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CIA agent jailed with false testimony

HOUSTON (AP) — A former CIA officer jailed since 1983 for illegal arms smuggling has filed an appeal accusing federal prosecutors and the Justice Department of knowingly using false testimony to convict him.

Edwin P. Wilson's claims are supported by hundreds of secret government memos obtained by a defense attorney and the Associated Press before embarrassed officials requested the information be sealed from public view once again.

"There is not a single allegation I cannot support with the government's documents, so this is not your standard government-conspiracy whining," David Adler, Wilson's court-appointed attorney and himself a former CIA officer, said.

Adler said the government writings detail lengthy efforts to hide the use of false testimony and prosecutors' failure to release information that would have aided Wilson's defense during a 1983 Houston trial on charges

of selling tons of high explosives to Libya.

A four-volume appeal filed Sept. 8 includes more than 800 pages of exhibits that show gov-

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— David Adler
Wilson's attorney

ernment lawyers knew a crucial affidavit by CIA Executive Director Charles Briggs, then the agency's No. 3 official, was false the night before it was presented in court.

Documents also show prosecutors nearly eight months discussing whether to close that fact to the court and Wilson.

The evidence was enough to prompt a usual courtroom admission earlier in Justice Department attorney Arlene...

"We have a lot of documents that think show that there was a clear pattern in the affidavit's accuracy and that the involved were well aware of that," he told U.S. District Judge Lynn Huggins to a court transcript.

The secret documents, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act through court discovery, were sealed on Sept. 23. The AP obtained them after a court order was signed.

The Justice Department has until now refused to respond to the appeal filing because of its rules. If Wilson's conviction is overturned, he could be retried.

Controversy over Pickle Congress disputes honoring retired senator

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress is honoring retired Texas Congressman J.J. "Jake" Pickle — but a dispute has soured the tribute.

Texas Republican Sen. Phil Gramm and Pickle's successor, Rep. Lloyd Doggett, D-Austin, have engaged in the congressional version of hair-pulling over what was intended as an entirely uncontroversial bill naming Austin's federal building after Pickle.

The House gave final approval yesterday to legislation the Senate had endorsed in June honoring Pickle's three decades of congressional service, sending the bill to President Clinton's desk.

But Doggett — a Democrat who, like Gramm, has earned a reputation for partisan attacks — took to the House floor to make clear that he beat his longtime rival to the punch in introducing the legislation.

In his floor speech, Doggett accused Gramm of "arrogance" in substituting his own Senate bill for

Doggett-sponsored legislation that passed the House in May.

The measure would have been dispatched to the president far sooner had the Senate considered the earlier-passed House bill, rather than taking up a Gramm-drafted version that would require House approval anew, he charged.

"It is certainly not 'Profiles in Courage,'" Doggett said. "I call it 'Profiles in Pettiness.'"

Shortly after the speech, during which the House's presiding officer reminded Doggett that House members may not criticize senators by name, Gramm rushed out a statement accusing Doggett of a "temper tantrum."

"My sole interest is in honoring Jake," Gramm said. "Congressman Doggett's interest apparently is in assuring that his own name is well publicized."

He added that House Democratic leaders thwarted earlier consideration of his legislation.

Lab tests link suspect scene of clerk nabbing

SHENANDOAH, Texas (AP) — Police are investigating whether a man already in jail for a suspected aggravated kidnapping is responsible for snatching an 18-year-old clerk from a motel north of Houston.

Lab tests link William Ray Mathews, also wanted by Colorado authorities, to Wanda May Pitts' disappearance in January from the Lodge Motel along Interstate 45, police said.

Shenandoah police Chief John Chancellor said Mathews, 38, became a suspect because of his alleged involvement in another kidnapping, for which he was arrested May 14.

"Because of the similarities of the arrest he's in jail for now and [Pitts' disappearance], we went to lab tests," Chancellor said.

He would not discuss the prior kidnapping, and a spokesperson

for the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office did not return calls from the Associated Press.

The tests link Mathews to the lobby of the Montgomery County motel, Chancellor said. He would say whether the tests found evidence, but he said the results were "real strong."

Pitts last was seen in the lobby of the motel, now a Holiday Inn, shortly after 10 p.m. on Jan. 17., talking to a man about the price of a room.

Two employees and a guest who was checking out with Pitts and the man, but whose name was not given, returned to the motel less than 30 minutes later, police said.

Police said Williams matched the description of the man Pitts was talking with — a white man, 30 years old, about 6 feet 3 inches tall and weighing about 175 pounds.

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