Juror tells about bribery try

(UPI — Oscar Sislen, a former juror in the political corruption trial of Gov. Marvin Mandel, said he was "stunned" when he realized that he had been asked to "put a monkey wrench" in the trial.

According to a transcript released Tuesday of a meeting between Sislen and U.S. District Court Judge John H. Pratt, Sislen said he was approached by a member of his family and offered $10,000 if he would hold out for an innocent verdict.

Pratt declared the trial of Mandel and four codefendants a mistrial Tuesday because jurors heard news reports about the alleged jury tampering.

Sislen said in the Dec. 3 meeting with Pratt that he was offered the money by Walter Weikers, 67, of Pikesville, the stepfather of Sislen's daughter-in-law.

Weikers, a Baltimore city furniture salesman, was charged with obstruction of justice. He paid a $100,000 bond this week and was freed.

Sislen was dismissed from the jury last week. But Pratt announced it was for health reasons.

The transcripts show Sislen, a Bethesda chauffeur, told Pratt he was contacted by Weikers Nov. 23 when the two met at a highway intersection.

"What would you say if someone gave you, offered you $10,000 to throw the trial, or put a monkey wrench in the trial Sislen quoted Weikers as saying.

"At the time of the approach, I was under the impression that he wanted me to take something back to my son and daughter-in law back to Washington, (because) it is easier for me to take it back." Sislen said. "And I called him and agreed to meet him on the highway."

Sislen said after he was offered the $10,000 he was momentarily speechless "I mean that sort of stunned me there because I didn't expect it from him. I mean I was expecting something else," he said.

"I was sort of hesitant for a few minutes, and I asked him, what for, I mean why, why this?" Sislen said. "He said he was contacted by someone to give me $10,000 to throw the trial."

After the meeting, "It started to penetrate into my mind as to what he actually had offered," Sislen told Pratt.

"The more I came closer to Washington, the more I realized that I'm in deep trouble, because if I didn't come to court and tell you I was wrong, and if I kept quiet I was still wrong. So I went home and just went into the house, and my wife sensed that something was wrong."

Sislen said he did not want to tell his wife about the offer, but she wormed it out of me a little at a time, and we let it go at that."

Appreciation dinner postponed

An appreciation dinner sponsored by Boy Scout Troop and Pack 233, honoring Mrs. Dorothy F. Bennett has been postponed due to the death of Mrs. Bennett's father.

The dinner was scheduled to be held today (Friday) 6 p.m. at the downtown Holiday Inn. The date will be rescheduled after the last rites of Jefferson Foster.

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