

RAGSDALE SWEARS TO PERJURY PLOT

Burns Agents, Minister Testifies, Paid Him \$200 for Making False Frank Affidavit.

PUT MURDER ON CONLEY

Negro's Talk Distorted Into Confession—His Mind Hazy After Drinking in Thurman's Office.

Special to The New York Times.

ATLANTA, Ga., Jan. 28.—The Rev. C. B. Ragsdale testified today that he signed a false affidavit, in which he swore he overheard the negro, "Jim" Conley, confess to killing Mary Phagan; that after signing this affidavit \$200 was paid to him through Arthur Thurman and C. C. Tedder, and that a voice over the telephone, "like the voice" of Dan S. Lehon, promised him \$10,000 more "if the thing went through." He was a witness at the trial of Lehon, Tedder, and Attorney Thurman on the charge of subornation of perjury in the interest of Leo M. Frank, convicted of the murder of Mary Phagan. Lehon is the Southern manager of the W. J. Burns Detective Agency, by which Tedder and Thurman were employed at times.

When court adjourned this afternoon Ragsdale had finished his direct evidence and was being cross-examined by attorneys for the defense. The cross-examination will be resumed tomorrow.

Ragsdale identified the affidavit he had made, and swore that the contents were false. He had heard two negroes discussing the Frank case. One asked who killed the girl. The other said he had no idea.

Ragsdale had had some business transactions with Thurman, and in Thurman's office, in the Spring of 1914, he told Thurman of this conversation. Thurman told him it could be fixed up to appear as a confession by Conley to another negro. The date would have to be fixed prior to the date Conley was arrested, and Ragsdale would have to swear one of the negroes was Conley. In a few days he saw Thurman again and Tedder and R. L. Barber were present. He was told that they were fixing up the affidavit, and that he would get \$10,000 for signing it. Subsequently, he said, he saw Lehon and had negotiations with him.

Got \$200 for Signing.

On April 23, 1914, he went to the office of Luther Z. Rosser, the lawyer. Mr. Rosser, Lehon, and Barber were present. One of them, he did not remember which, read him the affidavit, which he signed. He continued:

"Barber and I went to Thurman's office. Thurman came in and told us everything was all right and for us to keep quiet. Then he went out. Finally his stenographer told us to come back next morning.

"We went back the next morning and got there before Thurman arrived. Tedder came in, put \$200 in bills on the bookcase, and went out. Presently Thurman came in. He took the money and counted it, gave me half and Barber half, and we started out. Thurman called me back at the door and give me another \$100. He told me this was just the beginning. He told me he had got \$100 and Tedder had got \$100.

"Then Tedder came in. He had a slip of paper in his hand like the slips they use to wrap up packages of money at the bank. It had \$500 stamped on it in red letters. He showed us the slip, and said: 'Ragsdale, you get \$200; Barber gets \$100; Thurman gets \$100; I get \$100; that's all of the \$500.' Then Tedder put the slip on the edge of a cuspidor, struck a match to it, knocked the ashes in the cuspidor and said: 'That's the way to burn up your tracks.'

"I went home and that night when my boys and I were standing on the front porch a man, who said his name was 'Boots' Rogers, rode up on a motor cycle and told the boys to tell their father not to say a word to anybody unless it was a Burns man, and he told them the Burns men all had blue cards, like the one he showed."

Solicitor Dorsey said he proposed to prove that Lehon sent Rogers to Ragsdale's house with the message. Ragsdale then went on:

"That night a man with a deep voice like Lehon's called up on the telephone. He didn't give any name and was very particular to find who I was before he said anything. He said to me: 'Ragsdale, you sit steady in the boat now. We can give bond for any amount and there's \$10,000 waiting for you if this thing goes through.'"

Nervous on Cross-Examination.

Judge Powell, for the defense, took up the cross-examination of Ragsdale, who manifested extreme nervousness and contradicted himself a number of times. He admitted that on April 23, the day he made his original affidavit, his mind was in a whirl and he was practically unconscious of what he did. He said he couldn't remember whom he saw first in Mr. Rosser's office and was not positive who took down his affidavit and had no exact recollection of what he said. He said that when the affidavit was read to him prior to his signing it, he called attention to the true facts set out, but he did not recall having pointed out the untruths.

Judge Powell handed Ragsdale the affidavit he made to Solicitor Dorsey on April 27, in which he repudiated his original affidavit. He declared that everything in this affidavit was absolutely true. Ragsdale denied that he had said that he was "doped" and insisted that all he had said was that his mind was hazy and in a whirl. It is understood that the defense will call members of the Grand Jury which returned the indictment against the defendants in an effort to prove that Ragsdale told the Grand Jurors that he was "doped."

Judge Powell asked Ragsdale to identify an affidavit which he made on Nov. 14, 1914, to Basil Stockbridge, an assistant in Solicitor Dorsey's office, in which he swore that he felt in a doped condition at the time he made his original affidavit. Ragsdale said he had not said that he was doped; that he had said that while he was in Thurman's office he asked for a glass of water, that Thurman directed him to drink out of a large glass, and that later his mind became very hazy.