

Wilson jury seating 'slow'

United Press International
HOUSTON — Just seating a jury for the explosives smuggling trial of former CIA agent Edwin Wilson is taking "longer than usual," and the judge says the proceedings will probably not be completed before Thursday.

Defense lawyers, prosecutors and U.S. District Judge Ross Sterling on Tuesday started individually questioning 59 potential jurors individually and secretly behind closed doors. Lawyers refused to disclose answers to questions were being asked.

At midday, Sterling sent more than two thirds of the candidates home and told them to return to court in stages for questioning.

"This is taking considerable time, much longer than usual," Sterling said. "We're trying to get a jury comprised of people who will be completely fair and impartial, who are willing and able to decide the case on the facts. That's why we're taking our time to talk to you one at a time, out of the presence of the others."

Sterling said the individual questioning of the first 20 prospective jurors would be finished Friday, the second group of 10 would be questioned in the morning session today Wednesday and the third group in the afternoon session.

Sterling ordered all 59 potential jurors to return to the courtroom at 9:30 a.m. Thursday for jury selection. Court officials said one of the original 60 candidates was dismissed due to inability to fill out a jury form.

Wilson, 54, a former CIA

agent, is charged with exporting 20 tons of militarily controlled plastic explosives from Houston to Libyan terrorists in 1977.

If convicted, Wilson faces a maximum possible sentence of 17 years in prison and a \$145,000 fine. The explosives were disguised as oilfield drilling fluid, packed in barrels and covered with real drilling fluids.

Two other men originally were charged with Wilson in the conspiracy case, but Monday Sterling granted a defense request to try the three men separately.

Defense lawyer Marian Rosen declined on Tuesday to discuss news reports claiming Wilson arranged for his son, Eric, to deliver a \$10,000 down payment and a hit list to what proved to be an undercover FBI agent.

"All I know is what I've heard and read in the media," Mrs. Rosen said. "I don't know where they got that. The whole thing is ridiculous. I just am not free to talk about this at this time."

Security was tight for what was expected to be a week-long trial once testimony starts. Armed U.S. marshals sat inside and outside the courtroom. They required all participants and observers to walk through a metal detector upon entry into the courtroom.

Wilson was convicted in Alexandria, Va., in November of smuggling arms to Libya. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison and fined \$200,000. He also faces two more trials in Washington on charges he conspired to murder a Libyan dissident and allegedly made another illegal arms shipment.

Justice warned not to cooperate

United Press International
AUSTIN — Saying the "honor of the Senate is at stake," Democratic officials are warning Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court if he doesn't agree to a retirement date so that Gov. Mark White can appoint his successor.

A 69-year-old former associate justice and popular Democrat, Pope was tagged for the top job by outgoing Gov. Bill Clements despite the warnings of 14 state senators who urged Clements not to fill the vacancy, but to leave the appointment to White.

The vacancy developed after the unexpected retirement of former Chief Justice Joe Greenhill.

But Clements ignored the senators' requests and appointed Pope to the seat. Some senators have said they are reluctant to reject his appointment because of his reputation as a fine jurist and loyal Democrat.

But other senators also say Pope should agree in advance to retire at a "future date" and let White appoint his successor.

"The honor of the Senate is at stake here," Sen. Chet Brooks, D-Pasadena, said. "Nobody is asking him to get out of the way quickly. We just want him to make a commitment to retire at some point so that vacancy is filled by the new administration."

Brooks said the Senate "is bending over backwards" to accommodate Pope and would confirm his appointment almost immediately if he pledged to retire during White's tenure.

"Fourteen senators signed a letter telling Gov. Bill Clements we don't want any lame-duck appointments here," Brooks said. "Mr. Pope knew that when he accepted the appointment."

Pope has been reluctant to cooperate with the Senate's retirement plans, saying the chief justice of the court should not have to make deals with the Senate.

Hearings on Pope's appointment were scheduled for this week but were delayed until early February at Brooks' request.

White has refused to comment on Pope's situation, saying he would prefer the matter were handled in the Senate.

Dallas ozone level endangers funding

United Press International
DALLAS — The head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says Dallas will be penalized for failing to meet federal clean-air standards for ozone.

Speaking at EPA regional headquarters Tuesday, EPA Director Anne Gorsuch said the city faces a possible loss of federal highway construction funds, air pollution control funds and an on major industrial growth. Sanctions against the city will be proposed next week and probably will take effect by late summer, she said.

Dallas is among 100 cities and counties nationwide that have not complied with sections of the Clean Air Act. All may be punished for their failure to comply with the federal law.

Gorsuch, who has battled environmentalists and Democratic lawmakers for two years, said the EPA opposes the use of sanctions to force compliance by cities and counties.

"Let me go clearly on the record, as I have for the last 20 months: We have continuously urged Congress to revise the law," she said. "Sanctions imposed by the mere occurrence of

a date that was picked out five years before are to me an anathema. I think they are arbitrary. I think they are counterproductive environmentally. I think they are disruptive economically."

In particular, she opposed the withholding of air pollution control funds to cities.

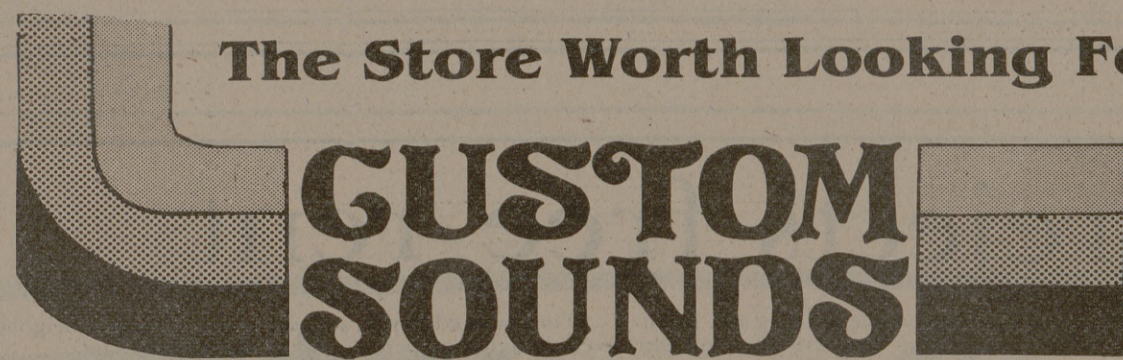
"These are funds that come to the jurisdiction from the federal government for the sole purpose of cleaning up the air the law directs us to improve," she said. "That's the original cutting off your nose to spite your face."

Ozone is a toxic, colorless gas that is produced by the reaction of sunlight with hydrocarbons, which are emitted by vehicles and industrial plants. Excessive levels cause headaches, coughing, shortness of breath and other respiratory problems.

The EPA set air quality standards in 1971 for ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulates. The deadline for meeting the standards was Dec. 31, 1982.

Dallas recorded excess ozone levels 10 times last year. The law allows one violation annually.

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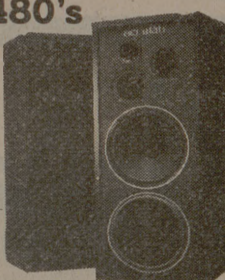
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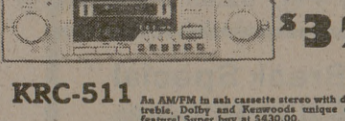
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