

Leonard Hall Tells Of Casey Meeting

By Stephen Isaacs

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NEW YORK, March 19—Former Republican National Chairman Leonard W. Hall testified here today that an associate of Robert L. Vesco asked him to set up a meeting with William J. Casey, then head of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The associate, Howard Cerny, is listed as an unindicted co-conspirator in the trial of John N. Mitchell and Maurice H. Stans, which was in its 21st day today.

At the time, the SEC was investigating Vesco and his companies. Mitchell and Stans are accused of intervening in that investigation in exchange for a secret \$200,000 cash contribution to the 1972 Nixon campaign, which they headed after leaving their Cabinet positions.

Testimony today brought out the fact that Cerny did, indeed, meet with Casey in September, 1972, but the circumstances of the meeting were not amplified.

Casey was a partner in Hall's New York law firm before becoming SEC chairman, and, as Hall said today, "we have [had] . . . since 1946, not only a business relationship but a close social, family relationship. . . ."

Hall represented Nassau County, New York, for seven terms in Congress and was chairman of the Republican National Committee from 1953 to 1957.

Today he blamed his spotty recollection of events concerned with the Vesco request to his advancing age—he is now 73—and often could not recall testimony that obviously had been rehearsed beforehand with the prosecutors.

Hall has not forgotten his bountiful sense of humor, however, and he had the courtroom—including the usually dour presiding judge, Lee P. Gagliardi—laughing on a number of occasions.

Hall said that lawyer Cerny first came to him in April, 1971, to get him to set up a meeting with Casey and that Hall finally did ask Casey to



LEONARD W. HALL
... former GOP chairman

meet on Vesco's problems two or three times later in the year.

Each time, he said, Casey would say, "Len, no."

Testimony also brought out that at their first visits, Wall brought up with Cerny a foundation he headed that was trying to raise \$100,000 to build an alcove for President Theodore Roosevelt's papers at Harvard University.

Cerny, he said, was a director of the Hayden Foundation, provided him with information on how to apply for a grant and, eventually, \$25,000 was contributed by the Hayden Foundation for his pet project.

On cross-examination, Hall insisted that as far as he was concerned, there was no connection between his requests for a meeting with Casey for Cerny and the foundation's bequest for his foundation.

Peter E. Fleming Jr., Mitchell's lawyer, asked, "Did Mr. Cerny ever ask you to fix the case in Vesco's favor?"

"Well, if he had," replied Hall, "that would have been a short conference. He would have been out of the office."

Hall also delivered a brief lecture on the virtue of being able to make contacts:

"... You can't be a congressman for 14 years and an assemblyman for seven years without doing this sort of

thing, and I would say, Mr. Fleming, that contacting people is the biggest part—the biggest area—I think of a congressman's work in Washington, and I hope it never changes because it gives us a chance to keep up communication with the people."

Also today, prosecutor John R. Wing told the judge, in trying to get testimony admitted into evidence from a representative of the General Accounting Office, that "there will be evidence to the effect that Mr. Stans had something to do with preventing 'depositions by Vesco associates' from being filed publicly . . ."

This afternoon, two secretaries who worked for Vesco testified about the \$200,000 that Vesco sent to Washington.

In the testimony of Shirley Bailey, Vesco's confidential secretary, it came out that Vesco was in effect a fugitive from justice (which he is), which prompted Walter J. Bonner, Stans' lawyer, to move for a mistrial as he has many times so far.

Judge Gagliardi denied the request. But, as he did so, he questioned the prosecutors as to Mrs. Bailey's testimony and whether they ought to charge her with perjury.

Mrs. Bailey testified today that Laurence B. Richardson Jr., a Vesco associate, had told her that he believed Vesco to be guilty of the charges the SEC brought against him on Nov. 27, 1973.

Fleming brought out that she had given an exactly opposite affidavit in the SEC case earlier.

Mrs. Bailey, a nervous witness who appeared to be on the verge of tears, said she still is paid by Vesco. She said that when Richardson returned from delivering the \$200,000 to Stans, he said, "Well, I delivered the package. I hope it does the trick."

Mrs. Bailey said she was the person who delivered a package addressed to F. Donald Nixon, the President's brother, a package that eventually ended up with Mitchell, who gave it back to another Vesco associate, Harry L. Sears.