

# Former Cabinet worker indicted by grand jury

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy was charged Wednesday with seeking and accepting more than \$35,000 in trips, sports tickets and favors from companies that did business with his agency. He was also accused of lying and tampering with witnesses to cover up.

Espy, indicted on 39 counts by a federal grand jury, joins just a handful of Cabinet secretaries ever charged with wrongdoing. The indictment portrays him as an official who persistently sought favors from large companies regulated by his agency.

Espy's Washington attorney, Reid Weingarten, said the special prosecutor in the case had taken "trivial, personal and entirely benign activities and attempted to distort them into criminal acts." Espy himself has consistently denied any wrongdoing. His law office in Jackson, Miss., said he was not available for comment.

The indictment did not contend that Espy had given any of the companies — including such agricultural business giants as Tyson Food Inc. and Sun Diamond Growers of California — favorable treatment in return for the gifts. "A quid pro quo is not required" to prove he violated the law, said independent counsel Donald Smaltz.

But it did charge that Espy, who resigned from the Clinton administration in 1994 after Smaltz began his investigation, "solicited, received and accepted gifts" for himself, his girlfriends and his family from companies that were regulated by the Agriculture Department or regularly did business with it.

The favors included illegal campaign contributions to his brother's failed congressional campaign in Mississippi, the

indictment said.

Espy also "attempted to conceal his actions by lying to a USDA inspector general representative, by lying to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and by lying to the Executive Office of the President," Smaltz said.

Espy was charged with mail and wire fraud, for accepting illegal gratuities and for taking gifts from companies regulated under the Meat Inspection Act.

The indictment charges that Espy directed an aide to solicit National Basketball Association championship playoff tickets from the chairman of Quaker Oats Co. and that he subsequently lied to the FBI about where he got them.

He is also accused of failing to report trips and gifts on the financial disclosure form that top government officials are required to file each year.

The trips included two that he and a friend, Patricia Dempsey, took to a National Football League game in Dallas and to the U.S. Open tennis tournament in New York City. The couple were provided with limousines both times.

The Dallas trip was paid for by a lobbyist for Tyson Foods Inc. Sun Diamond bought tickets to the tennis tournament and paid for a \$2,427 set of luggage for the New York trip, the indictment said.

The counts carry maximum penalties of more than 100 years in prison.

If convicted of witness tampering alone, Espy could be sentenced to as many as 10 years in prison. That count accuses Espy of ordering a department employee to alter a document to conceal that Tyson lobbyist Jack L. Williams paid for the trip to Dallas in 1994 for an NFL playoff game.

Espy is accused of ordering the deletion of references to Tyson

"I'm sure Tyson will have its day in court sometime in the not-too-distant future."

**DONALD SMALTZ**  
independent counsel

chairman Don Tyson, to Dempsey, and to the football game from an itinerary of the Dallas trip that had been requested by the USDA's inspector general.

Tyson has acknowledged that it is a target of the investigation but denies that it committed any crimes.

James Blair, the company's general counsel, said prosecutors would not be able to prove that Espy "took illegal favors from Tyson Foods."

"I don't believe that, because I don't believe it happened," Blair said.

Asked about the company's statement, Smaltz said: "I'm sure Tyson's will have its day in court sometime in the not-too-distant future."

The indictment also charges that Espy concocted pretenses for being in Dallas and other locations by scheduling speaking engagements or meetings with local USDA officials.

Espy was also accused of spending government money for personal benefit by arranging for the Agriculture Department to pay \$6,200 toward the rental of a Jeep Cherokee that the Cabinet secretary kept in Mississippi for personal use. He told the agency the Jeep would serve as his official car in Washington but later requested a limousine and driver.

# Bethlehem blockade removed by Israel

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (AP) — Pushing aside the red-and-white barriers that had blocked traffic for nearly a month, Israel lifted its much-resented blockade of Bethlehem on Wednesday.

The move followed days of violent Palestinian street protests and international criticism — including from the Vatican, which complained that Christian pilgrims were kept from visiting the birthplace of Jesus.

David Bar-Illan, a spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said the closure, imposed after a suicide bombing July 30 in a Jerusalem market, was lifted for security reasons. He gave no further details on why security officials reversed their position.

"Something has changed that made them feel it was safe now to lift the internal closure," he said.

The gesture was expected to help improve the deeply troubled relations between Israel and Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

But Arafat spokesman Nabil Abourdeineh said it "must be followed by many other steps," including the lifting of a general closure that keeps tens of thou-

sands of Palestinian workers out of Israel, and the resumption of tax transfers to the Palestinian Authority.

"Things must be returned to their normal situation in order to return to the negotiating table and the protection of the peace process," he said.

The market bombing, which killed 16 people, was claimed by the Islamic militant group Hamas. Israel reportedly maintained its blockade of Bethlehem for 28 days because it suspected two masterminds of the bombing were hiding in the city.

Bar-Illan said Israel was "seeing very little by way of cooperation" from the Palestinians on security. A resumption of security cooperation between the two sides was supposed to be a prerequisite for Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's expected visit in September and a new U.S. peace initiative.

The blockade of Bethlehem was lifted shortly after 4 p.m. Wednesday. Zainab Jafari, 37, was one of the first to enter Bethlehem from the Jerusalem side.

"They didn't speak to me," she said excitedly, pointing to the Israeli troops who let her pass.

## CORRECTION

A caption in Wednesday's Daily Nebraskan misidentified a member of Fat Tire Bike Messengers. Ryan Korb was misidentified as Chris Van Ooyen.

## Daily Nebraskan

**Editor:** Paula Lavigne  
**Managing Editor:** Julie Sobczyk  
**Associate News Editor:** Rebecca Stone  
**Assistant News Editor:** Jeff Randall  
**Assignment Editor:** Chad Lorenz  
**Opinion Editor:** Jessica Kennedy  
**Sports Editor:** Mike Kluck  
**A&E Editor:** Jim Goodwin  
**Copy Desk Chief:** Nancy Zywiec  
**Photo Director:** Ryan Soderlin  
**Design Director:** Joshua Gillin  
**Art Director:** Aaron Steckelberg  
**Online Editor:** MaryAnn Muggy

Questions? Comments? Ask for the appropriate section editor at (402) 472-2588 or e-mail [dn@unlinfo.unl.edu](mailto:dn@unlinfo.unl.edu).

**General Manager:** Dan Shattil  
**Publications Board Chairwoman:** Melissa Myles, (402) 476-2446  
**Professional Adviser:** Don Walton, (402) 473-7301  
**Advertising Manager:** Nick Partsch, (402) 472-2589  
**Assistant Ad Manager:** Daniel Lam  
**Classified Ad Manager:** Tiffany Clifton

Fax number: (402) 472-1761

World Wide Web: [www.unl.edu/DailyNeb](http://www.unl.edu/DailyNeb)

The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during the summer sessions. The public has access to the Publications Board.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by calling (402) 472-2588.

Subscriptions are \$55 for one year.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, NE.

ALL MATERIAL COPYRIGHT 1997

THE DAILY NEBRASKAN

**SPECIALS • SPECIALS • SPECIALS**

**HOME FOOTBALL GAMES**  
Free Hot Dogs before and after all home Husker football games. (Doors open at 10:30 A.M.)

<p><b>SUNDAY</b> (9-Close) Call it in the air for <b>1/2 OFF</b> your drink order</p> <p><b>MONDAY</b> (9-Close) <b>\$2 Colorado Bulldogs</b> <b>\$1 Busch Light Bottles</b></p> <p><b>TUESDAY</b> (9-Close) <b>\$2 Captain Morgans</b></p>	<p><b>WEDNESDAY</b> (9-Close) <b>\$2 Micro/Import pint draws</b> Guinness • Bass • Harp New Castle • Boulevard Haystack Black</p> <p><b>THURSDAY</b> (7 to 11 P.M.) <b>\$1 Well Drinks</b> Cape Cod • Jolly Rancher • Amoretto Sour • Fuzzy Navel • Screwdriver • Gin &amp; Tonic • More!</p>
---	---

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY**  
**\$1 Ice House bottles (4 to 8 P.M.)**

*Bodega's Alley*  
1418 O Street

**cannondale ON SALE**  
**20% OFF ALL 97'S AT LEAST \$100 off**  
**ALL 98 BICYCLES AT INTRO PRICES**

**BIKE PEDALERS**  
33RD & B (AS IN BIKE)  
2 YRS FREE TUNE-UPS - OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK  
**474-7000**

LINCOLN'S EXCLUSIVE DEALERS: CANNONDALE, DIAMONDBACK, RALEIGH, MARIN, SCOTT, BREEZER, IBIS, LITESPEED, AND SOFTRIDE

**TC** Teacher's College

Students in Teachers College, join us Thursday, August 28 from 4-5 P.M. for refreshments and conversation. Come to the Student Lounge in Henzlik Hall. See you at the Advisor Advantage!