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DREW PEARSON

Judges Slap RFK For Partin Payoff

WHEN BOBBY KENNEDY reached into a Louisiana prison to fish out Edward G. Partin as a star witness against Jimmy Hoffa, it created headlines around the nation. Recent developments have not caught up with the headlines.

The other day U.S. District Judge E. Gordon West accused Bobby Kennedy of "a payoff for testimony in the Hoffa case."

He excoriated the Justice Department for moving to dismiss charges against Partin.

"It is making a mockery of justice," the judge announced from the bench.

Judge West was indignant because shortly after Partin was used as the star witness against Hoffa, the Justice Department slowed up in prosecution of its own star witness. Then last month it filed a motion to dismiss the 26-count indictment against Partin in which he was charged with 13 counts of embezzlement of union funds and 13 counts of making false entries in Teamsters' Union books.

The Justice Department told the judge that "no bargain was made," but obviously the judge did not believe it.

"Are the interests of justice to be served by the granting of lifetime immunity to this defendant because of the wishes of some previous attorney general?" Judge West demanded, referring to Bobby Kennedy.

The judge's torrid words supported the vigorous dissent written by Chief Justice Earl Warren, who also denounced the former attorney general's tactic of reaching into a prison to use as his star witness a man beholden to the Justice Department. The chief justice made it clear that under these circumstances the testimony of the witness should not be believed.



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