

Government Finishes Case Against Edward Grady Partin

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HOUSTON (AP).— The government rested its case today after calling two FBI agents as witnesses in the obstruction of justice trial of Edward Grady Partin, Baton Rouge Teamster union leader.

Partin, 41, is accused of threatening the life of Wade McClanahan, a former assistant who was a witness against Partin in an extortion case.

The alleged threat occurred in a Baton Rouge jail Jan. 17, 1970.

RICHARD ALVIN Baker, 27, a Baton Rouge tugboat dockhand, testified Thursday he made untrue statements to a New Orleans grand jury and to FBI agents.

He admitted he told the grand jury he overheard Partin threaten McClanahan but Thursday, under questioning by government attorneys, he said he heard no such threat.

The final government witnesses, FBI agents Earl Peterson of New Orleans and J. H. Thomasson of Pittsburgh, Pa., testified no promises nor threats were made when they took statements from Baker. Peterson said Baker was very cooperative and relaxed when he obtained a statement Tuesday night.

U.S. District Court Judge Herbert H. Christenberry of New Orleans placed Baker on the stand after granting him immunity for anything except perjury during his testimony.

BAKER REJECTED all 17 pages of a statement given FBI agents in Houston Oct. 30 and many parts of his Feb. 20, 1970, federal grand jury statement.

To most questions by U.S. Atty. Gerald J. Gallinghouse of New Orleans, Baker said he "couldn't remember."

At one point he said he was "harassed" by the FBI into making a statement and that the grand jury statement was made because Gallinghouse threatened to "give me more prison time."

When asked by Gallinghouse why he made a statement to the FBI that he was now denying, Baker would only reply, "I was just making a statement."

At another point in the testimony, Christenberry asked Baker why he would sign a statement if it was not a true statement. Baker did not reply.

BAKER SAID HE "made up a lot of stuff" in the earlier statements but was "telling the truth" on the stand Thursday.

Baker remains under arrest as a material witness, ordered by Christenberry.

Dick DeGuerin, a Houston attorney representing Baker, said his client wanted immunity and wanted the authorization to be made by the Justice Department in Washington.

Proceedings were delayed while this was obtained.

WHEN PROCEEDINGS resumed and DeGuerin was advised immunity had been granted, the lawyer asked for time to consult with his client.

Christenberry showed obvious impatience but granted the lawyer's request.

"You are a young lawyer and I am an old judge," the white-haired Christenberry said. "I don't know who got you into this case but you're trying to disrupt it."

Chief defense lawyer James Neal of Nashville, Tenn., told the judge his staff "certainly was no part of any attempt to disrupt this trial."

McClanahan testified Wednesday that Partin came to the jail and threatened him.

McCLANAHAN said Partin told him, "If you testify against me you will never live to get to the court house."

Partin was found guilty in a March trial in Atlanta, Ga., on three counts alleging anti-trust violations and one count charging extortion.

The Atlanta trial followed a deadlocked trial in Billings, Mont., and a series of change of venue motions. A federal judge in Billings, who retained jurisdiction, declared a mistrial on the extortion count and entered a judgment of acquittal on the anti-trust counts.

The obstruction of justice trial was moved here from New Orleans on a change of venue.