

Warrant Issued for Vesco in Campaign Gift Case

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By ROBERT J. COLE

A warrant for the arrest of Robert L. Vesco, the New Jersey financier who secretly gave \$200,000 in cash to President Nixon's re-election campaign, was issued in United States District Court here yesterday after a 30-minute hearing.

The order for his arrest and for his appearance before a Federal grand jury investigating the campaign gift was signed by Judge Edmund L. Palmieri.

The 37-year-old executive was served with a subpoena last month at his home in Nassau, the Bahamas, and he was ordered to testify before the grand jury in Manhattan on April 18. After he failed to appear, United States Attorney Whitney North Seymour Jr. asked the court to hold Mr. Vesco in criminal contempt. Yesterday's warrant for his arrest is an outgrowth of that proceeding.

Mr. Vesco was named last November as the main defendant in a \$224-million civil fraud suit filed by the Securities and Exchange Commission after an intensive 18-month investigation. The suit charged that Mr. Vesco and 41 others had looted Investors Overseas Services, Ltd., a Swiss company of which Mr. Vesco was board chairman.

Stans Questioned

The grand jury, which has already questioned Maurice H. Stans, former Secretary of Commerce who was chairman of the Finance Committee to Re-elect the President; former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, and, possibly, Donald F. Nixon, President Nixon's 26-year-old nephew who is a personal aide of Mr. Vesco, is attempting to determine whether Mr. Vesco gave the secret contribution in exchange for special treatment in the S.E.C. investigation.

The grand jury's findings, according to sources close to the case, may include conspiracy, attempted bribery, perjury and obstruction of justice.

Mr. Stans personally accepted the \$200,000, all in \$100 bills, from two former Vesco associates. The money, as well as \$50,000 more donated pub-

licly, was returned late in January, two months after the Government fraud suit was filed. The Department of Justice has since charged the Stans committee with failure to report it.

Mr. Mitchell is known to have performed several favors for Mr. Vesco, including making a phone call to Switzerland for him to obtain his release from a Swiss jail, where he spent the night after his arrest in a stockholder suit.

Fund Shift Alleged

James W. Rayhill, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, told Judge Palmieri yesterday that the Government had information that Mr. Vesco in-

tended to renounce his American citizenship and settle in Costa Rica. The S.E.C. has charged in its fraud suit that Mr. Vesco has transferred at least \$60-million in funds to the Central American republic.

Mr. Rayhill asked the court to withdraw the Government's petition to find Mr. Vesco in criminal contempt for failure to appear in court and asked instead that the court grant the Government a bench warrant for his arrest.

Edward Bennett Williams, who Mr. Vesco retained to represent him in the criminal proceedings, said however that if his client were compelled to testify, Mr. Vesco would invoke his Fifth Amendment privilege

against self-incrimination unless he were granted immunity.

Mr. Williams said that attempts had been made to obtain such immunity but that the Government had refused to grant it.

In a related matter, Mrs. Patricia Vesco was subpoenaed to appear before the grand jury at 11 A.M. on Monday. Mr. Vesco's associates who know her said, "Vesco's wife surely must have overheard lots of things but she doesn't understand it."

Mr. Williams refused to say if Mrs. Vesco would respond to the court order and she could not be reached for comment at the Vesco home in Boonton, N.J.