

A Probe of Nixon's Personal Finances

By Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein
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The Senate Watergate committee has launched an investigation into President Nixon's personal finances, according to informed sources.

The investigation will include subpoenaing records given by the President to Coopers and Lybrand, the New York accounting firm that audited the purchase of Mr. Nixon's residential property in Florida and California, the sources said. The audit was done at Mr. Nixon's request.

In addition, the sources said that the committee will seek to question the President's personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods, and expects to examine Mr. Nixon's personal bank records.

The committee effort to investigate the President's personal finances is likely to spark another dispute with the White House over executive privilege, and one White House source predicted last week that the President would resist the inquiry.

HOPES

The committee's chief investigator, Carmine Bellino, hopes to assemble a detailed profile of Mr. Nixon's net worth, income and expenditures over the last several years, one source said.

Such a profile was assembled by the Internal Revenue Service on former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew to establish the government's case against him.

The Senate committee, however, is unable to subpoena personal tax returns because the power to do so was not specifically given

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the committee in the Senate resolution that created it.

Attorneys of the Senate committee, however, feel certain that they have sufficient grounds to probe into the President's personal fi-

nces because they have turned up numerous contradictions from witnesses concerning \$100,000 in purported campaign money given by billionaire Howard Hughes to Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo, a close friend of Mr. Nixon's.

SOURCES

Two Republican sources on the Senate committee, variously labeled the probe of the \$100,000 and Mr. Nixon's personal finances as a "fishing expedition" and "a last ditch effort" to turn public attention again to the committee's work.

Essentially, the committee has four contradictory stories about the purpose of the delivery of \$100,000 in cash to Rebozo in 1969-70 and its return earlier this year to a Hughes attorney, Chester Davis.

Rebozo has told Senate investigators that he considered the money an advance campaign contribution for Mr. Nixon's re-election in 1972.

Robert A. Maheu, the former chief of Hughes financial interests in Nevada, has indicated that the money was earmarked for Mr. Nixon's personal use.

Richard Danner, the Hughes emissary who made the cash transfers to Rebozo, has given still a third version, saying that he thought the money was for the 1970 congressional races.

Davis, the Hughes attorney who received the money back from Rebozo this year, has told investigators that Rebozo indicated he did not know exactly why he received the \$100,000, which came in two installments, one in 1969 and another in 1970.

Committee sources said

that Rebozo has also been unable to explain satisfactorily why the \$100,000 was kept in safe deposit boxes for nearly three years and then returned. Rebozo reportedly has said he returned the money because the transaction might prove to be an embarrassment.

The sources said the Senate committee staff is investigating whether any connection exists between the \$100,000 and the financial support given by Rebozo to the President's purchase of his San Clemente estate in 1969.

SOURCE

"It may be a coincidence," one source said last week, "but the first \$50,000 in the contribution came . . . at the time of the property purchase and Rebozo has said that the President needed money."

In the audit of the purchase of the President's purchase of the President's San Clemente and Key Biscayne property, Coopers & Lybrand, the New York accounting firm, disclosed officially for the first time in August that Rebozo was a financial backer with Robert H. Abplanalp, another Nixon friend, in supporting the San Clemente purchases.

The President has denied that any campaign money was used in the purchase of his property in San Clemente and Key Biscayne.

The sources said that Rebozo told the Senate committee staff that Rose Mary Woods was the only other person who knew about the \$100,000 Hughes contribution.

Accordingly, the Senate committee intends to interview her to see if her story is the same as Rebozo's.

However, one White House source said that the President would certainly oppose an attempt to question his personal secretary.