

TESTIMONY IN CHAMBERS DRUG TRIAL BRANDED AS LIES

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The case against the alleged **Chambers Brothers** drug ring is built on lies from paid informants and false testimony from police and federal agents, defense attorneys said Wednesday in the final arguments of a six-week trial.

U.S. Attorney Roy Hayes has characterized the case as a "tale of two cities," Detroit, and Mariana, Ark., the Chambers' hometown where investigators said many young drug house workers were recruited.

But much of the government testimony came from "the City of Oz," said Timothy Murphy, lawyer for defendant Eric Wilkins.

Wilkins is among nine defendants -- including Larry, Billy Joe, Otis and Willie Chambers -- who allegedly ran one of the largest drug rings in Detroit history, specializing in crack cocaine during the mid-1980s.

Anthony Chambers, lawyer for Larry Chambers but no relation to him, said government witnesses were lured to "a special discount house . . . where like a K mart you get a blue light special" of money or immunity for co-operating.

"I'm not asking you to say yes to drugs," he told the jury. "I'm asking you to say no to this type of prosecution."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Larry Bunting, however, told the jury that payments and immunity deals were not unusual in major drug cases.

"Is it wrong for the police to pay a man to go into that kind of situation unarmed and unprotected?" he said. "Sometimes the government has to give immunity to people in order that they testify."

"The government didn't take an advertisement in the Free Press or News that said 'Wanted: witnesses to testify in Chambers trial.' "

The jury began deliberating late Wednesday afternoon.

Shortly after final arguments, presiding U.S. District Judge Richard Suhrheinrich found Willie Chambers, who had forgone a jury in favor of a bench trial, guilty of conspiracy to possess drugs with intent to distribute, and guilty of evading \$22,000 in taxes.

Meanwhile a charge of witness intimidation was dropped Wednesday against Charles Roberts, 21, estranged husband of a prosecution witness. He had been jailed for allegedly threatening his wife at gunpoint to discourage her from testifying. Federal prosecutors would not comment on why the case was dropped.

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