



By Larry Morris—The Washington Post

John B. Connally, his wife, and lawyer, Edward Bennett Williams, leave court.

WXPost AUG 10 1974 Connally Pleads Innocent to Bribery Charges

By William Claiborne
Washington Post Staff Writer
Former Treasury Secretary John B. Connally pleaded innocent yesterday to charges that he accepted a \$10,000 bribe for recommending that the Nixon administration increase milk price supports.

In a confident, booming voice that has become an emblem of his 27 years in politics, Connally startled a crowded courtroom in U.S. District Court by declaring, "If there is any doubt, I plead not guilty to all counts."

His statement came after one of the government prosecutors at the arraignment asked whether Connally had yet entered a plea, which he had earlier in response to a pro forma question by Chief Judge George L. Hart Jr.

Connally was indicted by a federal grand jury July 29 on charges of taking illegal payoffs, conspiracy to obstruct justice, and perjury.

A protege of President Johnson who served as Democratic governor of Texas for three terms before joining the Nixon Cabinet last year, Connally is accused of taking two \$5,000 cash payments from the nation's big-

gest dairy cooperative, Associated Milk Producers, Inc., in return for his help in getting President Nixon to raise federal milk price supports in March, 1971.

His principal accuser is a friend of 25 years, former AMPI lawyer Jake Jacobsen, who pleaded guilty Wednesday to one count of bribery in exchange for a promise to testify in the milk case trial.

Federal prosecutors agreed to limit their case against Jacobsen to one count, and they have said they will drop their pursuit of an unrelated case in Abilene, Tex., in which Jacobsen is accused of misapplying \$125,000 in a Texas savings and loan association's funds in 1970.

Other prosecution witnesses will include former AMPI general manager Harold S. Nelson, who has pleaded guilty to bribery, and Bob A. Lilly, Nelson's assistant, who received immunity after admitting he gave Jacobsen the \$10,000.

Hart yesterday granted a request by Connally's lawyer also released Connally with- out bail, and granted the

former Treasury head unlimited travel rights.

Williams also asked that no trial date be set because, he said, his pretrial motions will "go directly to that subject," which some observers interpreted as meaning that Williams will seek

Meskill Named To Be U.S. Judge

United Press International
Connecticut Gov. Thomas J. Meskill was nominated to the second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals by President Nixon Thursday only hours before Mr. Nixon announced he would resign.

The nomination now goes to the Senate Judiciary Committee for hearings.

Meskill was originally proposed for the seat, which has been vacant for three years, by fellow Republican Sen. Lowell P. Weicker of Connecticut. It was delayed for some time, apparently because of Mr. Nixon's dislike for Weicker, one of his strongest critics on the Senate Watergate Committee.

lengthy delays and perhaps even a change of venue because of the publicity surrounding impeachment proceedings and President Nixon's resignation. Williams declined to discuss his strategy after the arraignment.

Hart indicated he planned to be on vacation until Oct. 22, meaning that the start of Connally's trial is more than two months away at least.

Connally arrived in the courtroom 20 minutes early in a seemingly ebullient mood, although his plain, conservative blue suit, white shirt and dark tie were in contrast to the natty attire associated with his years in public life.

He appeared relaxed and in good humor, and while awaiting the start of proceedings, he chatted amiably with news artists who were sketching him.

Afterwards, he walked briskly out of the courtroom hand-in-hand with his wife, Idanell, and refused to answer questions of reporters.

Connally, who served as Treasury Secretary for 18 months and returned briefly as an adviser to the President, is the fourth Nixon Cabinet member to be indicted or to plead guilty to a criminal offense.