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Segretti Indicted for Phony Letters

Associated Press

Orlando, Fla.

Nixon campaign figure Donald H. Segretti was indicted yesterday on charges of distributing a phony Edmund Muskie campaign letter that accused two other Democratic presidential candidates of sexual misconduct.

A federal grand jury charged the California lawyer and George A. Hearing of Tampa with "publishing and distributing a letter . . . which failed to identify those responsible."

The two and an undicted associate, Robert Milton Benz, 35, former president of the Tampa Young Republicans, met before the March 14, 1972, Florida presidential primary to plan the operation, according to the indictment.

On March 11 a bogus "Citizens for Muskie" newsletter was mailed, accusing Senator Henry Jackson (Dem - Wash.) of fathering an illegitimate daughter in 1929 and being arrested for homosexuality in 1955 and 1957.

The phony letter, addressed to "Dear Fellow Democrats," but not bearing a signature, also claimed that

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, (Dem - Minn.) was arrested for drunk driving in 1967 in Washington with a "known call girl" in his car.

Segretti surrendered to federal agents in Los Angeles a few hours later and was taken before a U.S. magistrate for arraignment. He was released on \$10,000 personal surety bond.

Hearing, 40, a self-em-

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ployed certified public accountant, turned himself in to federal marshals in Tampa accompanied by his attorney Ralph Russo. He was released on \$5000 bond and refused comment other than to acknowledge that he knew Benz.

The indictment said Segretti and Benz first met on

Dec. 1, 1971, at the Causeway Inn in Tampa to discuss "the disruption of the campaigns of Senator Jackson and Senator Muskie."

That day, it said, Segretti paid Benz \$50 "for the purpose of carrying out the disruption."

On February 15, Segretti talked to Benz by telephone concerning the letter's distribution and on February 20 he mailed Benz a supply of "Citizens for Muskie" stationery and envelopes, said the indictment.

Two days later, it went on, Benz gave Hearing the stationery and "the proposed letter for the purpose of having the proposed letter printed on said stationery."

On March 11, Hearing mailed the letter "to persons within the Middle (federal judicial) District of Florida



UPI Telephoto

DONALD SEGRETTI
A plot in Florida

and elsewhere," it was charged.

The Florida primary was won by Alabama Governor George Wallace with 42 per cent of the vote. Humphrey placed second with 18 per cent, followed by Jackson with 13 per cent and Muskie 9 per cent.

U.S. Attorney John Briggs, who presented evidence to the grand jury, told reporters, "I can't say whether there will be other indictments."

The charges against Segretti and Hearing are misdemeanors. Each count car-



AP Wirephoto

GEORGE HEARING
He was indicted, too

ries a maximum penalty of one year in jail and a \$1000 fine.

Briggs said immunity from prosecution was granted in the probe, but declined to identify who received it. He added that the grand jury was "in constant

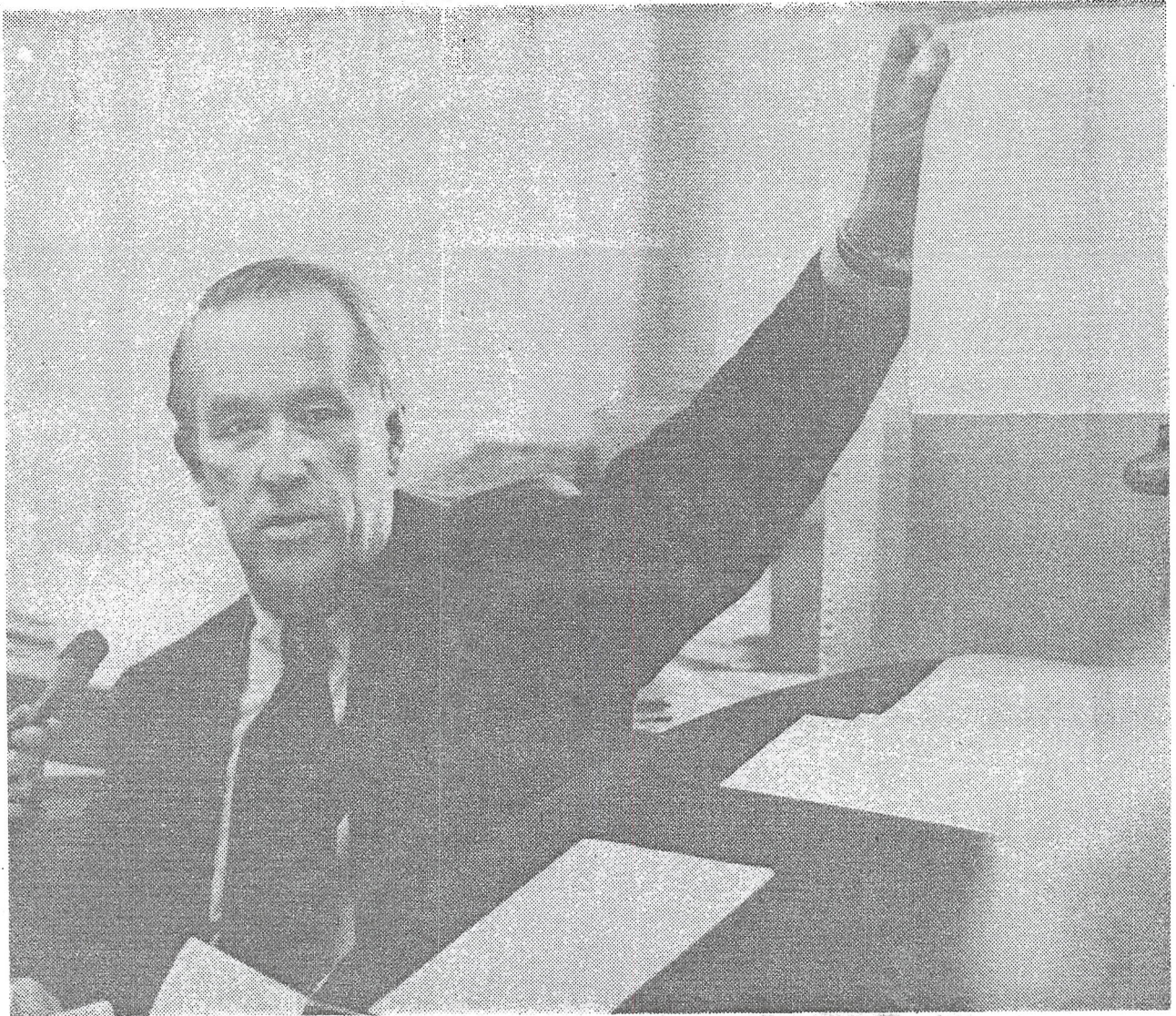
touch" with the Washington grand jury which probed the Watergate bugging. "The exchange of information was valuable," he said.

Briggs also said certain newsmen provided investigators with useful information by telephone, but added he would not "disclose my news sources."

Segretti, 28, of Marina del Rey, Calif., has been identified in various news accounts as a chief recruiter for Nixon campaign sabotage operations.

Segretti has been named by President Nixon's personal lawyer, Herbert Kalmbach, as the man to whom Kalmbach paid between \$30,000 and \$40,000 on orders from Dwight Chapin, Mr. Nixon's former appointments secretary. The money came from a secret fund kept in a California bank for campaign operations on the West Coast.

Briggs said the government began investigating the case last October — seven months after the Florida primary. He said indictments were not returned earlier because "it took just about that long to complete this case."



AP Wirephoto

Senator Henry Jackson showed a copy of the phony campaign letter charging him with sexual misconduct