

COURT EMPLOYEES TESTIFY AGAINST FORMER MARSHAL

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A variety of court papers should have let Vincent "Pete" Wahby know that a man working at Wahby's Gun Shop was supposed to be in prison, several witnesses testified Friday.

That testimony came from several employees of the Missouri Court of Appeals at St. Louis as well as other judicial officials in a criminal case against Wahby, a former marshal of the appeals court.

Wahby, 31, is accused of using his position to extort money and favors from two felons, Larry D. Sutton and Marsha C. Fredrickson. Wahby went on trial this week before Judge Robert H. Dierker Jr. in St. Louis Circuit Court. The trial is scheduled to continue Monday.

Sutton has accused Wahby of keeping him out of prison for 20 months in exchange for Sutton's work - without pay - at Wahby's Gun Shop, 2711 Clifton Avenue in south St. Louis.

In testimony Wednesday, Sutton said that Wahby "buried" papers that would have resulted in Sutton being sent to prison.

Anthony P. Gonzalez, assistant circuit attorney, used a chart to show jurors that at least one key document in Sutton's case had gone to Wahby but was missing from the file where it belonged. Gonzalez contrasted Sutton's case with that of another male felon whose paperwork was generated at the same time and who went to prison on schedule.

Wahby's attorney, Dennis J. Myers, contended that Wahby had believed that Sutton's case was being appealed to the Missouri Supreme Court and was being treated differently from the other man's case.

Deirdre O. Ahr, clerk of the appeals court, testified that Wahby had made about \$20,000 a year in his job as marshal.

In a brief hearing with no jurors in the courtroom, a lawyer, Michael Donatt, took the witness stand to invoke his Fifth Amendment right against incriminating himself. Donatt refused to answer questions in the case.

Donatt apparently was called to testify instead of Robert Hampe, a lawyer who was a friend of Wahby. Donatt worked for Hampe, who represented Sutton and Fredrickson in some of their court dealings. Sutton and Fredrickson said Wahby had directed them to Hampe.

Myers, Wahby's attorney at the trial, has accused Hampe of being the culprit behind the charges that were brought against Wahby. Hampe told Wahby that he was working on Sutton's case before the Missouri Supreme Court, Myers said .

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