

Dufala says he is 'being crucified' in Rockefeller assassination trial

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CAMDEN, N.J. (AP) — Robert F. Dufala testified Monday that he is "being crucified" by the government in being tried on charges he threatened to assassinate then-Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller with a cyanide bullet last year.

Under cross examination on the ninth day of his federal court trial here, Dufala said that he didn't take notes of meetings with an undercover Secret Service agent because, "I assumed that

later on the government would be helping me, but now I'm being crucified."

"You're being questioned," replied Asst. U.S. Atty. Thomas McKay.

The government charges Dufala, 35, a Williamstown daycare school owner, threatened to kill Rockefeller after he was defeated in the June 8 Republican primary for the 2nd congressional district seat. The government says the attempt was threatened for the period July 2-4.

McKay's cross examination failed to shake Dufala's basic story that he was trying to uncover a plot he thought was being planned by undercover Secret Service agent Michael Maddaloni. Dufala said he was afraid that if he pulled out of the plot, the agent would kill him and his family.

Dufala claims that he was playing detective in an attempt to learn who was behind three cryptic letters that he said invited him to join a John Birch Society plot of political assassinations.

McKay repeatedly asked Dufala why he never reported the agent's alleged plot to authorities.

"Were you ever going to tell anybody that this man was going to assassinate the vice president of the United States? Or were you going to wait until the 4th?" McKay asked.

Dufala replied that he never got a chance to report the undercover agent until the Secret Service came to question him on June 21.

He testified that when Secret Service agent Richard Wagner came to his summer home in Avalon to arrest him June 24, Dufala told him, "Agent Wagner, I think this is one great mixup, if who I was speaking to was an agent."

Dufala said that when he was questioned at the Avalon police station he told a Secret Service representative that, "The whole thing was a mistake, that this thing was blown all out of proportion."

"I told him that someone ought to do some homework on me and they would see I wasn't capable of doing this. And he said this would be done," he said.

Later in the day, a man who was present in Dufala's home on June 11 when the defendant allegedly made the threat against Rockefeller said he was very surprised when Dufala said, "OK. We're taking Rockefeller out, all right, on the 2nd, 3rd or 4th."

George Heaps, an unemployed handyman from Gloucester City and a former Dufala campaign aide, said, "I thought it was a big joke, you know, and I looked around and no one was laughing."

Heaps said he never heard Dufala make a statement like that before.