

Attorney Delayed Partin Won't Testify at O'Hara Probe

By DAVID SNYDER

Baton Rouge Teamster boss Edward Grady Partin said today he would not answer questions before a Louisiana Supreme Court commission looking into alleged wrongdoings by Criminal District Judge Malcolm V. O'Hara until he could be represented by his attorney.

Partin showed up at the hearing this morning with four friends, but without an attorney.

When the commission hearing broke for lunch, Partin, who was the principal witness in the prosecution of Teamster boss James A. Hoffa, still had not testified. Partin's testimony was instrumental in getting Hoffa convicted of jury tampering.

PARTIN SAID HE was to have been represented by an attorney from Washington, D. C., but the man could not make it because of sickness in his family.

Asked if he wasn't afraid he would run into trouble for not answering questions, Partin said:

"If you see me walking out of there with handcuffs on, you'll know..."

"I DON'T THINK I should answer questions anywhere without an attorney," said Partin. "I don't intend to answer questions without an attorney."

The only witness questioned this morning was Judge O'Hara himself. It was learned that O'Hara will probably be on the stand in the

closed-door hearing for some time before anyone else is called.

The procedure is for the state to question the witness. If there is an objection from the witness' attorney, the commissioner, Michael M. Ir-

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win, then rules on this objection.

O'HARA WAS EXPECTED to testify for most of the day today.

Partin was asked if he was surprised to see Zachary "Red" Strate at the hearing. He said:

"Yes, I was. I understood he was in Florida."

Strate, one of the builders of the Fontainebleau Motel here, was an associate of Hoffa and was subsequently convicted with him on a fraud charge. Hoffa is now in a federal prison in West Virginia serving time on the jury tampering conviction.

Partin also said he was "mildly surprised" to see District Attorney Jim Garrison at the hearing.

PARTIN SAID HE had a "general conversation" with Strate in the witness room about the presidential race, the recent Democratic primary, "nothing specific."

Strate and Partin have been on opposite sides in the Hoffa controversy.

Partin said the witnesses were under orders not to discuss the O'Hara case.

On another matter, Partin said he believes the Labor-Management Commission hearings scheduled to begin shortly in Baton Rouge are "illegal. I think the commission is illegal."

HE SAID THE commission hearings would prove nothing. O'Hara was the first witness to leave the court building af-



—States-Item Photo.
EDWARD GRADY PARTIN
Hearing witness.

er the commission broke for lunch. He walked past newsmen with his two attorneys, stating simply, "Lunch break."

Strate and Garrison made surprise appearances this morning.

Irwin was appointed by the Supreme Court to gather evidence and compile a record.

This record will then be submitted to the high court, where it will become public.

ON MAY 3, the court will hold a trial on the state's suit to remove Judge O'Hara from office.

*Strate has reportedly been living in Miami and was therefore out of the court's jurisdiction. Garrison has never previously figured in the case involving Judge O'Hara.

The hearing today was for the presentation of evidence on a charge that O'Hara improperly tried to obtain evidence to reverse the conviction of Hoffa and Strate.

Strate made only a brief appearance today at the Supreme Court building. He left quickly with a friend afterwards.

When a reporter started to ask him a question, Strate said: "Man, don't even look at me!"

The red-haired witness wore sunglasses and carried a topcoat over one arm. His unidentified friend carried a tartan plaid suitcase.

GARRISON, who arrived at the court building almost at the same time as Strate, said he did not know why he was brought into the case.

Asked if he had been subpoenaed, the DA said "No."

Asked why he was making the appearance, Garrison said:

"I don't know, myself."

When he left the court building, Garrison was asked why he thought he had been called, and answered:

"I wouldn't even want to speculate."

The DA, in apparent good spirits, said he had never met Partin in his life and, "I have nothing to do with the case. This is one imbroglia that I seem to have missed somehow."

One of the first to leave the hearing area was East Baton Rouge DA Sargent Pitcher, who said he did not testify and was on call. Two attorneys, Edward M. Baldwin and Ross Scaccia, a former assistant DA, said they were also on call but did not testify.

THE O'HARA ouster case grew out of a Chicago federal court hearing in which he testified that he had been a "messenger" in an attempt to get Partin to sign an affidavit that illegal wiretapping had been used to convict Hoffa.



—States-Item photos.

EN ROUTE TO THE LOUISIANA SUPREME COURT for a hearing on a move to oust Criminal District Judge Malcolm V. O'Hara are, from left, Louisiana Attorney General JACK P. F. GREMILLION, East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney SARGENT PITCHER and JUDGE O'HARA.