

FBI frameups at issue in DeLorean case

by Jeffrey Steinberg

If the cocaine conspiracy case against John Z. DeLorean goes into court this October, it may be sectors of the U.S. and British governments that have to respond to charges of criminal conspiracy, and not the defendant.

DeLorean, former General Motors executive and founder of the Belfast, Northern Ireland DeLorean Motor Company, was arrested in Los Angeles in the fall of 1982 and charged with involvement in a multimillion dollar cocaine conspiracy.

The government case against DeLorean centers around claims that in desperation to save DeLorean Motor Company, the defendant had sought out a former neighbor, James Timothy Hoffman, and stepped into the middle of a southern California cocaine ring in pursuit of a "quick solution" to his dilemma. At the time of his alleged involvement, DeLorean was facing the bankruptcy of DMC, after the British government backed out of a promised several-million-dollar loan to his auto company.

The government's star witness Hoffman was working for the Federal Witness Protection Program (FWPP), a notorious stable of government-subsidized murderers, drug traffickers and swindlers who have provided the Federal Bureau of Investigation with videotaped evidence for hundreds of fraudulent prosecutions over the past five years, and given the FBI powers comparable to the Nazi Gestapo and Soviet KGB.

Government case in trouble?

But now, evidence is being presented before Federal Judge Tagasugi in Los Angeles that could not only destroy the government's case, but expose massive government corruption and abuse of prosecution.

In late September, Mr. DeLorean's attorney Howard Weitzman presented Judge Tagasugi with the results of a polygraph test administered by Dr. David Raskin of the University of Utah, a specialist in lie detection who has been a frequent consultant to the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Secret Service. The tests demonstrated that John DeLorean was telling the truth when he asserted that he had been approached by Hoffman, not the other way around, and that Hoffman had initially proposed a legitimate loan through

an accredited California chartered bank. If Judge Tagasugi accepts the polygraph findings as evidence, this would raise the question of grand jury perjury by Hoffman.

Moreover, telephone company records released to the defense revealed that at least 17 telephone discussions between Hoffman and DeLorean, including one discussion in which DeLorean contends that Hoffman threatened the lives of his family if DeLorean attempted to back out of the cocaine transaction, had not been tape recorded. Under oath before the grand jury, Hoffman swore that every telephone call between the two after July 11, 1982, was recorded.

In a striking parallel to the Abscam legal travesties of last year, records were submitted before Judge Tagasugi showing that from Jan. 1, 1982 through the present, informant Hoffman had been paid more than \$110,000 tax-free by the government through FWPP. In sworn grand jury testimony, according to sources, Hoffman claimed to have received only "expense money."

Hoffman's impressive record of apparent grand jury perjury might be enough alone to short-circuit the DeLorean prosecution—Hoffman's poor performance as a federal witness in a previous federal sting in Maryland resulted in a not-guilty ruling. But far more serious charges of government misconduct are pending as the case proceeds to final pre-trial motions.

The court battle as of early October pivoted on government documents from 52 agencies all dealing with John DeLorean. DeLorean's attorney successfully argued for the release of at least the relevant portions of these documents before Judge Tagasugi last week. The decision was reversed by the federal court of appeals, and it is likely to go all the way to the Supreme Court before the question is resolved.

DeLorean's attorneys assert that the entire action against the auto magnate, whose company brought jobs to thousands of families in the conflict-torn West Belfast, was orchestrated at a government-to-government level between Washington and London. The prosecution has denied this out of hand and gone to great lengths to prevent release of any government documents to the defense.

If the DeLorean allegations are borne out by the release of government cables (the government has acknowledged cable traffic between the U.S. and British governments on the case), the FBI and Drug Enforcement Administration may be exposed as conducting illegal frameup operations on behalf of overseas interests, perhaps overseas private financial interests.

Sources close to the case believe that if the Supreme Court orders the release of the cables between the State Department, the British government, and the U.S. Department of Justice, these charges will be confirmed. One source identified former Deputy Attorney General Rudolph Giuliani as the "point man" for the transatlantic consultations on the DeLorean sting. Giuliani left the Washington, D.C. post earlier this year to assume the post of U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York.