

Hale asks to handle his own defense - Attorney cousin files to withdraw

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Jailed white supremacist Matthew Hale, awaiting sentencing for his conviction for soliciting the murder of a federal judge, has signaled his intent to fire his first cousin as his attorney and take over his own defense.

In a filing he wrote by hand at the Metropolitan Correctional Center, Hale was critical of a legal motion filed on his behalf by Timothy Murphy, who took over as Hale's lawyer after his trial.

"Since the quality of legal documents filed on my behalf may spell the difference between the rest of my life in prison and imminent freedom, it behooves me to take over my own defense now so that all further documents may meet my standards," Hale wrote.

"No one knows my case as well as me."

Hale went on to say that "I alone can win vindication from the charges that I have been wrongly convicted of."

Hale has graduated from law school and passed the Illinois bar examination, but he was denied a law license principally because of his racist views.

In light of Hale's motion to discharge him, Murphy said Thursday that he has filed to withdraw as Hale's attorney.

In an order issued Thursday, James Moody, the federal judge from Hammond who presided over Hale's trial in Chicago, referred Hale's request to take over his own defense to a magistrate judge.

Moody recently postponed Hale's sentencing to Nov. 15.

In April, a racially diverse federal jury convicted Hale of soliciting his security chief to kill U.S. District Judge Joan Lefkow in anger over her order in 2002 to change the name of his group after it lost a trademark-infringement suit. The security chief turned out to be an FBI plant in Hale's church who secretly tape-recorded their conversations.

In another handwritten motion, Hale asked that he be appointed "an attorney-adviser" to help do legal research, contact witnesses and other tasks that Hale can't do easily because he is incarcerated under special administrative measures usually reserved for foreign terrorist suspects.

Hale asked that he be allowed to telephone witnesses, though he consented to the calls being monitored "for any solicitations on my part." But if no solicitations occur, he asked that the conversations "not be communicated to the prosecution in any way."

Hale also asked to be allowed to wear street clothes instead of a prison jumpsuit for court appearances and be provided a typewriter "so that your honor's eyes can be spared from reading penciled briefs and motions."

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