

That Milk Scandal



Patrick J. Buchanan

CARTER-MONDALE, the love-and-compassion ticket, has made clear its intention to force-march America through the Watergate swamp, if that road leads to the White House. If John Connally is on the Republican ticket, suggests Jimmy, "public trust" will become an issue.

The cloud that supposedly hangs over the silver locks of the former Treasury Secretary is, of course, his dealings indirectly with the nation's milk producers — a matter for which Connally was indicted, and of which he was acquitted.

But before Carter tables the matter of milk money, he might have a heart-to-heart with his vice presidential choice, Walter Mondale.

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BRIFLY, let us review the history of the milk decision, which brought such subsequent grief to the Nixon White House.

In early March of 1971, the Nixon administration announced it would not raise the milk support price from about 80 per cent to 85 per cent of parity. Refusal to do so meant potential loss of hundreds of millions of dollars to U.S. milk producers — similar savings for consumers. When the negative decision was announced, the Associated Milk Producers, Inc. (AMPI), other dairy lobbyists and their congressional allies mounted a ferocious campaign to overturn it. Legislation, sponsored by Senator Walter Mondale and others, was

introduced to overturn the decision.

About to be rolled, the Nixon White House reversed itself. Support prices were raised to 85 per cent of parity; and the heavens opened and rained milk dollars on the Committee to Reelect the President.

Not all those milk dollars went into the coffers of CREEP. They were spread all over Capitol Hill. And 5000 of them were used to purchase tickets to a June 5, 1971 fund-raiser of Senator Walter Mondale.

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HERE, the plot thickens. Not only did AMPI shell out five grand for Mondale's feast, two political agents, working on Mondale's behalf, apparently demanded, repeatedly, that the AMPI contribution be jacked up to \$25,000. This is the allegation of Bob Lilly, political agent of AMPI.

AMPI did not give the \$25,000 to Mondale. However, that exact sum was deposited in July of 1971 with Valentine and Sherman Associates, a Minneapolis mailing operation with close ties to the Democratic party.

These facts were revealed May 18, 1974, in a story by Minneapolis Tribune Washington correspondent Frank Wright. There was no follow-up by the national press, however.

Congress subsequently cut the statute of limitations on campaign contribution violations from five to three years — saving a lot of the good ole boys a lot of embarrassment.

Arthur Hoppe is on vacation