

JUSTICE UNIT SAID GUILTY OF 'PAYOFF'

AP 5-4-64
Accusation Is Made by
Judge at Hearing

By BILL NEIKIRK

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP)—
A federal district judge Friday
accused the U.S. Justice De-
partment of a "payoff" because
of its refusal to prosecute crim-
inal charges against a local
union leader who gave key tes-
timony at the trial of Team-
sters Union President James R.
Hoffa.

U.S. Dist. Judge E. Gordon
West rejected a Justice De-
partment motion to dismiss
an embezzlement indictment
against Edward Grady Partin,
business agent for Team-
sters Local No. 5 of Baton
Rouge.

Michael Epstein, an attorney
for the Justice Department, de-
nied the judge's accusation that
a "deal" had been made with
Partin to dismiss charges
against him if he turned state's
evidence against Hoffa.

He said only that the "inter-
ests of justice would best be
served" if the indictment were
not pressed.

INTERESTS OF JUSTICE

"Are the interests of justice
to be served by the granting of
lifetime immunity to this de-
fendant because of the wishes
of some previous attorney gen-
eral?" West asked.

"No, sir," Epstein replied.
"No such immunity is in exist-
ence today."

The reference was to former
Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy,
now a U.S. senator and a candi-
date for president.

Epstein declined to go into
detail on the Justice Depart-
ment's reasons for asking for
a dismissal of the indictment.
The motion did say that cer-
tain key records were miss-
ing, one government witness
had died, and a number of
government witnesses were
biased against Partin.

West said he was not con-
vinced the reasons were true.

Epstein noted that Partin was
"one of the principal witnesses
in an important federal case."

He acknowledged when ques-
tioned by West that it was the
jury tampering trial of Hoffa
in Tennessee in 1964. Hoffa was

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JUDGE CHARGES 'PAYOFF'

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convicted and is now in federal
prison.

'NO BARGAIN'

Epstein said that "no bar-
gain" was made with Partin
that if he testified against
Hoffa, the Justice Department
would not press the embezzle-
ment charges against the local
union leader. The charges in-
volve embezzlement of union
funds.

But West noted that the em-
bezzlement case had been sit-
ting for several years with-
out a Justice Department
move. He asked Epstein if
he were aware or suspected
that a deal had been made
to drop the charges if Partin
testified against Hoffa.

Epstein replied that he wasn't
familiar with the case and had
no reason to suspect it.

The judge had ordered the
Justice Department into court
to show cause why it wanted
to dismiss the motion.

West noted Epstein's state-
ment that Partin was an im-
portant government witness
and had assisted the Justice
Department. The judge de-
clared:

"If that isn't a payoff, I don't
know what it is."

After the motion was denied,
West said he believed it was

a "mockery of justice" that the
indictment had not been pressed.

"There are questions in this
case this court and the public
have a right to know," the
judge said.

TARGET OF DRIVE

Partin is a key figure in the
Baton Rouge labor-management
field and his union has been
the target of a drive by a state
anti-rackets commission.

The Labor-Management Com-
mission of Inquiry was estab-
lished amid a massive indus-
trial construction shutdown last
summer to ferret out criminal
violations in the labor-manage-
ment field.

Only a day before, the Jus-
tice Department confirmed it
was investigating the Labor-
Management Commisison to
determine if it is playing any
role in an effort to free Hoffa.

In a related development, a
petition filed in federal court
by a Teamsters Union member
charged that officials of the
commission have "singled out
for murder" six union members.

The petition alleged that the
Teamsters "could be shot and
killed on sight at the slightest
provocation and any employe
killing any one of these union
members would be granted com-
plete immunity by the governor
of the State of Louisiana."

The suit identified the Team-
sters union members allegedly
"singled out for murder" as J.
D. Arnold, Wade McClanahan,
Terry George, Jerry Sylvester,
Hugh Marionneaux and Lloyd
Kitcher.