

NY Times APR 19 1974  
**Steinbrenner Aide Pleads Guilty  
To Hiding '72 Nixon Contribution**

WASHINGTON, April 18 (UPI)—The executive vice president of the American Shipbuilding Company pleaded guilty today to concealing an illegal \$25,000 contribution to President Nixon's re-election campaign.

The surprise plea, entered by John H. Melcher Jr. before United States District Judge John Hart, was reported to indicate that Mr. Melcher will testify against George M. Steinbrenner 3d, the company's chief executive, who is under indictment for allegedly masterminding such contributions in 1972.

The judge delayed sentencing Mr. Melcher on the misdemeanor charge, which carries a maximum sentence of a year in jail and a \$5,000 fine. He is the 10th person to plead guilty in connection with illegal corporate contributions, and three others have been charged.

In his guilty plea, Mr. Melcher said that Mr. Steinbrenner "willfully and unlawfully" agreed to make a corporate con-

tribution to the Nixon campaign on behalf of American Shipbuilding.

Mr. Melcher himself, the plea said, "did relieve, comfort and assist Steinbrenner in order to hinder and prevent Steinbrenner's apprehension, trial and punishment by using a false and misleading explanation of the \$25,000 contribution."

American Shipbuilding officials told the Senate Watergate committee that the corporate source of the money had been concealed by disguising it as bonuses and other items on various employee payroll records.

Mr. Steinbrenner was indicted by a Federal grand jury in Cleveland two weeks ago on 14 counts including alleged attempts to obstruct investigations by falsifying records and ordering company officers to make false statements.

Mr. Steinbrenner, 43 years old, said in a statement, "I am totally innocent and we will prove it in court."