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EMBEZZLEMENT CASE

*The Answer Caused Him
to Blush a Little*

By MILTON BERLINER

William H. Godel, former \$20,000 a year Pentagon official, took the stand in Alexandria Federal District Court yesterday to explain financial transactions that form the basis of the Government's embezzlement charges against him.

One of them, involving the purchase of \$1500 worth of Travelers Checks in Honolulu on his way to the Far East, caused him to blush a little.

His counsel, E. Waller Dudley, had asked why he had converted some of the cash he had been carrying into these checks.

RELUCTANT

"I'm somewhat embarrassed to tell you why but I will," said Mr. Godel.

"I had a lot of small bills (he said he had thousands of dollars in U. S. currency with him on the trip) and they made a considerable bulk in my dispatch case.

"Normally, I carry a bottle of liquor on trips, and I couldn't get it in with all that bulk so I reduced the bills to Travelers Checks."

MARINE OFFICER

Mr. Dudley opened the defense by drawing from the witness biographical details — born in Colorado, graduate of Mexico Military Institute, Georgetown University's Foreign Service School for two years; married, five children — all girls.

Mr. Godel was a Marine Corps Officer all during World War II, in combat and in Intelligence.

The Godels built a \$47,000

house in Falls Church in 1958 and started out with a \$25,000 mortgage which has been trimmed to \$18,000; they never joined any country club and, said Mr. Godel, "sought to live entirely within my earned salary."

VERY LITTLE LEAVE

In 18 years in the Defense Department, he said, he has taken only five days of annual leave and no sick leave.

The prosecution had brought out that Mrs. Godel had gone on a Far East trip with her husband as a "consultant without compensation," getting expense money.

Mr. Godel explained yesterday that she had been invited both to Thailand and to Australia by those governments to official ceremonies in Bangkok and to inspect projects in Australia.

She served in a similar capacity on a European trip, he testified.

Mr. Dudley's final question was: "Have you ever taken any Government money?"

"I have never knowingly taken any of the Government's money, except for official purposes," Mr. Godel replied.

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