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Bid to Make Deal With Top Aides Denied by Vesco

MIAMI (AP)—Fugitive financier Robert Vesco denies he ever tried to approach the Carter administration in an attempt to strike a deal solving his legal problems, the Miami Herald reported yesterday.

"I never asked anybody, ever, to put a fix in for me with the Carter administration," Vesco told a Herald reporter in a private interview somewhere in the Bahamas.

Vesco confirmed, however, that he met with two Georgia men, lawyer Spencer Lee IV and businessman R. L. Herring, said by syndicated columnist Jack Anderson to have attempted to contact administration officials on his behalf.

"I have met Herring and I've met Lee," Vesco said. "They came to see me in Costa Rica . . . I can tell you that I didn't ask them to come down."

Lee has testified in federal court that he received a \$10,000 retainer and the promise of \$990,000 more if he served as liaison between Vesco's representatives and several of Carter's closest advisers, including Charles Kirbo and Hamilton Jordan.

Lee said he withdrew from the deal before personally contacting Jordan and that Kirbo told them he couldn't help them because of his closeness to the president.

The Justice Department said last week it has been investigating for several months whether any of the alleged approaches to the administration were illegal or improper.

The White House has denied that Jordan was contacted, and denied anything was done to help Vesco. The White House said it was unaware of any efforts by Vesco or the Georgians to influence administration figures before the newspaper articles appeared.

Lee, a longtime friend of Jordan, was a Carter campaign manager in 1976.

The Herald said Vesco granted the interview on the condition that he not be photographed and his location on one of the 700 islands in the Bahamas not be made public.

Vesco fled the United States for Costa Rica and then the Bahamas to avoid prosecution on charges he plundered a publicly held corporation of millions of dollars and then tried to have the charges dropped by contributing \$200,000 in 1972 to the campaign of former President Richard M. Nixon.