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Partin 240

DERVER AP - Louisiana Teamsters Union official Edward Gradv Partin, whose testimony was a key factor in the jury-tempering conviction of former union president James R. Hoffa, denied Saturday that he ever said he would try to help Hoffa win parole from prison.

Partin, whose federal conspiracy trial in Butte, Mont., ended in a mistrial Thursday, was quoted in news reports after the trial as saying, "I've informed my attorneys and the prosecution that I'll go to Washington Aug. 20 and testify in favor of Hoffa. He was wronged and things should be made right." Reached at a hotel here, Partin said Saturday, "I never made that statement."

The union official, business agent of Local 5 in Baton Rouge, said he would have a statement on his intentions early in the week, after he returned to Baton Rouge.

Partin claimed he was misquoted by Arthur Eagan, a reporter for the Manchester, N.H., Union Leader.

"I heard him say he was going to Washington to testify for Hoffa," newswoman Ellen Miller of Butte radio station KBCW said of Partin. She said the station's news director, Steve Severner, also was present and heard the comment. Severner, however, was out of town Saturday and not available. Eagan was reported traveling back to New Hampshire and also was unavailable for comment.

Miss Miller said Partin made the initial comment to Eagan, who asked the newswoman and Severner to verify it with Partin.

She said Partin then told the three he had informed federal prosecutors that he did intend to go to Hoffa's parole hearing Aug. 20 to testify in behalf of the former union president.

Partin was accused of five counts of conspiracy under the Sherman Antitrust Act. His trial, declared a mistrial when the jury was unable to reach a verdict after 3 1/2 weeks of testimony, was moved to Butte on a change of venue.

The prosecution contended he had attempted to use extortion to gain control of the cement industry in Baton Rouge.

Government attorneys said it has not been decided whether Partin will be tried again. He is free on \$25,000 bond.

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