

Ex-Drug Agents Won't Talk

Silence in Vesco Probe

Washington

Three former federal narcotics agents refused yesterday to answer questions before a Senate subcommittee investigating their alleged

role in the debugging of the home and office of fugitive financier Robert Vesco.

The three men were confronted by the testimony of Thomas P. Richardson, a Los Angeles stock broker and close Vesco friend, who said he paid them \$3000 to search Vesco's premises for suspected listening devices in June, 1972.

Richardson told the Permanent Investigations Subcommittee, chaired by Senator Henry Jackson (Dem-Wash.) that the three were federal drug agents at the time of the Vesco search.

Richardson said he did nothing illegal in obtaining their services. He said he did it as a "favor" to Vesco — who was alarmed at leaks of information from his company — and that Vesco reimbursed him for the cost in gambling chips sometime later when they met in a gaming casino.

Jackson's subcommittee is probing charges that a multibillion-dollar heroin investigation was shelved when Vesco's name surfaced.

John L. Kelly, former assistant regional director of the then-Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs in Los Angeles, and former drug agents Robert P. Saunders and Sergio Borquez claimed their Fifth Amendment provisions against self-incrimination when questioned by Jackson.

Both Saunders and Borquez have testified in private to subcommittee investigators, but Kelly has declined to do even that much.

All three said they had testified about the matter recently to a federal grand

jury in Los Angeles that is investigating the Vesco debugging.

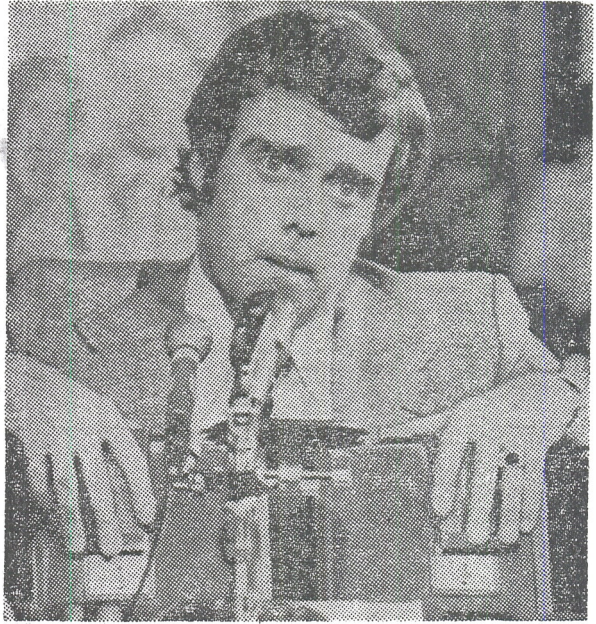
Richardson said he first met Kelly in January, 1972, at a party given by singer Eddie Fisher.

He said Kelly agreed to help in searching Vesco's premises and arranged to have Saunders and Borquez conduct the search in Vesco's New York City office and his home in suburban New Jersey.

Richardson said he also had Kelly and Borquez search his own home for bugging devices as early as last January.

Kelly, now a private investigator, retired from the government in June, 1973, after 22 years' service.

Vesco has been a fugitive in both the Bahamas and Costa Rica since he was in-

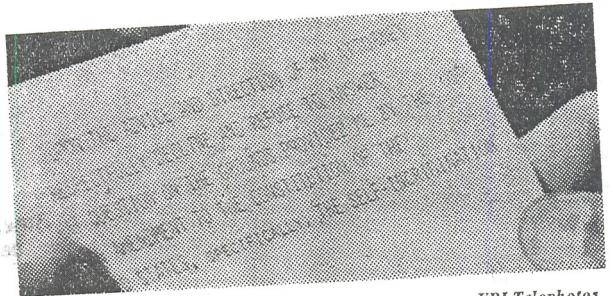


AP Wirephoto

L.A. STOCKBROKER THOMAS RICHARDSON
He said he hired the three agents

dicted in May, 1973, on change Commission investigation of his stock dealings. charges of obstructing justice in a Securities and Exchange Commission investigation of his stock dealings.

United Press



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Sergio Borquez (left) repeatedly took Fifth Amendment when questioned about Vesco. To make sure he replied correctly, Borquez read from a prepared card (below).