

Limitations Law Shields Wild From Prosecution

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WASHINGTON, July 27—A Federal judge decided today that Claude C. Wild Jr., the former Gulf Oil Corporation lobbyist, could not be punished for making an illegal campaign contribution to Senator Daniel K. Inouye because the three-year statute of limitations ran out before the Government indicted him.

In reaching this decision, Judge Joseph C. Waddy found that the Watergate special prosecutor failed to establish "beyond a reasonable doubt" that the \$5,000 contribution took place after March 12, 1973, three days before a fundraising dinner held for the Hawaii Democrat that the Government asserted led to the payment.

Mr. Wild, who is 52 years old, wept and embraced his family after the verdict was read this afternoon. The trial, heard without a jury, lasted less than two days.

During the summations this morning, Judge Waddy declared he was "faced with a question of credibility" in deciding between Mr. Wild's account of the transaction and that of Henry Giugni, Senator Inouye's administrative assist-

ant who solicited the money and subsequently committed perjury to a grand jury about his actions in transmitting it to the Senator.

The case is the last of those brought by the special prosecutor in connection with payments to politicians in this country, although the prosecutor's office said today the Gulf case was still open and there was the likelihood that additional charges would be made.

Mr. Wild testified that he made the contribution to Mr. Giugni between three and six weeks after he was solicited in December, 1972, and that this was before Feb. 7, the day the Senate Watergate Committee was created to investigate contributions to President Nixon's campaign.

"I just thought it would be too sensitive a matter to get involved in after Feb. 7," Mr. Wild said.

Senator Inouye served on that committee, which began hearings in May.

When asked for money in December, Mr. Wild testified, he told Mr. Giugni, "Henry, your Senator among many others has passed a new law and there is a reporting requirement. I'm not about to give you any money you'd have to report."

He said he asked Mr. Giugni to discuss the contribution with Senator Inouye and that if they both agreed that it would not

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be reported he would make \$5,000 available.

Mr. Wild then stated Mr. Giugni called him later, and said he had talked with Senator Inouye and "any way I wanted to handle it was all right with them."

This contradicted the testimony Monday of both Senator Inouye and Mr. Giugni that they had never discussed the Gulf contribution.

William G. Hundley, representing Mr. Wild, argued in his closing statement that "the testimony of Senator Inouye is in my judgment seriously lacking in credibility."

Mr. Wild also testified about an August, 1974, lunch he had with Mr. Giugni when the Watergate Committee appeared ready to look into matters other than wrongdoing in the 1972 Presidential campaign.

He said he expressed fears to Mr. Giugni that the committee, including Senator Inouye, might delve into Senatorial and Congressional matters because "staff members have a way of running away with themselves."

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