

Ellsberg Enters Plea Of Innocent

Los Angeles

Dr. Daniel Ellsberg pleaded innocent yesterday to charges of illegal possession of secret documents in the Pentagon Papers case.

"I am not guilty," he told United States District Judge William M. Byrne Jr. in a firm, even tone. He said the words twice, answering two counts of a Federal indictment.

U.S. Attorney Robert Meyer then arose and told the court that no electronic eavesdropping devices were used in investigatig the Ellsberg case. Ellsberg's attorneys had argued in opposing his coming here for trial that the government should say whether evidence was obtained by wiretap.

Meyer and defense attorneys were told to confer on a mutually agreeable trial date.

The defense said it expected a long trial with a need for "elaborate preparation" and asked that it be at least 90 days hence.

The judge ordered Ellsberg to return Jan. 4, 1972 for hearing on pretrial motions and setting of a trial date. The action came after defense attorneys asked for 75 days to file motions and government attorneys asked another 45 days to respond.

Ellsberg's defenders reserved the right to file later for dismissal or for transfer of the trial if research indicates such motions are warranted.

Outside of court, Ellsberg said he expects to return shortly to Boston.

Associated Press

According to radio news account, Meyer said "I have been authorized [by the Federal government] to say ... "