

State

Denies protecting his lover

Mercenary testifies on coup

United Press International  
NEW ORLEANS — The government's star witness against two Americans accused of bankrolling a bizarre plot to overthrow a Caribbean island government denies testifying to protect his homosexual lover.

Defense lawyers claimed Tuesday that Michael Perdue, a self-styled soldier of fortune, was strong-armed into making a case against the two businessmen.

Attorney G. Brockett Irwin said chief prosecutor Lindsay Larson threatened to drag Perdue's lover, identified as Ron Cox of Houston, into the case unless Perdue testified effectively.

"You and Mr. Cox lived together as man and wife for 11 years," Irwin told Perdue. "It is this relationship and this passion that impels you to try to protect him from prosecution."

Perdue admitted his relationship with Cox after blurting out, "I object to that question" but denied he was lying to protect anyone.

Lawyers for L.E. Matthews, an electrical contractor from Florence, Miss., and James C. White, a businessman from Lakeland,

La., worked to destroy Perdue's credibility and produced documents to show he took money from White as part of an antiques deal rather than a coup.

Perdue, who sold antiques with Cox in Houston, said he could not remember signing the delivery orders or the receipts for payment.

U.S. District Judge Jack M. Gordon dismissed jurors until today after the documents were introduced and ordered Perdue to submit to a handwriting analysis. He also ordered Perdue to notify prosecutors if he wanted to change his testimony.

Defense attorneys hammered at inconsistencies in Perdue's descriptions of the plot against Dominica. They also tried to show prosecutors threatened Perdue with extradition to Dominica if he did not cooperate.

Perdue said he was pushed into traveling to Dominica next week to testify against deposed Prime Minister Patrick John. He said he would face conspiracy charges there if he did not go voluntarily. "They said five years but I know it would be death," Perdue said. "I know that once I got down there

in their custody, they would kill me."

White and Matthews are accused of putting up more than \$57,000 for the coup attempt against Prime Minister Mary Eugenia Charles. Perdue and nine other mercenaries were arrested April 27 as they prepared to embark on the two-week, 2,000 mile voyage to Dominica.

Perdue also described a meeting with Memphis attorney J.W. Kirkpatrick, who was found dead in his car on a rural Arkansas road after the plot was uncovered. The death was ruled a suicide.

Perdue who turned govern-

ment witness after pleading guilty, said he and Kirkpatrick decided at that meeting to assault Dominica instead of the Caribbean island of Grenada.

"We originally started talking about Grenada but we changed to Dominica because the situation was so primed," Perdue said. He said Kirkpatrick contributed \$10,000 to the attempt.

Perdue testified he had talked members of a black religious cult out of staging a bloodbath during the planned coup. He said members of the marijuana-smoking Rastafarian sect wanted to use his revolution as an excuse to murder Charles.

Judge orders pay to master

United Press International  
HOUSTON — The federal judge who ordered sweeping reforms of state prisons has ordered the Texas Department of Corrections to pay the special master an additional \$36,000 for expenses incurred.

Vincent M. Nathan, 43, and his staff had already been paid almost \$200,000, officials said Tuesday. The latest payment is due by Oct. 14, according to U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice's order.

Texas Attorney General Mark White said the special master's operation "is costing more than it should be." He said he will appeal to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of

Appeals concerning the special master position, which was created by Justice in April to oversee the sweeping reforms.

In his most recent expense report filed with the U.S. District Clerk's office, Nathan listed payroll expenses of \$20,670 for employees during a six-week period ending in mid-August. Nathan said he spent 104 hours, at \$95 an hour, on the prison case.

Nathan has hired Michigan consultant Seth Hirshorn to assess the possibility of using computerized data retrieval and analysis systems to measure the extent to which the TDC was following orders to reform the prison system with 30,000 inmates.

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