

The President And Mrs. O'Neal



Jack Anderson

THE GOVERNMENT persuaded one of President Nixon's Florida neighbors to give up her home, according to a classified account, because she had been "spreading wild tales of what was going on in the presidential compound."

The President's two favorite millionaires, Bebe Rebozo and Robert Abplanalp, joined in the effort to remove the alleged gossip from the fashionable Key Biscayne neighborhood. She is Mrs. Perry O'Neal, a sweet, 70-year-old widow.

She agreed to vacate her home to make room for the President's communications staff, but she didn't want to lease it to the government. Abplanalp quickly coughed up \$150,000 to buy the house from her and then he leased it to the government for \$18,000 a year.

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THE Public Buildings Service sent Theodore Sachs from its Atlanta regional office to Key Biscayne to negotiate the deal. He met with Rebozo on February 6, 1969, and afterward submitted this confidential report of their conversation.

"Mr. Rebozo stated that this would not be the ordinary type of negotiation," recounted Sachs. "Mr. Rebozo stated that Mrs. O'Neal, who lived at 478 Bay lane, was creating a problem for the President and for the administration . . .

"Further, since the White House Communications Agency needed space in the compound for the communication operation, it was determined that the leasing of

the house at 478 Bay lane would provide the space required by the agency and would also solve the problem created by Mrs. O'Neal . . ."

The widow was distressed over this account of her alleged tattling. "I never did any such thing," she huffed.

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SACHS continued his story: "Mr. Rebozo further went on to state that since Mrs. O'Neal was not interested in leasing the house, he had contacted a friend of his, Mr. Robert H. Abplanalp of Bronxville, New York, and Mr. Abplanalp had agreed to purchase the O'Neal home as a favor to the President and Mr. Rebozo.

"Negotiations between Mr. Abplanalp, Mr. Rebozo and the O'Neals resulted in a sale of the home at 478 Bay lane to Mr. Robert Abplanalp and his wife for \$150,000 . . .

"Mr. Rebozo stressed the fact that Mr. Abplanalp had purchased the home merely as a favor and did not want to make a profit on it; but since Mr. Abplanalp had taken the money out of a company fund, he wanted a fair net return on his money and the price of \$18,000 as an annual rental had been agreed upon."

Abplanalp also objected to signing an agreement that would permit the government to use the house for any purpose it wished. Possibly for this reason, the Secret Service and the White House Communications Agency traded houses. Thus the President's bodyguard wound up replacing the talkative Mrs. O'Neal.