

# Trial of Connally Starts; Jury to Be Seated Today

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WASHINGTON, April 1—The trial of John B. Connally on bribery charges opened in United States District Court here today, and all but the final phase of jury selection was completed.

Mr. Connally stood impassively as Frank M. Tuerkheimer, an associate Watergate special prosecutor, identified him to 75 prospective jurors as the defendant against charges that in 1971, when he was Secretary of the Treasury, he accepted \$10,000 from a dairy industry official.

After a day-long examination of the prospective jurors in the closed chambers of Chief Judge George L. Hart Jr., Mr. Tuerkheimer and Edward Bennett Williams, the chief defense attorney, narrowed the jury pool to 44. Judge Hart said that the selection of 12 jurors and six alternates would be completed tomorrow morning.

## Starts on Muted Note

The trial, only the second in history involving bribery accusations against a former Cabinet official, began on a muted note.

Few people sought admittance to the blond-paneled, Spartan courtroom on Constitution Avenue, not far from the White House, where Government prosecutors hope to prove that Mr. Connally twice in 1971 accepted \$5,000 gratuities from Jake Jacobsen, then a lawyer for the nation's largest dairy producers' cooperative.

Mr. Jacobsen, the chief prosecution witness, pleaded guilty last July to a charge that he gave the money to Mr. Connally on behalf of the Associated Milk Producers, Inc. He told Government investigators that Mr. Connally accepted the illegal gratuities in his Treasury Department office on May 14 and Sept. 24, 1971.

Mr. Connally, once considered a leading contender for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1976, has persistently denied the Government's allegation that he took the money in exchange for his efforts to persuade President Nixon to increase the level of Federal milk price supports four years ago.

## Wife and Son Attend

"This is a criminal case," Mr. Tuerkheimer told the jury pool moments before Mr. Connally, a former Governor of Texas and once a protege of President Johnson, rose and stood at the defense table.

Mr. Connally's wife, Idabell, and their son, John B. Connally 3d, sat a few feet away on a wooden bench with four close friends from Texas and Thomas G. Corcoran, a former New Deal official.

The jury selection began in open court. Mr. Tuerkheimer and then Mr. Williams, at times assisted by Judge Hart, asked the panel members question designed to determine whether

they had any prejudice in the case.

None of the prospective jurors said in open court that they were acquainted with 11 persons Mr. Tuerkheimer said that he might call as prosecution witnesses or nine persons Mr. Williams said that he might call for the defense.

The list of possible prosecution witnesses — including a Government bank examiner, a bank officer and an official of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing — suggested that the prosecutors would attempt to trace the path of \$10,000 in cash that Mr. Jacobsen reportedly said Mr. Connally provided in 1973 in an effort to cover up the alleged bribe.

Possible witnesses named by Mr. Williams included Charles McNelis, an attorney for Mr. Jacobsen, and two former officials of the milk producers' cooperative who have told investigators they gave the \$10,000 to Mr. Jacobsen for Mr. Connally.

The defense will presumably attempt to show that the former dairy officials, Harold S. Nelson and Bob A. Lilly, had no personal knowledge that the money was ever forwarded to Mr. Connally.

## Asked About Publications

The jury pool, in reply to a set of questions from Mr. Williams, exhibited unfamiliarity with a number of publications. Only two members of the pool stood in each case to indicate that they were regular readers of The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times or Time magazine. None indicated that they had subscribed to The National Review, a conservative journal, or The New Republic, a liberal publication.

Only three of the 75 prospective jurors were excused following separate conferences at the judge's bench, but 28 others were dismissed for cause as a result of the examinations in chambers.

The jury pool, reflecting the make-up of the population of the District of Columbia, was predominantly black. Most of the prospective jurors were women.

If found guilty of the two counts of accepting illegal gratuities, Mr. Connally would face a possible prison sentence of four years and fines up to \$20,000.

Mr. Connally declined to comment on the trial or its implications for his political future when he entered the Federal courthouse this morning and departed this afternoon.