

McGovern Aides Knew Of Eagleton's Problem Before Selection

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. George McGovern's top aides learned that Thomas F. Eagleton had been hospitalized for exhaustion even before the Missouri senator was selected as the vice presidential nominee, interviews with The Associated Press disclosed Tuesday.

Within hours of Eagleton's nomination, two top McGovern aides, Gordon Weil and Frank Mankiewicz, received confirmation from Douglas Bennett, Eagleton's administrative assistant, but failed to pass the word to McGovern until a few hours later.

At that point, "it wasn't a serious problem," Mankiewicz said. Mankiewicz and Bennett agree that Eagleton never mentioned that he had undergone electric shock treatments until nearly a week later, after an anonymous tipster gave that information to a Knight Newspapers executive and to two McGovern aides.

Bennett said, however, "there was never any effort to conceal the shock treatments." Eagleton, however, omitted mention of them on July 25 when he detailed his medical history for reporters, though subsequent questioning brought it out.

The interviews, conducted in the wake of McGovern smashing election defeat, confirmed for the first time the extent to which the McGovern camp knew of Eagleton's medical history, both before and immediately after he was nominated as the No. 2 man on the Democratic ticket.

Those involved put blame for the incident, from which McGovern says his campaign never recovered, on Eagleton's eagerness for the nomination, the haste with which he was picked and the initial feeling, in both McGovern and Eagleton camps, that his medical history did not present a serious problem.

As early as the Wednesday night of the convention, before McGovern himself was even nominated, Mankiewicz and Kirby Jones, the senator's deputy press secretary, received word in the candidates' trailer of a report circulating on the convention floor that Eagleton had been in the hospital with a mental problem.

Cal Tech Prof To Speak On Learning Centers

Dr. James Olds of the California Institute of Technology will present the Sigma Xi-RESA National Lecture, "Learning Centers of the Brain," Thursday at A&M.

The TAMU Sigma Xi chapter presentation will begin at 5 p.m. in lecture room 102 of the Zachry Engineering Center, according to the chapter president, Dr. James G. Teer.

Dr. Olds is the Bing Professor of Behavioral Biology at Cal Tech. He also taught and conducted research at Harvard, McGill University, UCLA and Michigan. The Sigma XI speaker was educated at Amherst College and Harvard.

The lecture deals with his investigations disclosing four different "learning centers" in the brain. Dr. Olds localized them by implanting fine-wire micro-electrodes and recording action potentials from individual neurons during Pavlovian conditioning.

His data suggest that different kinds of learning, obeying different laws of learning, go on at the same time in these centers. To some degree this represents a division of labor and a redundancy that supplies the brain a safety factor.

Dr. Teer said the lecture is open to all interested persons.

David Schoumacher, a television correspondent now with ABC, said the McGovern aides dismissed it as "one more of the nutty things you hear around the convention," but that Mankiewicz said it had better be checked.

Jones said he circulated around the hall and in the press galleries but never heard any more.

Weil, who was unavailable for questioning this week, was detailed to check reports that Eagleton had a drinking problem,

and according to Mankiewicz and legislative assistant John L. Holun reported back that the Missouri had been hospitalized for exhaustion, not drinking.

"It was an answer to the alcoholism charge. That's what we were looking for," Holun recalled. "No one really thought of it on its own."

Mankiewicz said he doubts that McGovern was told. "Why shouldn't the senator go into the hospital for exhaustion?" he

asked. "So have a lot of people. That's like saying he had polio when he was a kid."

Later that afternoon, after White was considered, and according to some accounts, Kennedy again indicated interest, Eagleton was selected and McGovern phoned him with the news. After a brief conversation, in which the Missouri senator said he would accept, McGovern turned the phone over to Mankiewicz, who said he asked "if

there was anything in his record" that would present a problem.

Jones, who was seated next to Mankiewicz, agreed that Mankiewicz asked a follow-up question indicating he meant "booze, dames" or anything such as legal difficulties.

"It was pretty black and white what Frank was asking about," Jones said, adding "he was asking for any specifics without

mentioning hospitalization or exhaustion."

Eagleton has said his negative answer was based on the fact that he didn't regard his past treatments as a problem since his health has been excellent since the last hospital stay in 1966.

Early Friday morning, July 14, just hours after the convention ended, Bennett said Weil approached him at a victory party

to report that McGovern's staff had picked up rumors of hospitalization for drinking, that he didn't believe them but that they might have to be faced.

"I told him, 'Those rumors are false. What he was hospitalized for was exhaustion and depressive tendencies,'" Bennett said. Weil told Mankiewicz, who didn't tell the nominee before he left Miami Beach to return to Washington.

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