

NEWSDAY

28 September 1983

# Wilson: This Time, I'll Testify

By John Cummings

New York — Former CIA agent Edwin P. Wilson, answering questions for the first time since his arrest last year, said yesterday that he had been made a "sacrificial lamb" by the U.S. government and wants to take the stand in his own defense in his upcoming conspiracy-to-murder trial.

"I consider myself a patriot, I have never done anything to hurt my country, and I intend to talk freely about everything I know and have done," Wilson said in response to questions put to him through his chief defense attorney, Michael Dowd of Kew Gardens. The defense has obtained from the government some secret documents in order to prepare its case, but Dowd said he doesn't know yet how much the judge will allow Wilson to be questioned about his life and activities during his government service.

Wilson also hinted in his remarks that

there were connections between U.S. intelligence and at least one of two Cuban exile fugitives wanted in connection with the 1976 murder in Washington of former Chilean Defense Minister Orlando Letelier.

The questions were put to Wilson through Dowd and answers were relayed through the attorney because the Justice Department refused to let Wilson be interviewed face-to-face in prison, where he is now serving a 34-year term for illegally selling weapons to Libya. Assistant U.S. Attorney Eugene Kaplan said he barred the interview because he feared that publicity might prejudice potential jurors against Wilson. The former intelligence operative had been the subject of a three-year international manhunt.

Dowd labeled Kaplan's statement as the "height of hypocrisy."

"The Justice Department has been leaking damaging information about Wilson to

the media for three years," Dowd said.

Wilson is scheduled to go on trial Monday in U.S. District Court in Manhattan on attempted murder and conspiracy charges stemming from what the government says was a plot in which he offered \$1.2 million for the murder of a number of people, including two federal prosecutors, his former wife and six witnesses against him in past cases. His 23-year-old son, Erik, is a co-defendant in the case.

Wilson, who has been labeled a "renegade" and a "rogue agent," already has been convicted of illegally shipping firearms to Libya and illegally transporting explosives. He is serving a 34-year term in the federal prison at Otisville, N.Y. He faces a life sentence if convicted on the new charges. He was acquitted last year of charges that he plotted to assassinate a political foe of Libyan strongman Moammar

Khadafy. Wilson did not testify in any of these trials.

"I don't deny I made money," Wilson said, referring to the arms deals, but he claimed that he did not violate any U.S. laws in doing so and that the deals took place in the late 1970s through a Swiss proprietary that Wilson owned when the U.S. and Libya still maintained normal relations.

"But I was also performing intelligence functions for the United States . . . the United States was aware and wanted me to do this . . . I could have not been in this [intelligence] as long as I have and not known how to cover myself," Wilson said. When adverse publicity, generated primarily by former CIA operative Kevin Mulcahy, began to emerge about his links to Khadafy, Wilson said he was "tossed to the wolves and made a sacrificial lamb."

David Lewis, Wilson's co-defense counsel, said Wilson maintained contact with U.S. intelligence through Waldo Dubberstein, a retired intelligence official who was found shot to death last April 29 in his Arlington, Va., apartment in what was described by authorities as a suicide.

Another purported link was through a shadowy Cuban exile named Rafael Quintero, a man who, government sources told *Newsday*, is still employed by U.S. military intelligence. He is one of the people Wilson is accused of plotting to kill and the man reported to have worked with the FBI. Quintero worked with Wilson in the super-secret naval intelligence project known as Task Force 157 until 1976, according to government sources. Quintero might be called as a government witness, but U.S. authorities refuse to give his whereabouts.

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