



SEN. RUSSELL LONG
... made phone calls



FRED VINSON JR.
... ex-Justice official

Post 9/10/69
**Long Warned Vinson
In Hoffa Case Probe**

By Laurence Stern
Washington Post Staff Writer

Sen. Russell B. Long (D-La.) warned two Justice Department officials that they risked indictment in Louisiana if they persisted in a federal investigation of efforts to upset the conviction of Teamster president James R. Hoffa.

Confidential memoranda on file with the Justice Department, it was learned, assert that Long directed the warnings at former Assistant Attorney General Fred M. Vinson Jr., who then headed the Criminal Division, and Michael Epstein, a staff attorney.

In a telephone interview yesterday Long said: "If something of that sort was said, it was not said in seriousness."

According to the memoranda, Long warned both men in phone calls from Capitol Hill and at a joint meeting in his Senate office that they would be indicted by a state grand jury in New Orleans if they continued a 1967 government investigation in the Hoffa case.

The federal inquiry centered on Teamster-inspired efforts to generate new testimony that there had been illegal wire-

tapping by the government in Hoffa's 1964 Chattanooga trial. The target of these efforts was key anti-Hoffa witness E. Grady Partin, boss of breakaway Teamster Local 5 in Baton Rouge.

Long's warnings were delivered in mid-July, 1967—two days after his former staff aide and high school chum, James H. (Buddy) Gill, was subpoenaed by Epstein to appear before a federal grand jury in New Orleans.

Long in the telephone interview, also charged that Justice Department officials—including Vinson and Epstein—had exerted constant pressure to prevent Partin from being indicted for crimes he committed subsequent to the Hoffa conviction. "They have repeatedly used every power Washington can use "to keep Partin from being prosecuted, Long said.

Neither Vinson nor Epstein would comment on the case. Records of the intercession show, however, that after the subpoena to Gill the flamboyant Louisiana senator called Epstein twice, Vinson once and then confronted the two men in his office—all on the same day.

See LONG, A7, Col. 2

LONG, From Al

Then, in August of 1968, Long issued another warning to Vinson when FBI men began interviewing top Louisiana state officials about another suspected effort to punish Partin for his anti-Hoffa testimony.

No indictments resulted from either federal investigation. But the approach to Partin by Gill and New Orleans Criminal Court Judge Malcolm V. O'Hara in March, 1967, resulted in suit by the state to remove O'Hara from the bench for gross misconduct.

Partin was indicted last June 21 on five counts of violating antitrust and antiracketeering laws. Also indicted in the case was a Baton Rouge concrete manufacturer, Ted Dunham jr.

Work Stoppages

The nub of the case against them was that Partin created work stoppages in an effort to pressure contractors into using ready-mix concrete from Dunham's company. Influential industrial and business spokesmen in Baton Rouge have been urging the Justice Department since the Nixon administration took office to investigate charges of labor racketeering and featherbedding in the industrial city.

Partin was first indicted by a federal grand jury in 1962 on charges of embezzling about \$1,300 in union funds. The case has never gone to trial though federal Judge E. Gordon West, a former law partner of Long's, refused to go along last year with a Justice Department recommendation that the old charge be dropped.

Epstein requested the dismissal of the seven-year-old indictments on the ground that Partin had been a valuable government witness.

The Baton Rouge Teamster began his role as an informer for the Justice Department after his 1962 indictment when Robert F. Kennedy was Attorney General.

His first tip concerned an alleged plan to assassinate Kennedy but the case was never developed.

1962 Hoffa Trail

Partin then learned of plans

by Hoffa to bribe jurors during a 1962 trial at Nashville, Tenn., in which the former Teamster president and associates were accused of taking kickbacks from "dummy" trucking companies.

The FBI checked out Partin's leads and the result was the first conviction of Hoffa, along with six other Teamster functionaries, at Chattanooga



EDWARD GRADY PARTIN
... anti-Hoffa witness

—where the trial was transferred—in 1964.

It was Partin's testimony in the Chattanooga trial that clinched the Hoffa jury-tampering conviction. And it was the same testimony that caused Gill, Long's former aide, and Judge O'Hara to

meet privately with Partin at Gill's office in Baton Rouge during early March of 1967.

'Messenger Boy'

The purpose of that meeting was to get Partin to sign an affidavit asserting that the government had used illegal wiretapping in the Chattanooga jury-tampering case. The affidavit was presented to Partin in the privacy of Gill's office by Judge O'Hara, who later testified that he was merely acting as a "messenger boy" for New Orleans contractor Zachary A. Strate, who was convicted in Chicago in 1964 with Hoffa and Teamster associates of mail fraud and conspiracy.

O'Hara has admitted under oath that he was an intimate friend of Strate and that the contractor paid his travel and hotel bills on joint trips they took to Las Vegas for a holiday, to Washington where Strate conferred with top Teamster officials at the union's headquarters here, and to other places.

At the time of these travels O'Hara was a New Orleans Criminal District Court Judge.

Partin Refused to Sign

Gill has given sworn testimony that he agreed, at Judge O'Hara's request, to invite Partin to his office for the meeting at which the wiretapping affidavit would be presented to the Teamster leader for his signature.

O'Hara and Gill said they did not read the affidavit, which was drafted by Harold Brown, a Teamster attorney in the Chattanooga case. Partin refused to sign. At the time the Teamsters had announced a \$200,000 reward for anyone who could produce evidence that the government used illegal wiretapping in Hoffa's conviction.

The first public disclosure of the approach to Partin by Judge O'Hara, Gill and Strate was in a Chicago hearing in August, 1967, before Federal Judge Richard B. Austin.