Diggs indicted by Grand Jury

WASHINGTON — A federal grand jury Thursday indicted Rep. Charles C. Diggs Jr., D - Mich., on charges of mail fraud and making false statements to the government in connection with an alleged payroll kickback scheme.

The Justice Department said a 34 - count indictment charging that Diggs obtained financial contributions from his staff members was returned in the U.S. District Court in Washington.

Each mail fraud charge carries a maximum penalty of five years and a $1,000 fine. The penalty for making false statements is five years and a $10,000 fine.

"I am innocent of the charges being leveled against me," Diggs said in a statement issued by his Washington office.

"I do not believe that I have violated any federal law or any house rule or precedent. Allegations in an indictment do not prove guilt and I am confident that due process of law will vindicate me."

Diggs dictated the statement from Mozambique, where he is traveling as part of a 15 - day tour of nine nations in Europe, Africa and the Caribbean as chairman of the House International Relations Subcommittee.

The Grand Jury said Diggs made the false statements in connection with payroll vouchers filed with the House.

Rep. Charles Diggs

The indictment followed reports dating back to last summer that a Grand Jury was investigating charges Diggs gave raises to some of his staffers, then required them to kick back money to him.

Diggs, 55, was elected Michigan's first black congressman in 1954. He founded and became first chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, an organization of black house members.

Diggs has been re - elected 12 times and now serves as chairman of the House District of Columbia committee.

Between July 1, 1973, and about March 2, 1977, the indictment said, Diggs schemed to defraud the government of more than $101,000 through the kickback scheme "in order to pay for his personal, business and house of representative expenses."

To set the stage for obtaining the kickbacks, the indictment said, Diggs "inflated" the salaries of various staff members.

The indictment charged Diggs also placed employes of his business firm, The House of Diggs Inc., on his congressional payroll.

The Grand Jury charged Diggs with 14 counts of mail fraud based on financial transactions he handled by letter, and 21 counts of making false statements to the House finance office to cover up his kickback scheme. The indictment listed the following details of Diggs' alleged payroll padding scheme:

— The salary of Jean G. Stultz was increased from between $14,667.84 to $22,700 a year to higher rates between $33,667.84 and $37,355.

— The salary of Felix R. Matlock was increased from between $12,942.55 and $20,000 to $21,700 and $37,000.

— The salary of Ofield Dukes was increased from $12,000 to a higher rate between $39,900 and $37,000.

— Jeralee Richmond (or Geralee Richmond) was paid $20,000, George G. Johnson was paid $19,000 and Hallison Young was paid $35,000 from congressional funds for their work for Diggs as House of Diggs employees.

A news release accompanying his statement said Diggs resented the timing of the announcement. Diggs attorneys were told Tuesday of the Grand Jury action and they had asked for a delay until he returned.

Diggs planned to meet President Carter in Nigeria, and it was not immediately known whether his travel plans would be changed.

"The timing of the indictment shows an unfortunate insensitivity also to the nature of the congressman's mission in Africa," the release said. "He has been an active participant in shaping America's relationships with the nations of black Africa for 20 years."

"In response to speculation over the past several months that an indictment may be imminent, the Congressman canceled plans to attend other meetings in Africa and declined invitations from African leaders to visit their coutries to avoid the situation caused today," the release said.

"Announcing this indictment on the eve of his participation during the Presidents Historic visit to Nigeria cannot help but divert attention from the main purpose of these visits and may hamper meaningful dialogue between the parties and, indeed, the nations involved," the release said.

FASHION DESIGNERS—Local fashion designers' creations will be on display at the Civic Center April 9 at 4 p.m. The fashion show will benefit the restoration of Orchard Street Church. Shown are (L to R): Ms. Denise Bates, Ms. Sharon Green, Ms. Sandra Wilkens, Guy Chandler, Ekello Harrid, Ms. Barbara Hall, Ms. Jessie Dawns, Ms. JoAnn Jackson, Ms. Jean Taylor and Ms. Ruth Lewie. Not shown is Ms. Mary Buster. For ticket information, call 396-1664.

House votes on legislators' pay

ANNAPOLIS — The House of Delegates acted early this week to raise General Assembly salaries to $18,500 annually by 1982 by rejecting a Senate resolution for a pay hike to $16,000 from the current $12,500.

House members, divided by worries about voter reaction to the pay hike in the 1978 election year and angered at the Senate for leaving the final decision in their laps, voted down the Senate recommendation 73-60.

As a result of the House vote, a recommendation by the Governor's Salary Commission takes effect in 1979 when salaries will jump to $16,000 and then to $18,500 by 1982.

Del. Benjamin Cardin, D - Baltimore, said, "We created the salary commission to recommend our salaries because they are in a better situation than us to determine what the next legislators should receive."

Cardin said the increased workload expected in the next four years in addition to the rising cost of living justified the full salary hike.

However, Del. Russell Hickman, D - Worcester said, "We can't afford to be made the laughing stock for voters while we make the Senate members heroes."

"There are going to be a lot of able candidates running against us and we cannot afford to reject the Senate's recommendation for $16,000 a year," he said.

Del. Steven Sklar, D - Baltimore, said, "If we're going to be left holding the bag let's show our guts and vote the way we did the first time when we voted to accept the commission's report."

The House voted in February to accept the recommendation of $18,500.

However, the Senate then passed the resolution to lower the salary hike and sent it back to the House for Tuesday's vote.

Charges civil rights violations

Health group asks HEW to cut Hopkins Hospital's federal aid

A local health group has charged Johns Hopkins Hospital with violating the civil rights of a black woman and other black Baltimore residents in its provision for accomodations and patient care.

In a letter to U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Joseph A. Califano Jr. this week, the Community Health Council of Maryland urged HEW to take prompt and effective action" and cut federal aid to the hospital for violating the rights of the black woman under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

"The issues that are raised in this complaint have life and death ramifications," said Howard "Pete" Rawlings, president of the health council. "The experiences of this woman along with other blacks and substantial statistical documentation brings up the inescapable conclusion that the Johns Hopkins Hospital discriminates on the basis of race in the assignment of patients to various units of the hospital and the quality of health care delivered.

According to Rawlings, the incident involved the admitance of a black woman, whom he refused to identify, because she still needs the hospital's care.

Rawlings said based on several extensive interviews with the woman about her experiences as a patient he alleges that the operation performed on her was done by a physician in training and not a staff physician which resulted in undue complications and suffering.

He further charged that the physicians and hospital personnel who treated her subjected her to harrassment because she is black.

Because of this incident and others, Rawlings said, his group and the Hospital and Health Care workers Local 1199E filed a discrimination suit with the Maryland Human Relations Commission which is currently investigating the charges.

Manufacturers provide repair facilities

ANNAPOLIS — The Senate Economic Affairs Committee is considering a bill to require manufacturers whose issue warranties for products sold in Maryland to provide adequate repair facilities in the state or pay stores a reasonable rate to perform the repair work for them.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Charles Gilchrist, D - Montgomery, would require manufacturers who sell products with warranties in Maryland to either maintain sufficient repair facilities or designate business as authorized repair centers.

If the manufacturer designates a repair center, it would have to pay the center for work at a rate "at least equal to the actual and reasonable cost of service and repair," Gilchrist told the committee.

John Croteau, manager for Erol's TV, which has stores in Wheaton and Marlow Heights, said Tuesday that "aside from the direct benefits to the consumer, this type of legislation could have beneficial side effects."

Croteau said more small dealers would be able to provide service and repair work for products.

"A concern throughout our industry is the rapidly disappearing small service dealership," he said. "These small dealers could use the shot in the arm that servicing a wider number of brands could bring them."

A spokesman for General Electric Co. opposed the bill, saying it could result in limited warranties.

General Electric also noted the dealers who are designated as authorized repair centers receive the prestige of being warranty dealers and do not have to advertise for repair work customers.

The Economic Affairs Committee also is considering a bill that would require repair or rent facilities to furnish a loan car to a customer when the estimated completion date for the customer's car repair work is delayed more than a week.

The bill is sponsored by Sen. Clarence Mitchell, D. - Baltimore.

Committee expected on abortion issue

ANNAPOLIS — A House-Senate conference committee is expected to be named to deal with the issue of state funding for abortions, according to legislative officials.

The committee, which could be convened as early as next week, became necessary after the Senate's budget and taxation committee removed the ad-mendment set up by the House of Delegates limiting Medicaid aid for abortions to mothers except when their life was whose lives were threatened.

Supporters of an amendment to the $4.5 billion proposed state budget that would have stopped state funding of elective abortions say it would stop "genocide," while opponents say it denies poor women the freedom of choice given wealthier women.

The Senate Budget and Taxation committee Tuesday voted 9-3 to reject the amendment, which was added to the budget bill in the House of Delegates.

The amendment would allow the use of state money for abortions for Medicaid recipients only in cases of rape, incest or in which the mother's life is in danger.

If the Senate follows the committee's action, the fiscal 1979 budget would provide money for state funding of abortions for Medicaid recipients. However, the House would have to agree to the funding.

Until last summer, the federal government paid most of the costs, but it has stopped paying for elective abortions for poor women and left it at the states' discretion.

Joan Little ordered returned to N.C.

NEW YORK — A state Supreme Court justice ruled Thursday that Joan Little, the black woman cleared in 1975 in the slaying of her white jailer, must return to North Carolina to face prison escape charges.

When Justice Leonard Scholnick announced his decision in the crowded courtroom, Miss Little burst into tears and literally had to be carried to a holding room by several court officers.

Scholnick agreed to give Miss Little's attorney, William Kunstler until Friday to file an appeal with the state appellate division.

When Miss Little was being escorted away, about 200 supporters erupted into a loud, angry demonstration, many of them stamping their feet and shouting obscenities.

About a dozen court officers eventually cleared the courtroom by forming a line and slowly forcing the observers out the door. Most of the demonstrators remained inside the courthouse, many of them banding together singing spirtuals.

Police barricades were set up in the hallway outside the courtroom to hold the crowd. There were no reports of violence and no arrests were made.

Miss Little gained international fame when she was acquitted of murder for the stabbing of a white jailer who she said forced her to commit an unnatural sex act in her Raleigh, N.C., cell. She was serving a 7-to 10-year sentence for breaking and entering.

She escaped from the jail last Oct. 15 and was arrested in New York city Dec. 7 with a male companion following a high-speed chase through Brooklyn. Police had received a tip from a man who said he was her boyfriend and that she was at Kennedy airport.

Kunstler had fought extradition to North Carolina saying Miss Little's life would have been in danger if she was returned. Miss Little complained of her treatment at the jail and said she would rather die than go back.

But North Carolina officials, including Gov. James Hunt, said she would be protected and demanded that she be returned to serve the remainder of her sentence.

Last month, Gov. Hugh Carey signed an extradition order, saying New York had "taken all of the review in this case" that state law allowed.

"Gov. Hunt insisted that Joan Little be returned and I am going to respond under the law and she will be returned," Carey said.

Miss Little was freed from Riker's Island Feb. 1 after her attorneys raised $51,000 bail.

In his ruling Thursday, Scholnick said he had no authority to interfere with the extradiction proceedings. After the decision, Kunstler first asked for three days to lodge an appeal, then asked if Scholnick agreed.

Search for displaced homemakers

Baltimore New Directions for Women is looking for displaced homemakers who are interested in training to become consultants in the area of sex bias and sex role stereotyping. Displaced homemakers are persons over 35 years of age who have lost their source of income through separation, divorce, disability or death of a spouse or through loss of public assistance.

The Sex Bias Project is being funded by the Maryland State Department of Vocational and Technical Education and the Maryland Commission for Women.

Resumes or letters of interest should be sent to the Sex Bias Project, c - o Joyce Keating, Baltimore New Directions for Women, 2517 N. Charles St., Baltimore 21218.

ALCOHOLISM COUNSELORS — Ms. Barbara Boyd (L), director and Charles Russell, senior counselor, shown outside Fayette House Inc., a resident program for recovered alcoholics, located at 1611 W. Fayette St. The program, open since December 1977, provides facilities for recovered alcoholics who can live there from three to six months or longer if necessary. The program has back-up medical services from Bon Secours Hospital.

After $1 million fire

Prisoners transferred

GOOCHLAND, — Most of the 308 inmates at the James River Correctional Center have been transferred to other prison facilities after a fire that caused at least $1 million damage to the prison kitchen and boiler plant.

Corrections Department Officials said none of the inmates were hurt in the March 19 fire, but the prisoners were evacuated at the height of the morning fire when it appeared that a living

Dalton said the buildings were insured.

The inmates had already eaten breakfast and left the area when the fire broke out, Minter said.

"We don't know the cause except that it started in an office off the dining hall," he said. The cause is under investigation.

Officials said some of the prisoners would spend the night at a portion of the center of the southside of the James River. The fie was confined to the support facilities on the river's north bank.

They said 35 prisoners would be transferred from the south complex to a Chesapeake prison to make room for some of the inmates displaced by the fire. The rest would be dispersed throughout the state prison system to. River Correctional Center property has served as a prison facility since 1895, but most buildings are newer. "The building housing unit has a date of 1914," he said.

The ruined dining hall and boiler building continued to smoulder throughout the afternoon, giving off thick white smoke. Twisted tin flapped in the wind on the roofs of the gutted buildings.

Child study meet, April 6

The April meeting of the Child Study Association of Maryland, Inc., will be held April 6, 8 p.m., at Old Court Junior High School, 4627 Old Court Rd., Pikesville. Following the business meeting Elsie T. Chisolm will speak on a topic of great interest to many women today: "Trying to be Housewife, Mother and Career Woman All at the Same Time."

Child Study promotes discussion groups on topics of family life. Its meetings are free and open to the public. For more information call 358-3555. Judy Pincus is president of the Child Study Association of Maryland, Inc.

SHOW TIME

Music, theatre, movies, the arts

Exhibit at Peale Museum

Black women on display

(AFRO photo by Roman Hankewycz)

WOMEN EXHIBIT — Eugene Johnson, 48, looks at the famous black women at the Peale Museum, 225 N. Holliday St. The exhibit runs through April 16.

Black women
"There was one of two things
I had a right to,
liberty, or death.
If I could not have one,
I would have the other;
I should fight for my liberty
as long as my strength lasted,
and when the time comes
for me to go, the lord
would let them take me."
--Harriet Tubman

There is a kind of mystique that hits you when you begin reading the biographies of 150 black women who are on exhibit at The Peale Museum in Baltimore

Entitled: "Black Women; Achievement Against the Odds," the exhibit is a collection of pictures and biographical sketches of women who have gain fame, those who have been fogotten in history and many who are not well known.

The exhibition is divided into nine major sections including literature, medicine, civil rights, education, law and the judiciary, government, fine arts, performing arts and business and industry.

Of particular interest to me was the section on literature that featured such notables as Nikki Giovanni, Gwendolyn Brooks, Lorraine Hansberry and Margaret Walker.

Another woman who had a very interesting life is Frances Ellen Watkins Harper who was born free in Baltimore and lived from 1825 to 1911.

According to the bio-sketch, because she witnessed the terror of fugitive slaves, she became a permanent lecturer for the Anti-Slavery Society of Maine in 1854.

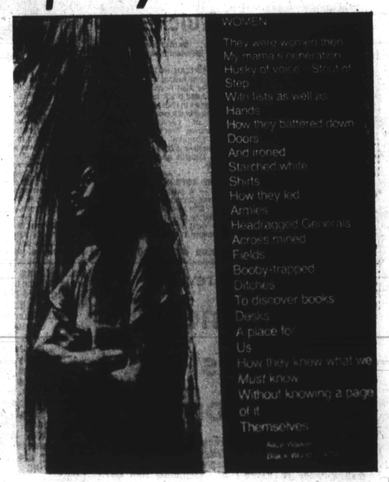
Most of her poems, the biography says, were called the "ornaments of her public address."

Another is the first known black poetess, Lucy Terry. Her poem in 1746, "Bars Fight," commemorated the Deerfield Massacre, a raid on that village by 60 Indians.

For all those elementary and high school teachers who may be lamenting because school is out this week, they will still be able to take their classes because the exhibit at 225 Holliday Street will run to April 16.

After that the exhibit will tour the rest of the United States under the auspices of the Smithsonian- Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and was researched and organized by the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum.

—Fred Hines



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On black classical music

Dominique de Lerma

Dr. deLerma is professor of music at Morgan State University. He also hosts a radio show, "Melodies, Notes and Lyrics," Sunday, 11 a.m. WEAA-FM.

I've met a few music lovers and teachers in the past weeks who have kindly told me they have been clipping these columns for future reference. That's quite an honor, but it is also a responsibility which I must accept.

In Feb. 18, for example, the AFRO published my article "A Fountain for Music" which was on the subject of one of the most impressive of younger black composers, Primous Fountain.

Well, I just came back from the Fountain again, and I think we need an update.

Remember that this composer, who hasn't hit 30 yet and is one of those rare figures on the scene today who has made it without a college degree, has already held a Guggenheim Fellowship, has been appointed composer to the Dance Theatre of Harlem, has held commissions from many major ensembles and was awarded a personal scholarship from Quincy Jones.

Well, the Fountain really has been flowing on. The March issue of "High Fidelity" confirms my hope that the new cello concerto which Fountain wrote for the Minnesota Orchestra was performed by that orchestra's associate principal cellist, Anthony Elliott, an extraordinarily accomplished artist whose philosophies and aesthetic concepts never ignore his profound dedication to his racial and cultural heritage.

Meanwhile, Fountain has become one of the few persons to secure a second Guggenheim Fellowship.

Michael Tilson Thomas will conduct the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra this season in four performances of Fountain's "Ritual Dances," following a series of interpretations of that work with the Buffalo Symphony Orchestra, not only in the orchestra's home town, but on his tour of the East, including Carneige Hall.

Gunther Schuller, one of the first major figures to note Fountain's genius, has asked for a new work, and Fountain is presently creating a piece for 15 wind instruments.

Also Fourftain has established himself with a new publisher: Hinshaw Music (P.O. Box 470, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514). I must admit this is a new name to me but, if it is true that Simrock made it by publishing Brahms, Schott, by publishing Hindemith, Boosey and Hawkes by publishing Stravinsky, perhaps Hinshaw will make it by promoting Fountain, whose "Ritual Dances" and "Manifestations" are presently being engraved by that firm.

The acquisition of these scores (which, I hope, might be reviewed in this column) by the music lovers and teachers who, with others, might be in my reading audience could prove an investment in the continuously evolving career of a remarkable young man.

Return to the Fountain

GETTIN' DOWN AT THE COURTHOUSE — Virginia Union University Choir gave a recent noontime concert at the Baltimore County Courthouse in Towson, Randy Kitt, a freshman at the school and cousin of Eartha Kitt, led the group in "I Got a Rope" and brought the audience to its feet. Later, Baltimore County Executive Theodore Venetoulis, presented the university's president, Dr. Allix B. James and the choir director, Dr. Odell Hobbs, with honorary county chizenships in recognition of their visit and the choir's performance at Woodlawn Senior High.

THE GOOD LIFE

Community Events

SOCIAL SECURITY PROBLEMS — Turners Station branch library, 411 New Pittsburg Ave., Saturday, March 25, 1 p.m. Call 285 - 5000 for more information.

"REASSESSING OUR EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL" — Sheraton - Johns Hopkins Inn, Orleans and Broadway, Saturday, March 25. For more information, call 728 - 2894 or 624 - 0977.

EASTER MONDAY INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM — War Memorial Plaza, Monday, March 27, noon to 1:30. Call 396 - 4691 for more information. Social affairs 24 pt

REUNION — February 1958 class of Baltimore City College. For more information, call 655-3059.

The Arts

"ARTISTS' EQUITY JURIED EXHIBITION" — City Hall Galleries, 100 N. Holliday St., weekdays, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Through April.

"REUBEN KRAMER: Sculpture and Drawings, 1925 to 1978," Baltimore Museum of Art, Art Museum Drive, through April 16, Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday, 7 to 10 p.m., Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m.

STUDENT ART SHOW — Anne Arundel Community College, 101 College Parkway, Arnold, Md., careers building, lobby, through Wednesday, March 29.

"BEFORE YESTERDAY: — Baltimore Photographs from 1852 to 1920," Peale Museum, 225 Holliday St., through April 2.

"WHAT I DO BEST" — Art by Baltimore City Special Olympians, Central Pratt Library, 400 Cathedral St., Waverly branch, 400 E. 33rd St., through May 20. Fore more information, call 396 - 7903.

"WHO DONE IT" — Paintings by "Anonymous," Maryland Historical Society, 201 W. Monument St., Tuesday, through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. Through April 23.

Movies

"THE THREE WORLDS OF GULLIVER" — Westport Homes Recreation Center, 2343 Norfolk St., Monday, March 27, 3:30 p.m. Bentalou Recreation Center, 222 N. Bentalou St., Mondav. March 27, 7 p.m. Rosemont Recreation Center, Normount Avenue and Rosedale Street, Tuesday, March 28, 3:30 p.m. Herring Run Recreation Center, rear of 5001 Sinclair Lane, Tuesday, March 28, 7 p.m. Wyman Park Recreation Center, 501 W. 30th St., Wednesday, March 29, 3:30 p.m. Furley Recreation Center, Furley and Sipple Aves., Wednesday, March 29, 7 p.m. Greenmount Recreation Center, 2304 Greenmount Ave., Thursday, March 30, 3:30 p.m. Greater Model Community Recreation Center, Saratoga Street and Arlington Avenue, Thursday, March 30, 7 p.m. Irvin M. Luckman Memorial Park, Rockwood and Wo' "rest Aves., Friday, March 31, 3:3. p.m. Easterwood Recreation Center, 1530 N. Bentalou St., Friday, March 31, 7 p.m.

"ROMEO AND JULIET" — Towson area branch library, 320 York Road, Thursday, March 30, 7 p.m.

"THE WILD CHILD" — Baltimore Murseum of Art, Art Museum Drive, auditorium, Thursday, March 30, 8 p.m.

Theatre

'A FORMER GOTHAM GAL" — The Corner Theatre, Undercroft, Episcopal Cahtedral of the Incarnation, St. Paul Street near University Parkway, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, March 24, 25, 26, 8 p.m. Call 467 - 3750, weekdays from 9 to 5 p.m., for tickets and reservations.

"ASHES" — Center Stage, 700 N. Calvert St., through April 23. For ticket information, call 332 - 0033.

"DIVERSIONS AND DELIGHTS" — Vincent Price starring as Oscar Wilde. Mechanic Theatre, Hopkins Plaza, through April 1. Call 752-1407 for more information.

Music

Classical

SOLOISTS — Contralto Maureen Forrester and tenor John Alexander, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, 120 W. Mt. Royal Ave., Wednesday, Thursday, March 29, 30, 8:15 p.m. For ticket information, phone 837 - 5601.

APPLICATIONS — Musicians, dancers and theatre groups sought for Young Audiences Inc., deadline for return is March 31. Call 837 -7577 for an appointment.

Jazz

BARNEY KESSELL, HERB ELLIS QUARTET — Left Bank Jazz Society, Famous Ballroom, 1717 N. Charles St., Sunday, March 26, 5 to 9 p.m. Call 945 - 2266 for more information.

Dance

PERFORMANCE — Dancer - choreographer Sara Runder, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, 5401 Wilkens Ave., Fine Arts Building, room 317, Wednesday, March 29, 8 p.m.

"THIS IS THE ARMY" — Central Pratty Library, 400 Cathedral St., Wheeler Auditorium, Saturday, March 25, 2 p.m.

"TOBY TYLER or 10 Weeks with a Circus," Towson area branch library, 320 York Road, Monday, March 27, 1:30 p.m. For children ages six to 12.

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