

Segretti Indicted in Mailing Of Bogus Muskie Letter

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By MARTIN WALDRON
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ORLANDO, Fla., May 4—A Federal grand jury today indicted Donald H. Segretti, a national campaign worker for President Nixon, on a charge of political espionage in Florida last year. The grand jury accused Mr. Segretti and a Tampa accountant, George H. Hearing, of arranging for the mailing of a fictitious letter on the stationery of Senator Edmund S. Muskie, Democrat of Maine, who was a candidate in the Florida Presidential primary at the time.

The letter accused two other Democratic candidates for President—Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota and Senator Henry M. Jackson of Washington—of sexual misconduct.

Mr. Humphrey and Mr. Jackson vigorously denied the charges at the time, and aides to Senator Muskie disclaimed any knowledge of the letter.

Linked to Plot

Mr. Segretti, a 28-year-old Los Angeles lawyer, has been linked with several top Republican campaign workers and officials alleged to have been involved in a national plot to destroy Senator Muskie as a Presidential candidate and to throw the Democratic nomination to Senator George McGovern of South Dakota.

White House employes have told the Federal Bureau of Investigation that Mr. Segretti went on the payroll in late 1971, when Senator Muskie was leading Mr. Nixon in Presidential preference polls, with Senator McGovern showing very little voter appeal.

Although it has been estimated by investigators that as many as 50 persons were being used throughout the nation in

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an alleged attempt to sabotage the Democratic campaign last year, today's indictments are the first ones returned.

The mailing of fictitious or spurious campaign literature, the charge brought against Mr. Segretti and Mr. Hearing, is punishable upon conviction by a sentence of one year in prison and a fine of \$1,000, a Justice Department spokesman said.

Disruption Planned

The indictment said that on Dec. 1, 1971, Mr. Segretti met with Robert Benz, a 25-year-old Tampa man, to plan a disruption of the campaigns of Senator Muskie and Senator Jackson. Mr. Benz, a student and contract newspaper carrier for The Tampa Tribune, was president of the Tampa Young Republicans Club. The Government said that Mr. Segretti paid him \$50.

An investigation by The New York Times in Florida last fall turned up the mailing of the spurious letter and the existence of a plot to disrupt the Florida primary.

Patricia Griffin, a young South Carolina schoolteacher, told reporters she had been recruited by Mr. Benz to work in Senator Muskie's headquarters in Tampa as a spy.

Neither Mr. Benz nor Miss Griffin was indicted, although both testified for the grand jury. A Justice Department source said Mr. Benz had been granted immunity in return for his testimony.

Kalmbach Mentioned

Telephone records indicated that Mr. Segretti, who was being paid from funds controlled by Herbert W. Kalmbach, the President's personal attorney and a Republican fund-raiser, talked almost daily earlier this year to Mr. Benz and to Martin Douglas Kelly, a Republican campaign worker in Fort Lauderdale.

Mr. Benz has refused to talk to newsmen since last summer, and Mr. Kelly denied that he had engaged in any sabotage or had ever been asked to.

The indictment accused Mr. Segretti of sending a quantity of Muskie stationery to Mr. Benz on Feb. 28, 1972. Thousands of copies of the letter attacking Senator Humphrey and Senator Jackson were mailed from St. Petersburg on March 11, three days before the Florida primary.

Unsigned Letter

The letter, which was unsigned, was said to have been mailed to thousands of people. Mr. Benz and Miss Griffin were reported to have brought the copies of the letter to St. Petersburg, where volunteers addressed the envelopes by hand.

The letter accused Senator Jackson of being the father of an illegitimate daughter in 1929, when he was a high school senior in Everett, Wash. The letter also accused Mr. Jackson of being arrested as a homosexual in Washington, D. C., in 1955 and 1957. It said no charges were brought against him "because of his position."

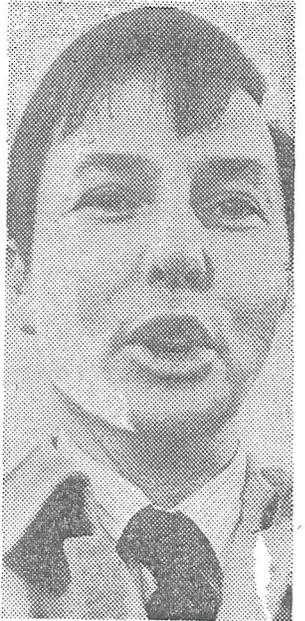
The letter also said Senator Humphrey "has similar skeletons in his closet." It said he was arrested for drunken driving in Washington in 1967, and that a call girl was in his car at the time.

Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama led the Florida primary. Senator Muskie ran fourth, behind Senator Humphrey and Senator Jackson.

Neither Mr. Hearing nor Mr. Segretti had been arrested late today. The Justice Department said it did not know where they were.

Mr. Hearing was not available for comment. Members of his family said he was out of town and would not discuss him.

Mr. Segretti joined the Nixon



United Press International
Donald H. Segretti



United Press International
John L. Briggs, prosecutor

on campaign organization in late 1971. At the University of Southern California, he was a classmate and friend of Dwight L. Chapin, who was the President's appointments secretary in 1971.