

# Connally Tried to Block Justice Probe

By Jack Anderson

Former Treasury Secretary John B. Connally tried to head off a Justice Department investigation of Jake Jacobsen, the dairy lobbyist, who has now confessed to the Watergate prosecutors that he delivered a \$10,000 pay-off to Connally from the dairy industry.

We have established that Connally last year telephoned Richard G. Kleindienst, then the Attorney General, and asked him to intervene in the Jacobsen case.

The Justice Department, nevertheless, went ahead with a double-barreled investigation of Jacobsen's role in the milk scandal and in an unrelated savings-and-loan case.

Jacobsen was called before a grand jury where he swore Connally had rejected the \$10,000. The dairy lobbyist testified that he had stashed the money in a safe deposit box and hadn't touched it until the FBI opened the box.

The FBI found evidence to the contrary, and the Watergate prosecutors began preparing a case against Jacobsen for perjury. Connally, inevitably, became involved in the investigation.

This was about the time that Archibald Cox was fired as the Watergate special prosecutor. Suddenly, Connally began pulling strings to name Cox's suc-

cessor. Connally's choice was Leon Jaworski, whom President Nixon had once met at a party for Texas dignitaries at Connally's ranch.

White House sources tell us that Connally urged Jaworski's appointment upon the President. Connally also spoke to the President's staff chief, General Alexander Haig, about Jaworski.

The appointment of Jaworski, therefore, put Connally in the happy position of helping to choose the special prosecutor who would now investigate him. But if Connally expected a whitewash, he had misjudged Jaworski's character.

The new special prosecutor, a man of solid integrity, immediately removed himself from all decisions affecting his friend Connally. In a private memo to Deputy Prosecutor Henry Ruth, Jaworski gave his deputy responsibility for the milk case, with full authority to direct the investigation of Connally.

On Feb. 6, Jacobsen was indicted in the savings-and-loan case. Two weeks later, he was indicted again for lying to the grand jury about the \$10,000.

This confronted Jacobsen, say his friends in Texas, with an agonizing human dilemma. He considered Connally probably his best friend and might even have been willing to go to

prison for him. But Jacobsen's wife is in poor health and needs his constant attention.

He was forced to choose, we were told, between his wife and his best friend. After considerable soul wrenching, he offered to cooperate with the prosecutors in a bid for leniency.

He told them he had delivered the \$10,000 to Connally at the Treasury Department. After the milk scandal broke into the headlines, Connally returned the money and they agreed upon a cover story, Jacobsen said. Jacobsen promised to say he had not delivered the \$10,000 to Connally but had kept it in a safe deposit box.

Later, Connally brought a second \$10,000 bundle to exchange for the first, because he became apprehensive that the first bills could be traced, Jacobsen told the prosecutors.

Connally has flatly denied Jacobsen's story. He told us that Jacobsen told the truth the first time. We couldn't reach Connally for comment on the latest developments related in this column.

Washington Whirl—Vice President Gerald Ford has promised Republican leaders he will put loyalty to the party ahead of loyalty to the President, one of the leaders has told us. . . . A week before the latest Republican loss in Michigan, GOP strate-

gists estimated secretly they would lose 30 House seats in November. The day after, they revised the estimate to 62. . . .

Sources close to the impeachment inquiry tell us the House should be ready to vote around July 15 whether to impeach President Nixon. . . . The bill of particulars, our sources say, will definitely include allegations that the President was involved in the Watergate cover-up and the ITT affair. The staff is still investigating whether to include charges of tax fraud. . . .

The political animosity between the presidential staff and the House impeachment staff has failed to break up a friendship between Dick Hauser, an attorney on President Nixon's defense team, and Tim Oliphant, a lawyer preparing impeachment charges against the President. . . .

We recently reported that the slaughter of rare Australian kangaroos was encouraged by the Interior Department's failure to ban the importation of their skins. Within 10 days, the department moved to protect the furry marsupials. . . .

A jurisdictional dispute between the Interior and Commerce departments, meanwhile, is holding up the protection of sea turtles. They have dwindled from 50 million to a mere 10,000 in the Caribbean and may soon become extinct.

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