

Agnew, on Journalism, Himself . . .

Spiro T. Agnew, in his first network television appearance since resigning as Vice President on Oct. 10, 1973, was interviewed yesterday by Barbara Walters and Jim Hartz on NBC's "Today" show. Now a businessman, Mr. Agnew was on the program to promote his book, "The Canfield Decision," a novel about political intrigue and romance. Following are excerpts from the network's transcript of the interview.

WALTERS: You have characters in the book talk repeatedly of the Jewish cabal, of the Jewish or Zionist lobby having too much strength, too much influence in Congress. Is this how you see?

AGNEW: I do feel that the Zionist influences in the United States are dragging the U.S. into a rather disorganized approach to the Middle East problem. I feel for example that we don't have an evenhanded policy in the Middle East.

There's no doubt that there has been a certain amount of Israeli imperialism taking place in the world. There has been an invasion of the West Bank. The Israeli Parliament is talking about setting on the Golan Heights, on the Gaza Strip, and I feel that because of the Zionist influences in the United States these matters of aggression are routinely considered to be permissible.

WALTERS: Influences where, Mr. Agnew?

AGNEW: There are influences, certainly, in the media, and when . . .

WALTERS: In the media . . .

AGNEW: In what I call the nation-wide impact.

WALTERS: How do Zionists influence us in the media?

AGNEW: Well, because of the way it's treated.

WALTERS: Tell me. I don't understand what you mean. There are Zionists within the media or Zionists who . . .

AGNEW: I think the media are sympathetic to the Zionist cause, put it that way.

WALTERS: You call it the Zionist . . .

AGNEW: What I call the nation-wide, impact media, and I don't feel—for example, we have a tendency not to separate the Arabs into what you might call militant Communist-

oriented Arabs and the Arabs that support free enterprise systems.

WALTERS: You don't think we do that? For example, with Egypt.

AGNEW: No, I think the Saudi Arabians, for example, have been our very staunch friends over a period of sixty years and yet we regard them and Mr. Sadat in Egypt, who has been trying to fight the battle of balance between the Palestinians . . .

WALTERS: You don't think Mr. Sadat, when he came to this country, his views were given equal treatment?

AGNEW: Yes, I think he was covered but I don't think that Mr. Sadat and the late King Faisal and other Arabs are given this—are put in a different position.

AGNEW: I knew exactly what I was doing when I pleaded no-contest to the count, single count of income tax evasion and it'll be explained when I write the memoir.

I don't want to talk about it now except to say that I was fully conscious of what I did and I know it was a felony conviction resultant. I do feel that there are more important, more serious crimes being abetted in the world today than the one I was accused of.

Incidentally all of the evidence against me being produced by people who accepted immunity to testify—crimes being abetted such as the vilification of our institutions, the C.I.A., the F.B.I., the glorification of the Communist system, this sort of thing.

WALTERS: Recently, in an interview which has not been aired, another television interview, you said, "I don't feel guilty. I had no personal benefit from anything that's happened."

AGNEW: That's correct.

WALTERS: In that conversation you raised the possibility that the money you're accused of having taken was more in the area of campaign contributions, which had been customary in the past.

AGNEW: That's part of it, but that's not all of it, and again I'm gonna—I'd like to get back to "The Canfield Decision," if we could, not because . . .

WALTERS: Let me ask you something.

AGNEW: . . . not because I object to discussing this at the proper time and because I'll be back to do it, you can be sure of that.

WALTERS: Let me take one more point, because in "The Canfield Decision," since you wrote it, and it was a product of your mind, you could go in any direction and Porter Canfield, who is a Vice President, but in many other ways is not you, but there are some things that he does—I don't want to give the book away—and he feels that he was framed. Do you feel that?

AGNEW: Do I feel that I was framed? Again, it's part of the story, and how I feel will have to [be] adduced from the telling of the complete, cohesive narration of what happened.

WALTERS: Can we ask you anything about—well, it has been reported there are some quarters who felt that Richard Nixon wanted your resignation to take the heat off of him, feeling that the country would think one resignation was enough in the time of Watergate. Do you feel this? What part do you think Richard Nixon . . .

AGNEW: Part of the same story.

HARTZ: I'm curious why you don't want to comment on it. This is your first television appearance in three years, very little . . .

AGNEW: There are essentially two reasons. One of them is a very simple one. I want to publish a memoir and I want to market it. I am not being interviewed for large sums as some political figures have been. How I tell my story, if it's something of interest, is a property of mine and I don't want it fractionated through being excerpted

and commented on until I have a chance to tell it as an entity. The other reason is that there are still certain trials in progress that directly touch on my situation, that won't be completed probably until early next year.

HARTZ: It wouldn't affect the trial if you said here today you were guilty or innocent.

AGNEW: It could.

HARTZ: How could it?

AGNEW: Because anything that I say that relates to what happened to me affects other people who are intermingled in my situation. I think I've—when I came on this program I explained what the ground rules were, and that I wasn't going to talk about this, so I think now that I have answered the question and I'm not going to talk about it, let's leave it because we're wasting valuable time.

WALTERS: Do you think Richard Nixon should have been pardoned? Is that something you can comment on?

AGNEW: I don't want to comment on Richard Nixon.

WALTERS: You have not talked to or seen him, have you?

AGNEW: No, I haven't talked to him, no.

WALTERS: In the book, there is what you called the obligatory love story and the Vice President has an affair and I won't tell anyone who it is, but when John Lindsay wrote his novel, he had a Congressman—he had it's better for marriages in a lot of ways. I'm vaguely quoting him, and especially in politics. It's almost a relief. Do you feel this, or did you put it in because you had to have a little sex—and by the way, it's well done in the book . . .

AGNEW: Well, it's really embarrassing to ask a 57-year-old man about sex.

WALTERS: Well, you wrote about it, Mr. Agnew.

AGNEW: I didn't have to, and I read a lot of books to write about it, but let me put it this way. When Julian Goodman, the president of NBC, is willing to come on and discuss his sex life, then I'll come . . .

WALTERS: I didn't ask you about your sex life, and Julian Goodman has not written a book. If he did and he wrote about sex, we would ask him about it . . .

AGNEW: I doubt it.

WALTERS: . . . and I have a feeling Mr. Goodman would answer. I'm asking . . .

AGNEW: I doubt if you'd ask him.

WALTERS: I'm asking about the political world, not you, Spiro Agnew, but in the political world . . .

AGNEW: The political world is no different than any other world. Personal relationships exist between politicians and nonpoliticians, just as they do anywhere else. I don't know how you can compartmentalize the political world when you're talking about sex.

HARTZ: You called it [the sex in the book] obligatory. Did the publisher ask you to put it in?

AGNEW: No, that was Bill Buckley's phrase, I believe, or Lindsay's phrase, I'm not sure, but I think it was Bill Buckley's phrase when he was speaking about his book.

WALTERS: I asked you in another portion of the program if there were times when you said, I could be President today, that could be me, and you said there had been those moments. Are you over them now?

AGNEW: Yes, Yes, I am. Completely over.

WALTERS: Are you at peace with yourself?

AGNEW: Yes, entirely.