

Attorney accused of fixing DUIs

Federal case involves
dead Atlanta official

By Bill Rankin
STAFF WRITER

A 44-year-old Atlanta lawyer was indicted Tuesday on federal extortion charges for allegedly fixing DUI tickets in Atlanta Traffic Court.

The indictment alleges that Eddie Castleberry, who ran unsuccessfully for the state Legislature in 1992, took money from clients facing DUI charges and paid former Atlanta Traffic Court Assistant Solicitor Kenneth London, who is now dead, to have the cases dismissed.

Castleberry was charged with one count of extortion under the Hobbs Act, which covers bribery of public officials. He also was charged with four instances of extorting money from clients and paying off London from Feb. 13, 1991, to Jan. 20, 1993.

Federal and state agents have been investigating alleged corruption in Atlanta Traffic Court for years. The probe took a dramatic turn on April 6, 1993, when London, a primary focus of the investigation, was found dead in White County. His death was ruled a suicide.

The FBI found dozens of traffic tickets in his car and briefcase.

Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell, who has been outspoken in his criticism of the Traffic Court, said his office will continue to assist in the investigation.

"This indictment shows progress in restoring the credibility of our traffic court," Campbell said. "This is only the first step in the cleansing process."

Castleberry, who once ran for the House District 67 seat, made a quick court appearance Tuesday. He pleaded not guilty and posted a \$20,000 bond.

Prosecutors hinted of related indictments to come. "This investigation is definitely continuing," U.S. Attorney Kent Alexander said.

Alexander said FBI and GBI agents have found thousands of pending DUI cases with no record of any disposition. Many are several years old.

Alexander urged anyone who has had a ticket fixed or has any information about DUI tickets being fixed at Atlanta Traffic Court to call the FBI at 679-9000.

Staff writer Daryl Fears contributed to this article.

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Tue, Nov 10, 2020