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1982 MOB KILLING

Hitman counts off the kills in trial of former FBI agent

A hit man pointed to ex-FBI agent John Connolly as the man who ID'd a potential informant later slain in South Florida.

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John Martorano, 67 years old and jowly, crossed his hands and described his work, shrugging matter-of-factly.

"Richie started counting money. I went down, got a gun and came down and shot him," Martorano said in court Wednesday, recalling his murder of a snitch named Richard Castucci.

Then, another killing. "Pistol. Carbine. Machine gun. I think some [fake] beads and a car-stealing kit," he said, describing a "murder kit" he was sent before shooting millionaire Roger Wheeler between the eyes.

Yet another victim: "I shot him," Martorano said of pal John Callahan, former World Jai-Alai executive, shot dead in a van outside Fort Lauderdale's airport in 1982. "I believe once, possibly twice. Put him in between the



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"YOU CAN'T RAT ON A RAT": Martorano admitted to killing Roger Wheeler and World Jai-Alai executive John Callahan.

chairs, closed the door and drove off."

Martorano, a husky man wearing a dark-blue suit and big square glasses, described kill-

•TURN TO TESTIFY, 2B

•TESTIFY, FROM 1B

ing after killing that almost made murder seem mundane. And most important to prosecutors, he fingered a disgraced FBI agent for setting up Callahan's death.

The hit man is not on trial. Instead, he's a key witness against former FBI agent John Connolly, 68, in the murder of Callahan.

Prosecutors believe Connolly, a handler of informants in his FBI job, tipped off Boston's Winter Hill gang that Callahan might cooperate with the investigation into Wheeler's death.

Connolly and Martorano have never met outside of glances in courtrooms. Prosecutors believe the ex-agent, a former star in Boston's FBI office, repeatedly tipped off gangsters James "Whitey" Bulger and Stephen "The Rifleman" Flemmi, about coming indictments, investigations and potential snitches like Callahan.

A Miami-Dade grand jury indicted Connolly in 2005 for first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit first-degree murder for Callahan's slaying.

Martorano walked into court at 10:25 a.m. Wednesday. Details of his long career as a gangster in the 1970s and '80s have been widely publicized in Boston. He repeated his story to a Miami-Dade jury in Circuit Judge Stanford Blake's courtroom.

Callahan, an accountant with a penchant for hanging with mobsters, wanted Wheeler killed because he refused to sell Miami's World Jai-Alai.

With Bulger and Flemmi's blessing, Martorano said he flew to Oklahoma and shot Wheeler between the eyes at a Tulsa golf course in May 1981.

Prosecutors say another Winter Hill associate, Brian Halloran, was shot dead in Boston the next year after he described the Wheeler murder to the FBI.

The triggerman: Bulger — today still a fugitive.

Connolly, the FBI agent on trial, tipped off the gang about Halloran to protect the gang from investigation, Martorano told prosecutor Michael Von Zamft.

"I said, 'Thanks, you know, I appreciate it,'" Martorano testified he later told Bulger and Flemmi.

Connolly's defense attorney suggested Martorano is an unreliable serial killer testifying to keep himself out of prison — and off death row — in two states.

Martorano, who has admitted to killing 20 people, served 12 years in prison as part of his testimony against Connolly and others.

He is now a free man.

"Don't you think receiving your life is payment enough for your testimony?" attorney **Manny Casabielle** asked.

"You could say that," Martorano said shrugging.

"You life is important to you?" **Casabielle** said.

"Same as is it you," Martorano shot back.

Martorano stressed he wasn't a "rat" like Flemmi and Bulger.

"You can't rat on a rat," Martorano said, adding he only wanted to "do the right thing" to protect friends and family.

"You don't consider yourself a rat," asked **Casabielle**.

"Nope."

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