target of the spreading Federal probe in Maryland of alleged kickbacks to Government officials from contractors and real estate promoters doing business with county, state and Federal agencies.

Wrongdoing Denied

Since then, although both the Vice President and his friend and mentor of 20 years have denied any wrongdoing, it has been disclosed that the Federal investigators have within their scrutiny an alleged payment of \$2,500 to Mr. Agnew by a Baltimore County contractor, supposedly witnessed by Mr. Jones. Mr. Jones's statement of Aug. 7 said, "I am not aware of any kickbacks on the part of the Vice President. He just isn't that type of man."

Mr. Jones's exculpatory judgment of Mr. Agnew as not "that type of man" has been received in Maryland as well-informed, even expert testimony. For no one has been closer to Mr. Agnew than Mr. Jones. They have risen together.

While Mr. Agnew was moving with Mr. Jones's help from the obscurity of the leadership of the Loch Raven Kiwanis Club in suburban Baltimore, where the two men met in the nineteen-fifties to the elected post of Baltimore County Executive in 1962, to the Maryland governorship in 1966 and then, two years later, to the Vice Presidency, Mr. Jones was amassing a fortune now estimated at about \$5-million, some of it as a direct result of governmental decisions made by Mr. Agnew.

Whether Mr. Jones has illegally shared with Mr. Agnew any of these fiscal rewards is a matter that the grand jury, and perhaps the courts, may have to decide.

Advice and Counsel

But there is no doubt that John Walter Jones has provided Mr. Agnew with advice, investment counsel, political guidance and directions for his friend's cultural betterment.

By Mr. Jones's own account, it was he, for example, who decided in 1962, when Mr. Agnew had just won the strategic post of Baltimore County Executive, with its administrative control over public works contracts and placement of county bank accounts, that Mr. Agnew's admission to the new circle of influential private businessmen to which Mr. Jones was about to introduce him would require the County Executive to play golf.

Golf, in turn, later became one of Vice President Agnew's entrees to life in Los Angeles and Palm Springs, Calif., where the duffer of 1962 now often makes the rounds of the Tamarisk Country Club with a foursome that is apt to include Frank Sinatra or Bob Hope, or both.

Mr. Jones, by the early nineteen-sixties, was in real estate sales and appraisals in the booming environs of Baltimore. His business, J. Walter Jones & Co., which is run now by his brother, Albert, was already the largest in Baltimore County. And with Mr. Agnew's help Mr. Jones began to branch out.

Zoning Decision

In 1959, Mr. Agnew, still a struggling lawyer, was an appointed Republican member of the Baltimore County Board of Zoning Appeals. The Vice President-to-be had cast his veto with another member of the appeals board to approve a disputed zoning decision that gave Mr. Jones and a group of his friends an enormous profit on the 205-acre land speculation venture that eventually became the kernel of Mr. Jones's fortune.

The land near Cockeysville, which cost \$2,600 an acre, was worth at least \$10,000 an acre with the industrial zoning that Mr. Agnew helped approve. By early 1962, Mr. Jones and his associates had sold 40 of their acres for \$474,000, recouping their original investment and leaving 165 acres that were rising in value.

A merger of the Jones group's land-owning com-



Associated Press

J. Walter Jones

pany, Maryland Properties, Inc., with the Baltimore-based spice, extract and flavoring company, McCormick & Co., came later that year. Until recently, Mr. Jones held 15 per cent of Maryland Properties. McCormick finally bought him out this year, paying \$850,000 in cash for his remaining 6.4 per cent.

Big Profit Realized

The Jones investment of \$12,500 in 1959 apparently multiplied 68 times in 14 years as Maryland Properties, Inc., prospered. The company's income included a five-year \$1.3-million lease from the Government for the Baltimore field office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Mr. Jones, while contributing and raising thousands

of dollars for Agnew campaigns, had also let Mr. Agnew in, with others, on a succession of business and investment opportunities that included the purchase of stock in a Jones-organized bank, a share in a speculative venture into property that later turned out to lie near a major state highway route, and a piece of a Virgin Islands condominium.

Mr. Agnew, as County Executive, was made a director of the Chesapeake National Bank when Mr. Jones helped organize it in Towson, the county seat, in 1964. The bank became a depository of county funds, designated as such by Mr. Agnew. In 1967, when Mr. Agnew became Governor, his name appeared with the other bank officers on the bank letterhead as "Spiro T. Agnew, Governor, State of Maryland." He was able to negotiate an unsecured \$15,000 loan for other Jones-guided investments.

From available financial data, most of Mr. Jones's investment suggestions appear to have brought Mr. Agnew more political controversy than profit. Mr. Agnew was criticized for allowing the use of his name, as Governor, on the bank's letterhead and for the speculative land deal, and he withdrew his name from both without significant gain. But there were other personal gifts from Mr. Jones, designed to upgrade Mr. Agnew's style of life. Mr. Jones, for example, made Mr. Agnew a connoisseur of wine.

Here at Annapolis—first while living aboard his new 68-foot, custom built motor yacht, the Bon Mer, and now

with his second wife at Olde Bloomfield, the historic 25-acre estate he has bought at nearby Riva, overlooking the South River—Mr. Jones has kept much of the unusual public-private character of his life intact, despite the higher visibility of Mr. Agnew.

Wine Cellar Purchased

In the Governor's Mansion, a red brick Colonial house that had just been restored for the Agnews, Mr. Jones in 1967 installed an extraordinary gift for his friend.

In guiding Maryland Properties to build for investment a luxurious hotel and golf club complex in Baltimore County, the Hunt Valley Inn and the Hunt Valley Country Club, Mr. Jones had indulged his self-taught taste for good wine by installing a private wine cellar at the inn's restaurant.

He kept his own wines in storage, too, at the Milton Inn, near Towson, and the cellar he was preparing at Olde Bloomfield, his own 230-year-old restored mansion, was to be rivaled by none.

According to a friend, Mr. Jones, "with the help of other people he collared — the same people he had asked for years for campaign money for Agnew — he paid for and installed in the Governor's Mansion a wine cellar suited to Mr. Agnew's taste, which he knew because it was Walter Jones's taste."

The value of Mr. Jones's vintage gift to Mr. Agnew has been disputed, but it reportedly represented several thousand dollars.

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