

Tommy Hill's Courtroom Performance

Written by Keith ID337

Monday, 08 November 2004 04:09 -

Former RAM Squad rapper John "Tommy Hill" Wilson testified in Common Pleas Court yesterday against a father and two sons accused of running such a high-level drug organization that they stockpiled weapons of mass destruction to protect it.

Wilson's testimony against dad Johnnie Bellmon, 61, and sons Harry, 41, and Benjamin, 30, offered firsthand knowledge of alleged drug sales from an admitted participant, as well as jailhouse information on the weapons - and caused quite a few titters and outright guffaws from spectators.

The rapper's hours on the stand provided some of the most entertaining - and educational - courtroom performances from a cooperating witness in recent memory. With wide smiles, amused laughs and witty sarcasm, Wilson, 29, could have been back on stage, performing with RAM Squad.

He spoke directly to the jury with a well-developed sense of sincerity. He spoke directly to defense attorneys with a well-developed sense of debate technique.

Wilson, who has his own state and federal drug cases, agreed to cooperate against the Bellmons, hoping to get his own sentence reduced. A federal investigation into RAM Squad's drug connections led to wiretaps that eventually snared Muslim cleric Shamsud-din Ali and widened into the ongoing Philadelphia corruption investigation.

Wilson said he has known the Bellmon family for 10 to 15 years, sold drugs with them and became closer to Benjamin Bellmon when the two shared a cell at the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility. During those months as "cellies," Wilson testified, Benjamin Bellmon told him all about the weapons he wanted to use to settle a score with a rival drug-gang member who killed another Bellmon brother.

When police raided the Bell-mon's North Philadelphia house in July 2003, they discovered a large quantity of marijuana, drug paraphernalia, four handguns, an ammunition-making machine, an artillery rocket, three grenades and 20,000 rounds of live ammunition.

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The Bellmons, whose trial opened Wednesday, are charged with drug offenses and possessing weapons of mass destruction. The WMD law was passed in Pennsylvania after 9/11 to stiffen penalties for terrorists.

In the process of providing evidence for the prosecution, Wilson educated jurors on how to maneuver through life "in the ghetto," jail and the criminal justice system, according to philly.com.

Here are some of the choicest raps from Tommy Hill:

The Big House

- "Ben [Bellmon] became my cellie... So it's like we old homies, like you brothers. Your bathroom is in the room, you sleep together... It's like a marriage... We break night, talk till the sun come up."
- "I mean, I've done everything from shoplifting to bad checks to selling drugs. I mean, I was surviving."
- "In the federal system, you're not done until your sentence."

The Drug House

- Now, when you bring weed to a crack post, it brings too much traffic... draws a lot of attention, brings a lot of young people, females, wild people playing their stereos."
- When you have a crack strip... that block is normally your turf. So, what Ben did was bring more drugs to somebody else's turf and that began a drug war."

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- Music and drugs go hand-in-hand anyway."

Weapon etiquette

- "Normally... on the street we carrying automatic guns."
- His brother Rich [Bellmon] drinks 40s and smokes weed and he's kind of a wild dude, so you don't want to have grenades around a wild dude."

Miscellaneous

- "God bless the dead."
- Hey, if they [my parents] had raised me, I wouldn't have been over the Bellmon's at 10, 11, 12."
- "I'm from the street. Police is like a no-no. So when you get caught, you lie to the police."
- "When a man says someone in his family died, you don't ask him when did he die, how did he die... that's not cool."