

# Two bondsmen plead guilty to perjury, bribing jail guard

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Halfway through their trial, the owner and chief employee of one of Columbia's biggest bail bonding companies decided Thursday to plead guilty to perjury and bribing a former Richland County Detention Center guard.

Quirk Release Bail Bonding Co. owner Lewis Hall and James "Jim Dandy" Daniels, who secured clients for the firm, pleaded guilty to perjury and "subornation of perjury," a legal

term that means bribing or forcing someone to lie on a witness stand. The two could receive maximum prison terms of 15 years at a sentencing hearing set for this morning.

First Daniels, then Hall decided to plead guilty Thursday afternoon after Judge Anthony Harris ruled as admissible nearly four hours of tape-recordings detailing their scheme to avoid paying \$40,000 in bail bonds on two fugitives.

Charges of perjury and obstruction of justice against a third defen-

dant, bounty hunter James Brayboy, were dropped immediately after Thursday's pleas because of a lack of evidence.

After the announcement that the charges were being dropped against Brayboy, his attorney, Jack Swerling, turned to his client and shook his hand. Brayboy then walked over to his wife, who was in the courtroom, and wept with joy.

Daniels, who suffers from high blood pressure, and had complained during the trial he had missed a

doctor's appointment, pleaded guilty first. He quickly left the courtroom, accompanied by his lawyer, Howard Hammer.

Hall appeared shaken by Daniels' decision to plead, and after an hour's conversation with his attorney, Richard Harpoathian, he also decided to plead.

Hall pleaded under the North Carolina *vs. Alford* legal definition, which means he acknowledged there was enough evidence to convict him, but he was not admitting guilt.

That plea is the same as a guilty plea under South Carolina law, and subjects him to the same sentencing provisions.

Deputy Solicitor Steve Brown said Brayboy likely could have been convicted only by statements made by Daniels and Hall. But under South Carolina law, persons convicted of perjury can no longer swear legal oaths, which would have prevented the two from ever testifying in court again.

Very little testimony was heard

Thursday. Prosecutors and defense attorneys haggled about the technical quality of the tape-recordings and the circumstances under which they were made.

On the tapes — which were never played in court — Daniels and Hall reportedly could be heard discussing with former Detention Center Sgt. Theodore Young a scheme to have Young falsify sign receipts indicating

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# Bondsmen

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two clients of Quick Release had been returned to jail on Jan. 6, 1983.

The two were James Wright, accused of the 1982 murder of a Columbia man, and Wright's girlfriend, Francina Webb, charged with being an accessory.

Wright and Ms. Webb fled to California sometime last year and were recaptured in August. Quick Release was responsible for a \$25,000 bond on Wright, and a \$15,000 bond on Ms. Webb.

In December 1983, Young testified at a bond-forfeiting hearing that he had signed receipts indicating Wright and Ms. Webb had been turned in during his shift at the jail.

Because of that testimony, a circuit judge refused to require payment of the \$40,000 bond. The company will now be required to pay the bond.

Young took the witness stand Wednesday, told of the false receipts and admitted he lied at the 1983 bond hearing. Both Wright and Ms. Webb testified they were never turned in at the jail.

Young also testified that he borrowed \$500 from Hall last year, and later received payments totaling \$700 by Hall, who "promised to take care of me."

Charges of allowing a prisoner to escape were filed and later dropped against Young, who has since been fired from his Detention Center job.

The Richland County Grand Jury will be asked next week to indict him for perjury, 5th Circuit Solicitor James Anders said Thursday.