

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

FBI Rushes to End Dodd Inquiry

By Drew Pearson
And Jack Anderson

The FBI has leaked out word that it intends to wind up its quickie probe of Sen. Tom Dodd (D-Conn.) and his unethical conduct by this weekend—with a whitewash.

Members of the Senate Ethics Committee, after much handwringing, have confided to friends that the protective club spirit will be maintained and that they will have a report out within 30 days upholding their colleague.

Despite these reports, we can state that the surface has only been scratched regarding the financial manipulations and lobbying of the statuesque Senator from Connecticut.

This column has already reported on the money raised by Dodd's 1961 campaign dinner and traced where the money went to. That dinner was supposed to pay off a 1958 campaign debt and raise money for his 1964 campaign—even though it was three years before he would be up for election. Instead, all of the money went into Dodd's personal account.

Here is the inside story of another dinner, on Oct. 26, 1963, called "Dodd Day," and how the proceeds from the dinner were used, among other things, to repair the

Senator's home and pay a liquor bill and the vacation expenses of his family.

Came to Dinner

Actually three different meals were held on 1963 Dodd Day — breakfast in Hartford, luncheon in Woodridge, and dinner in Bridgeport — with the Democratic faithful, including Lyndon B. Johnson, then Vice President, leading the tribute. There could have been no doubt about the purpose of Dodd Day. It was to raise funds for the Senator's 1964 campaign, not pay his personal expenses. Dodd made this clear in a "Dear Lyndon" letter dated Aug. 5, 1963.

"First of all," wrote the Senator, "allow me to thank you again for your generous offer to come to Connecticut to assist me in my forthcoming campaign. I wish I could convey to you how enthusiastic everyone is about your visit and how much it will assist me in getting my campaign drive under way . . . Your visit means more to me than I can say, Lyndon, and I shall never forget it."

The Senator neglected to tell the Vice President that most of the money he helped to raise would pay Dodd's personal bills. He also neglected to report this use of political contributions on his income tax returns, though the law clearly states that campaign funds diverted to personal use are taxable.

Dodd assigned several staff

members, whose salaries are paid by the taxpayers, to sell tables for the Dodd Day testimonials. One Senate employe, Joe Flynn, was instructed to go through all the Senator's case work files and list everyone whom Dodd had helped in Washington. More than 1000 names were sent to Ed Sullivan, another Senate employe, who directed the solicitation in Connecticut.

The Senator later complained to friends that Dodd Day had been "no howling financial success." He collected \$22,000 in Hartford, \$15,000 in Bridgeport, and \$10,000 in Woodridge—total \$47,000.

Most of the money was deposited in Hartford's Connecticut Bank and Trust in a special account labeled "Testimonial for U.S. Senator Thomas J. Dodd."

A check for \$8000, covering the net receipts from Woodridge, was mailed directly to Dodd in Washington. Somehow the check was misplaced and became the object of an intensive search. There is no trace of what finally happened to the \$8000.

Liquor Bills Paid

After Dodd Day, the Senator suddenly began sending all his office bills to Hartford to be paid out of the testimonial account. These were mostly personal items, including his liquor and country club bills, which came to his office for payment.

They had amounted to \$14,974.28 in 1961 and \$11,075.12 in 1962. In 1963, all but \$742.04 was paid out of political contributions.

The bills had been allowed to accumulate until after Dodd Day. Then the Senator's accountant, Michael O'Hare, began mailing the bills to Ed Sullivan in Hartford to be paid out of the testimonial dinner account.

"Enclosed are some of the bills," wrote O'Hare, "which the Senator would like you to pay out of the Hartford account . . . The American Airlines bill (\$3018.43) is quite a bit overdue, so that should be paid as soon as possible."

This bill included a number of personal flights by Dodd and his family. Among them was the return fare from a Miami vacation on Feb. 13, 1963—\$78.12 for the Senator's ticket, \$56.39 for Mrs. Dodd's ticket, and \$32.10 for excess baggage.

The Senator's son, Tom Jr., made a number of flights that were paid out of political contributions. These included trips from Washington to Akron on April 18 (\$59.43); Washington to Chicago on June 24 (\$91.77) and Washington to Asheville on June 26 (\$68.36).

It will be interesting to see whether the Senate Ethics Committee, considers Dodd's personal use of campaign funds and failure to pay taxes on them to be ethical.

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