

Murchison Is Said to Link Nixon to Role in Donation

By JAMES R. POLK
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WASHINGTON, July 18 — Clint W. Murchison Jr., the Dallas oilman, has told Watergate investigators that at President Nixon's personal suggestion he delivered \$5,000 in cash to Mr. Nixon's secretary, Rose Mary Woods, as a campaign donation in 1968.

Mr. Murchison's report appears to contradict a statement by Mr. Nixon that he always refused to take any personal role in handling or discussing contributions during a campaign.

The cash from Mr. Murchison did not show up on public records filed by Nixon campaign officials in the 1968 race. However, disclosure laws were looser then.

According to Mr. Murchison's account to investigators, he met Mr. Nixon during a trip through Texas by the candidate before the 1968 convention and mentioned that he had been planning to make a donation.

Mr. Nixon replied that the oilman could give the money either to him personally or to his secretary, Miss Woods, whenever Mr. Murchison was in New York City, the Texas multimillionaire told investigators.

Mr. Murchison is understood to have said that he later took the \$5,000 in cash to Miss Woods at Mr. Nixon's law offices in New York and left without getting a receipt. Mr.

Nixon was not there that day, according to Mr. Murchison.

The oilman's statements are thought to be the first to link the President's personal secretary to any dealings with cash donations in a campaign.

Mr. Murchison, who is also the owner of the Dallas Cowboy was at the professional football team's training camp in Thousand Oaks, Calif., yesterday and could not be reached, but a business aide quoted the oilman as saying he would have no comment.

White House officials at San Clemente, Calif., where Mr. Nixon is vacationing, also had no comment. Miss Woods could not be reached at San Clemente.

The President told a news conference last October:

"In terms of campaign contributions, I have had a rule. I have refused always to accept contributions myself. I have refused to have any discussion of contributions. Before the election, I did not want to have any information from anybody with regard to campaign contributions."

The oilman and his brother, John D. Murchison, gave \$50,000 in cash for Mr. Nixon during a secret fund-raising period early in the 1972 campaign, but that money is understood to have been handled through normal campaign channels.

Mr. Nixon's involvement



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Clint W. Murchison Jr.

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with the Murchison brothers dates back at least 13 years to an earlier controversy when Mr. Nixon bought a California home at what was apparently a bargain price after he left the Vice Presidency under Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The Murchison brothers' business empire had built the plush Beverly Hills development of Trousdale Estates where Mr. Nixon lived upon his return to California.

The developers sold the lot to Mr. Nixon in 1961 for \$35,000. The amount was not only less than the share of a real estate mortgage that had been carried on the property through a teamsters' union pension fund but also far below the local tax valuation.

Public records indicate that a construction concern among the Murchison businesses had paid taxes that year on the lot based on an official valuation of \$108,000. The Nixon purchase also compared favorably with the \$99,000 selling price that was listed for the lot next door.

At about the same time as the \$35,000 purchase, Mr. Nixon and his wife obtained a \$10,000 mortgage loan on their lot from the Home Savings and Loan Association in Glendale, Calif., according to public records presently on file in Los Angeles County.

Big Profit on Sale

After Mr. Nixon lost the California Governor's race, he moved to New York in 1963, selling his \$35,000 lot for \$86,000.

Mr. Murchison gave his account of the 1968 cash donation made through Miss Woods to the Senate Watergate committee staff in an unsworn interview last month.

No apparent significance can be attached to the omission of that donation from public filings in the 1968 race, since the old campaign disclosure law then in effect was riddled with legal loopholes.

The \$50,000 cash given by the two Murchison brothers before a tighter disclosure law took effect in April, 1972, was apparently funneled through the top Nixon fund-raiser, Maurice H. Stans, and fund-raisers in Texas.

Mr. Stans's initials, "MHS," are shown beside the Murchison name on a confidential 1972 campaign list of top donors and the fund-raisers handling them.