

Mandel Warned To Return Items From Mansion

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Former Maryland governor Marvin Mandel yesterday was given two weeks to return \$35,000 worth of public furnishings that state officials charge he improperly removed from the executive mansion when he left office.

Gov. Harry Hughes announced that if the 87 pieces of furniture and other objects were not returned by Dec. 20, the state attorney general would file a lawsuit against Mandel and his wife, Jeanne, seeking return of the property.

The state also is seeking reimbursement of \$3,800 in cash used before Mandel left the mansion in 1977 following his political corruption conviction. Sources said this cash was taken from the executive's household account to buy various items, some of which were taken by the Mandels when they left.

Asst. Attorney General Charles Monk, who headed the six-month in-

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Investigation into the missing objects, met with the Mandels yesterday at their suburban Annapolis consulting office for more than two hours, going over a long list of furniture, china, decorative pieces and other goods that were removed from the mansion.

"This whole thing is so ridiculous . . ." a pipe-puffing, fatigued Mandel said at his consulting firm office last night. "Being asked to prove ownership of our own property."

The former governor said at least 30 percent of the public property investigators previously told him was missing actually were wedding gifts sent to him and his second wife, Jeanne, when they were married in 1974.

"The silliest thing about this," he added. "is I don't have anywhere near \$35,000 worth of furnishings in my entire house."

Jeanne Mandel said that the allegations "knocked me off my seat when I heard them. As someone said this morning, 'They've got a whipping boy here.'"

Mandel said he had offered to give the state attorney general's office a list of people who sent him wedding gifts, if the state would promise never to reveal their names. But, he claimed, the state said his request was not feasible.

"I suspect many of these people would be so damn mad that they'll volunteer to testify in court if they have to," he said.

The former governor said he had scanned the list of 87 items presented to him yesterday by the state, but did not want to comment on them specifically until he studies it.

"I have no desire not to cooperate, and I have no desire to go to court

again, but, by god, I'm not going to sit back and be maligned," Mandel said.

He said that aside from a few pieces of government furniture that he already has offered to pay for he knew specifically of only three items he took from the mansion—a set of barbells, a wardrobe and a movie projector stored in his garage.

"We told the state to come by and pick them up," said Mandel. "But they never have. I don't know what they're disputing."

Mandel noted that he still has more than 200 boxes of uncrated goods moved from the mansion. There is a possibility, he said, that there are "a few small items" in the boxes belonging to the state. He said that twice during the six-month investigation he allowed investigators to photograph items in his home, but that both times the pictures did not come out. He said he then got a professional photographer to take the pictures and sent them on to investigators.

The source familiar with the list of missing items said it would "read like a Christmas catalogue from Jordan Marsh,"—a well-known Boston department store—and includes household items ranging from crystal to antiques.

Shortly after Mandel moved out of the mansion in October 1977, the state conducted an inventory and found nine pieces of furniture missing. The list included two leather wing chairs, a \$1,000 chesterfield sofa, an oak roll-top desk and a tortoise lamp, bought with the understanding Mandel would take them with him when he left and then repay the state, according to the head of the state General Services Department.