

SECRET COP CLAIMS U.S. TRIED TO ENTRAP HIM IN DRUG DEAL, PRISON

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Sylvester (Banjo) Chapman, personal super-secret cop for former Detroit Police Chief William Hart, testified Thursday that federal authorities twice tried to trap him in sting operations.

Chapman, called as the final defense witness at Hart's federal corruption trial, said he did not take the bait in either scheme.

Hart's defense rested after calling 18 witnesses, Hart not among them. The prosecution plans to present a rebuttal witness Monday. Jurors are scheduled to hear final arguments a week later and begin deliberation April 28.

Chapman had testified earlier as a prosecution witness against Hart, who is charged with stealing \$2.6 million from the police secret service fund. Hart has told federal investigators a sizeable part of the money went to Chapman for undercover work, but Chapman's earlier testimony did not substantiate the claim.

Thursday's testimony may have been an attempt by defense attorney Thomas Cranmer to show Chapman kept Hart in the dark about his contacts with undercover drug dealers. But Chapman didn't substantiate that.

He told how federal agents twice failed in apparent attempts to ensnare the man Detroit police officials say was unquestionably the city's top undercover cop.

In the first instance, Chapman said an FBI agent posing as a Colombian drug dealer tried to get him to ride shotgun on a money laundering operation. Chapman said he was introduced to the supposed drug dealer by Mayor Coleman Young's niece, Cathy Volsan Curry, who is married to jailed drug lord **Johnny Curry**.

Chapman testified that he met the supposed dealer, introduced as Mike Diaz, at the Airport Radisson Hotel in the fall of 1990. He said he expected to drop off Curry at the airport, but instead she took him to a suite where they had dinner with Diaz.

"Mr. Diaz presented that he would like me to get surveillance . . . to give him protection to a bank in an effort to launder money," Chapman said.

"I pretty much put him off," Chapman said, explaining that he suspected Diaz was "either a federal agent or somebody working for the feds. . . . Something wasn't right. He kept trying to get me to name a price."

Chapman said he chose to string out the scene, rather than confront Diaz, because Curry was in the room.

"If this guy was for real, being from Colombia and all, that's a dangerous situation," he said. "If I make the wrong action, somebody was going to get killed and it might be her."

Chapman said he agreed to keep in contact with Diaz, then notified his superiors, including Hart, about the overture.

In early 1991, the FBI arrested Cathy Volsan Curry's father, Willie Clyde Volsan, and several Detroit area police officers on charges of agreeing to participate in a similar scheme for a man named Diaz.

The officers are awaiting trial in federal court later this year.

Chapman said that later, while he was in prison on federal contempt charges related to the Hart case, he suspected a fellow inmate was wired by the FBI in an effort to get Chapman to reveal information about the police secret service fund. Cranmer read from transcripts of their taped conversations, to confirm the inmate was bugged.

Chapman said he may have discussed his operations with the inmates, but did not name any informants. He said his prison conversations did not contradict his court testimony about the secret service fund.

Also testifying Thursday was defense accountant Eugene Brazeal, who said Hart could have saved enough money during a life of frugal living to explain his lavish spending in recent years.

Brazeal said Hart and his wife, Laura, were able to save \$263,231 in 33 years. The largest portion was \$128,700 that Hart saved out of his salary, a figure Brazeal said was based on regular savings averaged out at \$150 every two weeks for 33 years.

Caption: Photo

S: Sylvester Chapman ***

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