

Deputies Took Flights Paid for by Ampex Corp., Ward Charges

BY RAY ZEMAN Times County Bureau Chief

Supervisor Baxter Ward charged Wednesday that at least two Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies received "hospitality" flights to Las Vegas and Mexico City paid for by Ampex Corp., contractor for a new, multimillion-dollar Sheriff's Department video-file system.

The Sheriff's Department replied it is investigating the charge and has been endeavoring for two months to determine whether there have been improprieties by any sheriff's officers in the controversial ORACLE (Optimum Records Automation for Courts and Law Enforcement) contract.

"At this stage of the investigation, it would be inappropriate to make any further comment," the Sheriff's Department statement added.

Milan Telian, Ampex Video-File Department manager, said in Sunnyvale, that he had no knowledge of any flights to Mexico City or Las Ve-

The Board of Supervisors April 17 voted to rescind an \$8.1 million contract with Ampex Corp. for the computerized system of record storage and retrieval. The ORACLE system was to be part of a \$19.5 million setup including communications dispatch and microwave transmission.

Supervisor Kenneth Hahn charged the ORACLE installation was faulty and said bureaucratic boondoggling involved comprised a major scandal.

Ward said a veil of secrecy enveloped the Ampex program and an investigation was needed to learn how county officials participated in the negotiations and if influence peddling was involved.

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AFTER 12 YEARS

N.Y. Publisher to Buy L.A. Magazine

BY LEE DYE

Los Angeles Magazine, born in poverty more than 12 years ago amid speculation that it could not survive, will be sold to the publisher of New York Magazine, it was revealed Wednesday.

The price and other details of the transaction were not disclosed.

However, the sale is expected to be completed "within a couple of weeks," according to Clay Felker, president of the New York Magazine Co.

Felker, who is editor and publisher of New York Magazine, said Los Angeles Magazine will remain "a locally edited magazine."

"I think the magazine is pretty good and we want to build on the

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Ray Zeman, Bureau Chief. (May 10, 1973). Deputies Took Flights Paid for by Ampex Corp., Ward Charges, re. ORACLE, Ampex Contract Scandal, signed Mar. 25, 1969, pp. II-1,3 The Los Angeles Times.

WARD'S CHARGES

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By order of the Board of Supervisors, a \$4.25 million damage suit was filed April 18 against Ampex Corp., charging the company did not live up to its contract.

Charles Steinberg, Ampex vice president, insisted the corporation fully performed its contractual obligations. He said the company delivered most of the videotape equipment but held up the remaining components because the county refused to permit their delivery. Ampex filed a \$22.5 million counter claim against the county April 20 because of the county's termination of the contract.

Data Undisclosed

Ward did not disclose the background for his new charges about the Mexico City and Las Vegas flights

gas flights.

"I do not know what additional costs Ampex might have picked up in these trips," he said, "but I felt that a hearing could have determined that.

"Such hospitality is quite common in the world of private business but it raises serious difficulties when employes of a government are courted in this fashion."

Ward's requests for a public hearing to air all facets of the ORACLE program, dating back to negotiations for the contract which was signed March 25, 1969, have been rejected by the Board of Supervisors.

Ward said such a hearing, with witnesses testifying under oath, might disclose much information on escalation of contract costs and a Sheriff's Department study on the use and installation of the OR-ACLE facility.

Seen as Impropriety

Acceptance of trips by sheriff's officers can be construed as an impropriety "that should not be repeated in future county negotiations with small or big business," Ward said.

negotiations with small or big business," Ward said. To determine whether county officials have invested in Ampex stock,

Ward submitted 42 names to the Wells Fargo Bank, the corporation's stock transfer agent, in San Francisco.

He learned only that a relative of one elected county official bought 1,-000 shares Feb. 23, 1973, a day on which the stock's sales closed at \$6.13 a share. Ampex stock, which once sold as high as \$49, closed Wednesday at \$4.38

Ward would not identify the purchaser. A spokesman for Sheriff Peter J. Pitchess said positively it was not the sheriff or any member of his family.

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Ward said he doubted the Feb. 23 purchase was influenced in any way by the county's ORACLE contract but he said, "There might have been certain inducements offered that perhaps smoothed the path of the purchase."

Linked to Trips

He did not amplify on this remark except to say it was linked to his information about the Mexico City and Las Vegas flights.

Acting County Counsel John H. Larson advised the Board of Supervisors Monday that the conduct and statements of county and Ampex employes will be a central issue in the forthcoming multimilliondollar litigation.

To hold public hearings at this time might prejudice the county's suit

against Ampex, he said.

"The public will have full access to the facts surrounding the ORACLE contract in the normal course of the trial proceedings," Larson added.

Compromise Seen

As a result of Larson's memorandum, Ward withdrew a motion for a hearing that he had planned to introduce at the supervisors' meeting Tuesday.

However, he advised Wednesday that he fears in the long run the suit will never come to trial, presumably ending in an out-of-court compromise.

"I am anxious that public representatives be present at the taking of the depositions that you described in your memo," Ward added.

Ray Zeman, Bureau Chief. (May 10, 1973). Deputies Took Flights Paid for by Ampex Corp., Ward Charges, re. ORACLE, Ampex Contract Scandal, signed Mar. 25, 1969, pp. II-1,3 The Los Angeles Times.

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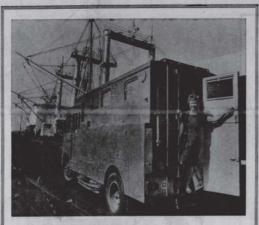


THURSDAY, MAY 10, 1973

ART SEIDENBAUM

Grunsky, Beilenson

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Around World in Fire Truck

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Santa Monica Mountains Park Bill OKd by Assembly Group

to Put Women on Street Patrol List New Donations in Primary Race

Study Shows Pattern of **UC Job Discrimination**

Survey of Employes by Race, Sex Finds Only Handful of Women, Minorities in Top Posts

BY WILLIAM TROMBLEY

GIBSON FIGHTS ABSENCES

City Council Exits Locked to Prevent Breaking of Quorum

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