

Agnew Turning to Wheeling, Dealing



Jack Anderson

IN HIS FALL from power, Spiro Agnew left behind a valuable contact who is now helping him find business deals.

The former Vice President during his glory days arranged a job for one of his supporters, Tilton H. Dobbin, as assistant commerce secretary in charge of domestic and international business. This has put Dobbin in touch with some of the world's most powerful businessmen. Inside sources say he has used his position to open doors for the deposed Agnew.

A forlorn figure, Agnew has lost his political career. He has been disbarred from practicing law. The Internal Revenue Service is squeezing him for back taxes.

Agnew tried to raise money by writing a novel. But after the reviews appeared, this no longer seemed a promising career. Almost in desperation, he turned to wheeling and dealing.

He has just returned from a swing through the Middle East in search of deals. He visited his Greek homeland, Amman and Beirut, and then hit the petroleum capitals, Tehran and Kuwait.

On the business side, according to our sources, Dobbin helped pave the way. He admitted to us that he does financial favors for his former mentor. Agnew has called on him, Dobbin said, to "get a run-down on a person or a company, or to do a bank or credit check."

But Dobbin denied that he arranged business contacts for Agnew on his latest

odyssey. "I didn't even know he was going until I read about it."

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UNDER PRESSURE from House Speaker Carl Albert, Small Business Administrator Tom Kleppe violated regulations to bail out an electronics firm from Albert's home state of Oklahoma.

The struggling company, Oklahoma Aerotronics, didn't qualify for a minority-business government contract. The firm also had money problems, not the least of which was a negative worth of \$900,000.

"To place contracts with Oklahoma Aerotronics under existing conditions," Kleppe notified the speaker on August 17, 1971, "we would have to violate Federal Regulations and our National Directive."

Nevertheless, Albert called Kleppe up to Capitol Hill for a personal meeting and repeated his hope that Kleppe "could find some way" to provide the electronics firm with minority-business help.

Despite the federal regulations, Kleppe caved in. Not long afterwards, Oklahoma Aerotronics got its minority-business approval and landed a whopping \$4 million worth of contracts.

Footnote: Albert told us he had relied upon an aide who had handled the Oklahoma Aerotronics case for him. The speaker said he didn't intentionally seek to run roughshod over federal regulations.