

Witness Links Gerald Ford 'Lobbyist' to Voloshen

By EDITH EVANS ASBURY

Edward M. Gilbert, the one-time multimillionaire convicted on Federal and state charges of swindling and looting corporate accounts, testified yesterday that "a lobbyist" for House Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford Jr. sent him to Nathan M. Voloshen for help in getting a suspended sentence in a New York state court.

Gilbert, a slender, bluish man with long, wide sideburns and a happy-go-lucky air, testified at the trial of Dr. Martin Sweig, suspended chief administrative aide of House Speaker John W. McCormack.

Dr. Sweig and Voloshen, a lawyer-lobbyist of New York, Baltimore and Washington were indicted here for allegedly scheming to use the prestige of the Speaker's office illegally on behalf of clients of Voloshen before a grand jury and for lying about their dealings.

As their trial opened last week, Voloshen, who is 72 years old, pleaded guilty.

Gilbert said Mr. Ford's "lobbyist," later identified as Robert Winterberger, told him that Voloshen "woked for Speaker McCormack, had a desk in his office. . . was a very powerful guy and if anybody could help me he could."

While waiting in an anteroom of Voloshen's midtown Manhattan office to see him on a Sunday morning, Gilbert said he heard a stenographer take 10 or 15 calls, answering, "Yes, your honor; Yes, Senator; Yes, Governor; Yes Count; Yes Prince—everybody in the world was calling. I was very impressed. God? It was overwhelming. When I got in to Mr. Voloshen's office I practically fell over, I was so happy to see him."

A "tough guy" who looked like "a Mafia agent or some sort of prize fighter" was with Voloshen, Gilbert continued, and

"the same kind of calls" came in during his half hour with Voloshen.

"At least three judges called, he said 'Yes, your honor,' and then he would tell me afterward who they were," Gilbert testified.

Gilbert said he was in search of help because his lawyer "had a funny feeling" that a promise that he would get a suspended sentence if he pleaded guilty was not going to be kept.

The "funny feeling" turned out to be a prescient. Gilbert was sentenced to Sing Sing May 8, 1967 for two to four years and remanded immediately. Voloshen, who had been in the courtroom, came to Gilbert's cell, said he could not understand the "shocking performance . . . handed me \$60 to take care of the guards" and promised to have him out by Christmas.

Voloshen called on Gilbert at Sing Sing and provided two lawyers to assist him, but failed to get him out. Gilbert was finally paroled in July, 1968,

when he was turned over to Federal authorities to serve two years. He had pleaded guilty to the Federal charges April 25, 1967, and had also been fined \$21,000.

Gilbert was followed to the stand by his mother, Mrs. Yolanda Gilbert. She testified that Voloshen asked her for \$10,000 in cash "for his advice and help." When she paid this, on Nov. 14, 1967, Voloshen "said another \$10,000 was due, and told her of another prisoner" who had not paid and never got a parole. She said she paid the second \$10,000, also in cash.

In Washington, a spokesman for Mr. Ford denied that Mr. Winterberger had ever been a lobbyist for the minority leader. He said Mr. Ford had been introduced to Mr. Winterberger by a constituent in 1965 and had seen him "three to four times a year from then on, in connection with his efforts to have a Dutch doctor legally admitted to the United States."

Also in Washington, Speaker McCormack said that he had

been invited by the prosecution to testify at the trial and would do so voluntarily. United States Attorney Whitney North Seymour Jr. said the Speaker would testify Thursday, July 2.

An assistant United States Attorney from the District of Columbia and a United States postal inspector testified that Voloshen and Dr. Sweig told them that Speaker McCormack was "interested in" people under investigation in connection with the National Labor Chronicle, and would appreciate anything that could be done to help them.

Irving Lobell, president of The Chronicle, testified that he had engaged Voloshen to represent him because "he had an autographed picture of the Speaker and picture of the President and told me he had been on the Washington scene many years." He said he paid him \$7,500.

The trial, before Federal Judge Marvin E. Frankel and a jury of four women and eight men, will continue today.