

Podell Indicted on Charge Of Taking Airline Bribes

NYTimes By ARNOLD H. LUBASCH JUL 13 1973

Representative Bertram L. Podell of Brooklyn was indicted yesterday on charges of conspiracy, bribery, perjury and conflict of interest involving efforts to obtain route for an airline.

The 10-count indictment in Federal Court here alleged that Representative Podell, who is a Democrat, had obtained \$41,350 in bribes to use his influence as a Congressman in an attempt to win a route to the Bahamas for Florida Atlantic Airlines.

Two other defendants indicted in the alleged scheme are Herbert S. Podell, the Congressman's brother and law partner, and Martin Miller of Miami, former president of the

airline's parent corporation, Leasing Consultants, Inc.

The indictment charged that Representative Podell sought to assist the airline by "fraud, corruption and misrepresentation" in dealings with the Civil Aeronautics Board, the Federal Aviation Administration and the State Department.

An angry denial of the accusations was issued in Washington by the 47-year-old Representative, who said that "I am ready to go to trial right now and am confident that a jury will completely exonerate me of any charges."

"I consider it a badge of honor to be known as public

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PODELL IS INDICTED ON BRIBE CHARGE

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enemy No. 1 of the most corrupt administration in the 200-year history of this nation," he asserted. "This indictment, an attempt at political death, is meant to atone for the cesspool of crime and corruption uncovered in the Watergate hearings and related matters."

"But I will not submit to blackmail nor political extortion," said the Congressman, who had charged last Sunday that the Justice Department ap-

peared guilty of a conflict of interest in dropping an anti-trust inquiry into a company owned by President Nixon's friend, Robert H. Abplanalp.

"On Monday," he said, "I will hold a press conference at which I will give a detailed account of political harassment, intimidation and extortion by a Department of Justice that is corrupt from top to bottom."

The indictment contended that Mr. Podell's alleged scheme began in March, 1968, one month after he won a special election to Congress. Mr. Podell, a longtime member of Brooklyn's regular Democratic organization, served as a State Assemblyman for 13 years before he was elected to Congress from the 13th District, which covers Con-

ey Island and several neighboring communities.

Federal authorities said that efforts to obtain an air-taxi route to the Bahamas for Florida Atlantic Airlines had been unsuccessful and that the corporation later went bankrupt.

Kenneth G. Burnstine, formerly the airline's president, and the late Michael Zorovich, who was an officer of the airline, were named in the indictment as co-conspirators but not as defendants.

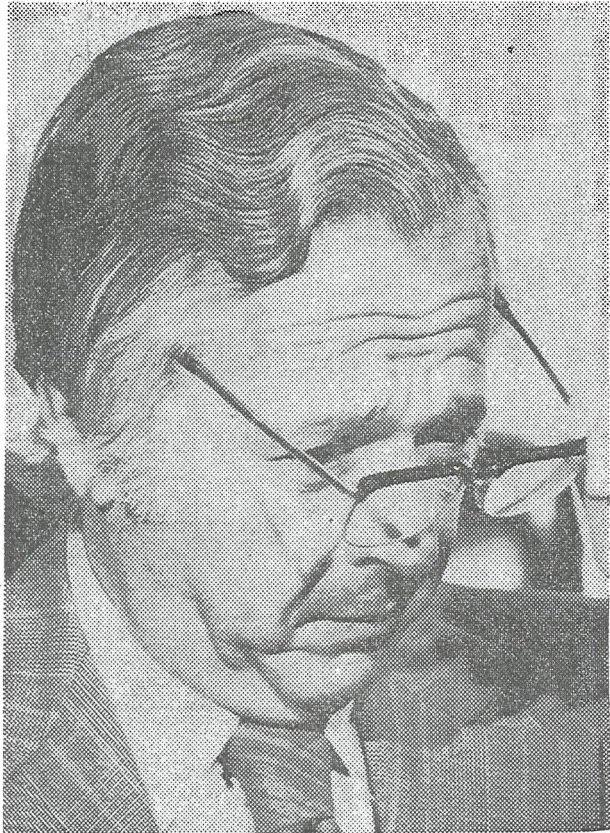
United States Attorney Paul J. Curran said the Podell indictment had resulted from "an exhaustive and long-term investigation" by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and by Government prosecutors here.

of the corruption unit in Mr. Curran's office, said Representative Podell and his two co-defendants were scheduled to plead to the charges at an arraignment in Federal Court here on July 23.

If convicted, each defendant could face up to 15 years in prison and up to \$20,000 in fines on a bribery count as well as lesser penalties on the other counts, according to Joseph Jaffe, who helped present the case to the grand jury.

The defendants, if convicted, also could be barred from practicing law and from holding any Federal office.

The principal conspiracy count in the indictment charged that the defendants had agreed "to defraud the United States of



United Press International

Bertram L. Podell after indictment was announced

the honest and unbiased services of a member of Congress" by the alleged bribery of Representative Podell.

In the bribery counts, the two Podell brothers were charged with accepting \$29,000 for their law firm in return for the Congressman's influence in seeking the airline route, and Representative Podell was charged with accepting \$29,000 "in the form of a check payable to the Citizens Committee for B. L. Podell."

Mr. Miller, the corporation executive, was charged with offering the payments to Representative Podell in 1968, 1969 and 1970.