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Armand Hammer Misses Court Date

Associated Press

Millionaire oilman Armand Hammer yesterday was reported hospitalized with chest pains and failed to appear in court to reinstate guilty pleas to federal campaign law violations.

U.S. District Court Judge George L. Hart Jr. immediately ordered an independent medical examination of Hammer by two heart specialists.

Attorney Louis Nizer told Hart that Hammer, 77, was hospitalized in Los Angeles Tuesday night after ex-

periencing shortness of breath and chest pains.

The situation temporarily delayed a resolution of Hammer's tangled legal difficulties.

A second Hammer attorney, Arthur Groman, said the industrialist's physician reported that Hammer would... be hospitalized for at least two weeks. The physician could give no indication when Hammer might be able to travel to Washington to plead guilty, Groman added.

Hammer's lawyers previously have claimed that the extended legal proceedings could aggravate his heart condition and kill him.

Hammer, chief executive officer of the Occidental Petroleum Co., pleaded guilty Oct. 1, 1975, to three misdemeanor charges

stemming from an illegal \$54,000 contribution to the 1972 re-election campaign of President Nixon.

The plea was withdrawn by U.S. District Court Chief Judge William B. Jones after Hammer wrote a letter to a Los Angeles probation officer. In the letter, Hammer backed away from the guilty plea and blamed the illegal contribution on former Montana Gov. Tim Babcock, a former executive vice president in Occidental's Washington office.

Jones ordered the Watergate special prosecutor to take Hammer to trial.

The U.S. Court of Appeals, however, sent the case back to Jones, who removed himself and assigned it to Hart. *

Hart earlier had sentenced Babcock to four months imprisonment for essentially the

same offense to which Hammer was scheduled to plead guilty.

Nizer cited this today in requesting that Hart disqualify himself from accepting a guilty plea or sentencing Hammer. The attorney quoted Hart as saying that Hammer was the "mastermind" behind the illegal Nixon contributions.

Hart rejected the appeal, saying, "Mr. Nizer, it is my opinion that you are engaged in judge-shopping."

Nizer also requested that the case be transferred to Los Angeles, in part because of

Hammer's medical condition. Hart said he would await the outcome of the independent medical examination before reaching any decision.

Hammer faces a maximum penalty of three years' imprisonment and a \$3,000 fine.