



UPI ARCHIVES

OCT. 14, 1987

World's No. 1 porn distributor in court



Add as a preferred
source on Google



Audio Coming Soon

 Instaread



Bestselling book summaries in 15-minute
text or audio segments. Enjoy Listening!



LAS VEGAS, Nev. -- The man federal authorities say distributes more pornography than anyone else in the world was released on \$200,000 bond and ordered to return later this month to enter a plea to racketeering and obscenity charges.

Flanked by bodyguards, Reuben Sturman appeared before a U.S. magistrate Tuesday on charges of racketeering and interstate transportation of obscene materials, entering the courthouse wearing dark glasses, a cowboy hat and a surgical mask, apparently to foil photographers. He doffed the glasses, mask and hat in court.

Sturman, 63, of Cleveland was indicted last week along with four associates on eight counts. If convicted, Sturman faces 130 years in prison, plus forfeiture of millions of dollars worth of property, said federal prosecutor Ivan Abrams.

Despite arguments by prosecutors that he was a risk to flee the country, the magistrate set a \$200,000 surety bond, of which Sturman was ordered to put up 5 percent in cash. Arraignment and plea were scheduled Oct. 23.

Abrams, a special Justice Department prosecutor from Washington, argued that Sturman should be held without bond because of the lengthy sentence he faces and the fact that he has the means to flee the country. Abrams said Sturman was free on bond on charges in Cleveland and now faces the additional counts in the Las Vegas federal indictment.

Ask UPI

✦✦ Ask UPI...

Defense lawyer Mike Murray told the court that many constitutional issues were involved and predicted Sturman would be acquitted.

'Sturman is a fighter, not a flee-er,' Murray said.

A report issued by the attorney general's office has called Sturman the No. 1 distributor of pornography in the world.

The indictment said Sturman and the four associates operated a smut ring out of the Talk of the Town bookstore in Las Vegas and that Sturman had been in the business for almost 15 years.

Three employees of the adult bookstore were released without bond last week. Suspect Ralph Levine, 56, owner of the store, surrendered Friday and was freed on \$200,000 surety bond pending Oct. 23 court appearances.

Federal prosecutors, in seeking no bail or a high bail for Sturman, presented an affidavit that said investigators discovered Sturman had a passport in another name and had recently visited a dozen foreign countries that have no extradition treaties with the United States on tax and pornography violations.

The indictment said Sturman owns homes in Ohio and California, a fleet of Cadillacs and Mercedes-Benz automobiles, a chain of pornography stores and has extensive cash and real estate holdings.