

# Mitchell, Stans Plead Innocent In Vesco Case

New York

Former Attorney General John Mitchell pleaded innocent yesterday to charges of perjury and conspiracy in an alleged plot to obstruct a federal investigation of President Nixon's top campaign contributor.

Former Commerce secretary Maurice Stans and Harry L. Sears, a prominent New Jersey Republican, also pleaded innocent to similar charges arising from a secret \$200,000-dollar contribution to Mr. Nixon's 1972 presidential campaign made by Robert L. Vesco, a multi-millionaire financier.

Vesco, also a defendant in the case, did not appear to answer charges and a fugitive warrant for his arrest was issued.

Vesco was last seen in April at his home in Nassau, The Bahamas, and was more recently reported living in Costa Rica where he holds millions of dollars worth of investments.

Vesco made the contribution, said to be the largest cash offering made to the Nixon campaign, on April 10, 1972. The indictment alleged that the contribution was made to have Mitchell and Stans intercede in a Securities and Exchange Commission investigation of Vesco.

The contribution came three days after a new federal law came into effect

which required the disclosure of campaign contributions. The Vesco offering, however, was not made public until this January when it was returned to Vesco by the Committee to Re-Elect the President.

The three men were released in their own custody after conferring with the judge who will handle the case, Lee Gagliardi, a Republican appointed to the bench in January, 1972, by Mr. Nixon.

## MOTIONS

The defense was given 45 days in which to submit legal motions and briefs. The trial is not expected to begin until late this year or early next year.

Mitchell, who remained solemn and unsmiling throughout the proceedings, was mobbed by reporters when he arrived and left the courthouse. Asked how he felt, the former attorney general, said "I've felt better."

A few of the reporters and spectators who besieged Mitchell were pushed to the ground in the crush and an ABC television cameraman who ran several yards after Mitchell's chauffeured limousine tripped and smashed his camera gear.

## EXTRADITE

Assistant U.S. Attorney John Wing told newsmen after the arraignment that the government is looking into procedures required to extradite Vesco.



*EPI Telephoto*

**JOHN MITCHELL LEFT COURTHOUSE  
He was pursued by newsmen**

"We want him and we really haven't gotten to the bottom of that problem yet," said Wing, who added that the government does not know Vesco's exact whereabouts.

The four defendants were cited in a 16-count indictment filed May 10 of conspiracy to obstruct justice and conspiracy to influence

an SEC investigation of Vesco's alleged looting of \$224 million from mutual funds controlled by his International Overseas Services Ltd. In addition Mitchell and Stans were accused of six counts of perjury each in their testimony before the federal grand jury that indicted them.

*United Press*