

PLOT TO KILL JUDGE, 1 OTHER ALLEGED MAN AWAITED SENTENCING

PAZNIOKAS, MARK; Courant Staff Writer . Hartford Courant ; Hartford, Conn. [Hartford, Conn]07 Oct 1999: A3.

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ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

Jeffrey L. St. Jean, 40, plotted to kill Alvin W. Thompson, the U.S. district judge assigned to sentence St. Jean for his illegal possession of a small arsenal, according to a grand jury indictment.

The indictment charges St. Jean with two counts: soliciting the murder of a federal officer and soliciting murder for hire. It alleges that he asked an unnamed person on June 19, presumably during a prison phone call or visit, to kill Thompson and a second person.

No motive was disclosed for the plot to kill Thompson or the second person. Prosecutors would say only that the second intended victim had no connection to Thompson or St. Jean's pending weapons case.

FULL TEXT

A Griswold man awaiting sentencing in a weapons case tried to arrange from prison the murders of a federal judge in Hartford and another, unidentified person, the U.S. attorney's office said Wednesday.

Jeffrey L. St. Jean, 40, plotted to kill Alvin W. Thompson, the U.S. district judge assigned to sentence St. Jean for his illegal possession of a small arsenal, according to a grand jury indictment.

The indictment charges St. Jean with two counts: soliciting the murder of a federal officer and soliciting murder for hire. It alleges that he asked an unnamed person on June 19, presumably during a prison phone call or visit, to kill Thompson and a second person.

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Thompson formally withdrew from St. Jean's case moments after St. Jean was arraigned on the new charges before U.S. Magistrate Judge Donna F. Martinez.

Thompson, 46, who was appointed to the bench in 1994 by President Clinton, was said to have calmly taken the news of the threat against him. Reached Wednesday night, he said only, "It would be inappropriate to comment." He is a popular, approachable figure at the federal courthouse in Hartford, who is often seen taking his law clerks to lunch. On the bench, many defense lawyers consider him one of the tougher sentencing judges in the district. Thompson, a graduate of Princeton University and Yale Law School, made history five years ago as the first black lawyer appointed to the federal bench in Connecticut.

St. Jean rather innocently came to the attention of authorities almost exactly a year ago. A state trooper stopped St. Jean one afternoon to cite him for failing to heed a stop sign while driving his motorcycle.

When the trooper noticed that St. Jean was carrying two bags stuffed with freshly cut marijuana, St. Jean said he had additional marijuana at his home in the Jewett City section of Griswold, police said last year.

A search uncovered more than marijuana. In hidden compartments, police found three machine guns, 13,000 rounds of ammunition, German military smoke grenades, a deactivated rocket launcher, stun guns and bulletproof vests.

St. Jean, who has been locked up since his arrest Oct. 2, 1998, pleaded guilty in May to federal weapons charges. He also faces state drug charges.

He initially was jailed at the Corrigan Correctional Center in Uncasville, though it was unclear Wednesday from which location he allegedly plotted the killings.

His federal public defender, Thomas G. Dennis, could not be reached for comment.

DETAILS

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