

White House mute on 'call boy' probe
Frank J. Murray The Washington Times; Part A; Pg. A1
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Administration officials continued yesterday to stonewall reporters on the growing federal "call boy" investigation, apparently hoping the scandal will fade before President Bush is asked his view of a late-night White House tour that reportedly included two male prostitutes.

Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady, who heads the Secret Service, reluctantly conceded yesterday at the White House that the agency is looking into the July 3, 1988, tour - one of several arranged by a Secret Service officer for lobbyist Craig J. Spence.

Meanwhile, White House sources confirmed that President Bush has followed the stories of the late-night visit and Mr. Spence's links to a homosexual prostitution ring under investigation by federal authorities since they were disclosed June 29 in The Washington Times. But top officials won't discuss the stories' substance, reportedly even among themselves.

"Mr. Bush knows about the story. Yes he does. He's aware of the story," said one White House source who, like virtually all the others, insisted on anonymity.

Press officers have rebuffed repeated requests to obtain Mr. Bush's reaction and decline to discuss investigations or fallout from the disclosures.

"I don't have anything on that," said Deputy Press Secretary B. Jay Cooper, the latest member of the press office to respond.

"There's no gain in talking about it," explained an official who declined to be quoted by name. "It only makes the story grow and helps keep it alive."

The president has not had "serious discussion" about the reports even with his most senior aides, including Chief of Staff John Sununu, according to another source.

Reports on the matter have been included in the Daily Press Summary, a comprehensive half-inch-thick digest of print and broadcast media stories and editorials prepared by a division of the White House press office for the president and aides throughout the complex.

Because the summary is an internal document, officials would not disclose its reports on the news stories. One official said, "I'm sure that the story was summarized, but the president also reads The Washington Times and The Washington Post."

Mr. Brady, the ranking administration official to speak publicly about the episode, appeared nonplussed when asked yesterday about Reginald A. deGueldre, a uniformed White House officer who moonlighted as Mr. Spence's bodyguard and arranged the late-night White House tours.

"Sir, were any Secret Service policies violated by Officer deGueldre's moonlighting relationship with Craig Spence, and, if so, what actions have you taken to correct that?" he was asked.

"Would you repeat that again?" Mr. Brady requested.

"Yes, sir, I'm talking about the UD [Uniformed Division] officer, Reginald deGueudre, who was working moonlighting for Craig Spence and who arranged the tours for him. I'm wondering if any Secret Service policies are violated by such moonlighting, and whether these visits to the White House are . . ."

Mr. Brady interrupted at that point and said, "I can't give you a precise answer on that now. We'll certainly look into it."

"You don't know if your own Secret Service is conducting an investigation into something that's been this prominent?" the secretary was then asked.

"I am sure they're looking into it," he said. "The nature of that investigation I cannot report to you at this time."

A Treasury Department spokeswoman said later, "The director of the Secret Service is looking into whether or not any policies have been violated" by the moonlighting or admission of outsiders to the White House compound.

She said neither Mr. Brady nor the Secret Service would comment on additional matters involved in a criminal investigation by the U.S. Attorney's Office of the homosexual prostitution ring that Mr. Spence patronized.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater and several of his deputies have said repeatedly that they do not know if Mr. Bush considered it appropriate for male prostitutes to be touring the White House at 1 a.m.

Yesterday, while talking informally to several reporters at the White House, Mr. Fitzwater parried one question this way: **"What are they saying, that you should have sexual-preference checks on people that come into the White House?"**

He also said, "We don't have any involvement that I know of."

Although he has talked repeatedly to individual reporters, including those for The Washington Times, Mr. Fitzwater has not held a general briefing since before the prostitution ring stories broke, largely because of the holiday weekend and because administration experts gave briefings on Mr. Bush's European trip, which begins Sunday.

The last of those briefings was scheduled for today, but Mr. Fitzwater reportedly was considering holding a general briefing as well, his first in nine days.

Mr. Fitzwater and his staff have declined consistently to say if they would take the question to Mr. Bush, a practice done only rarely and generally only on matters they expect the president might be willing to discuss.

One senior official, who insisted on anonymity, said it was unlikely any staff member would ask Mr. Bush such a question, discounting any threats to security and portraying it as a sordid sex matter beneath presidential dignity.

Photo, Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady concedes a probe is under way., Photo by Kevin T. Gilbert/The Washington Times,