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CHICAGO (AP)-A NEW ORLEANS CONTRACTOR HAS TESTIFIED THAT A FORMER JUSTICE DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATOR, WALTER SHERIDAN, OFFERED HIM EVIDENCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT ILLEGALLY OBTAINED WIRETAP EVIDENCE TO CONVICT JAILED PRESIDENT JAMES R. HOFFA OF THE TEAMSTERS UNION.

THE CONTRACTOR, ZACHARY A. "RED" STRATE, TESTIFIED IN U.S. DISTRICT COURT FRIDAY THAT THE EVIDENCE WAS OFFERED IN EXCHANGE FOR HELP IN DISCREDITING NEW ORLEANS' DISTRICT ATTORNEY, JIM GARRISON.

SHERIDAN WAS SCHEDULED TO TESTIFY TODAY, BEFORE JUDGE RICHARD B. AUSTIN, IN A SUPREME COURT-ORDERED HEARING TO DETERMINE IF ILLEGAL EVIDENCE TAINTED THE 1964 FRAUD-CONSPIRACY TRIAL OF HOFFA AND SIX OTHERS, INCLUDING STRATE.

THE TRIAL ENDED IN A FIVE-YEAR SENTENCE AND A \$20,000 FINE FOR HOFFA, WHO IS NOW SERVING EIGHT YEARS IN PRISON ON A SEPARATE JURY TAMPERING CONVICTION. THE FRAUD-CONSPIRACY CONVICTION COULD BE OVERTURNED IF JUDGE AUSTIN DECIDES THAT IT WAS OBTAINED WITH THE AID OF ILLEGAL WIRETAP EVIDENCE.

"WALTER SHERIDAN OFFERED ME EVIDENCE OF GOVERNMENT BUGGING SO I COULD GET A NEW TRIAL AT MY HEARING IN CHICAGO, IN EXCHANGE FOR HELPING TO DISCREDIT DIST. ATTY. JIM GARRISON," STRATE TESTIFIED FRIDAY.

"I WONDER THAT YOU HAVE THE NERVE TO MEET WITH ME," STRATE QUOTED SHERIDAN AS SAYING DURING A JUNE 12 MEETING AT A NEW ORLEANS HOTEL, ALLEGEDLY ARRANGED BY JUDGE MALCOLM O'HARA. "NONE OF HOFFA'S ACQUAINTANCES NEVER WILL TALK TO ME. WHY DON'T YOU LET ME HELP YOU IN CHICAGO?"

STRATE SAID NOTHING CAME OF THE MEETING, THOUGH.

"I GATHER SHERIDAN WAS WORKING FOR (THEN-ATTY. GEN.) ROBERT KENNEDY," STRATE ANSWERED A QUESTION FROM HOFFA'S ATTORNEY, MAURICE J. WALSH. "HE SAID HE WAS INTERESTED IN STOPPING THE PROBE OF THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION IN NEW ORLEANS."

SHERIDAN WAS A JUSTICE DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATOR WHEN KENNEDY WAS ATTORNEY GENERAL UNDER HIS BROTHER, THE LATE PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY. KENNEDY IS NOW DEMOCRATIC SENATOR FROM NEW YORK AND SHERIDAN IS AN INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER FOR THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING CO.

HERBERT J. MILLER, ATTORNEY FOR SHERIDAN, LATER BRANDED STRATE'S TESTIMONY "AN ABSOLUTE FALSEHOOD."

DONALD PAGE MOORE, CHIEF GOVERNMENT PROSECUTOR FOR THE HEARING, RESTED HIS CASE FRIDAY WITH THE WORDS, "THE GOVERNMENT HAS PROVEN OVERWHELMINGLY THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD INDEPENDENT SOURCES FOR ANY RELEVANT INFORMATION OBTAINED BY TRESPASS (EAVESDROPPING)."

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