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[LOGO]

EMBASSY OF PAKISTAN
2315 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE. N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

No. Pol-7/2/2002

September 20, 2002

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan presents its compliments to the Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran and with reference to the latter's note verbale No. 02-15/7662L, dated June 14, 2002, regarding the case of Hooman Ashkanpanah, an Iranian national on death row at Saint Quinton Correctional Center, has the honor to enclose herewith copy of a self explanatory note dated September 16, 2002, received from the U.S. Department of State.

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Interest Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran the assurances of its highest consideration.

[SEAL]

Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran,
(Mr. Jaffarzade, Deputy Director),
2209 Wisconsin Avenue, NW,
Washington, D.C. 20007

The Department of State acknowledges receipt of the Embassy of Pakistan's note No. Pol-7/2/2002, dated June 21, 2002, and its enclosure, note verbale No. 02-15/7662L dated June 14, 2002, from the Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The referenced note verbale related to legal proceedings involving

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Hooman Ashkanpanah, currently imprisoned in San Quentin State Prison.

The Department of State inquired into the status of the relevant legal proceedings and has been informed that there is no date set for execution of Mr. Ashkanpanah. Mr. Ashkanpanah's appeal is now pending before the California Supreme Court, with additional briefs to be filed before any decision on appeal. Given the status of the case, counsel for Mr. Ashkanpanah has the opportunity to pursue appropriate and timely legal objections to his conviction or incarceration. Any right Mr. Ashkanpanah may have to a new trial is a judicial determination for the competent court.

Department of State,

Washington, SEP 16 20,02.

JUDICIARY

Embattled L.A. Jurist's Defense: He's a Pathological Liar

■ Patrick Couwenberg admits he lied about his credentials, but says he couldn't help it.

By Donna Domino
Daily Journal Staff Writer

PASADENA — Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Patrick Couwenberg lied about his background and about receiving a Purple Heart because he suffers from a pathological compulsion to increase his self-esteem, a result of his childhood spent in war-torn Indonesia, his lawyer told a panel of special masters Wednesday.

During nearly three hours of pointed questioning at a judicial disciplinary hearing, the 56-year-old jurist was forced to admit that he lied extensively about his academic and professional background.

Couwenberg, a former Los Angeles prosecutor now residing near the Normale family

court, faces several disciplinary charges for "providing false information regarding his background and qualifications," according to the Commission on Judicial Performance, the state's judicial watchdog agency.

Dismissing the falsehoods as "misrepresentations concerning a relatively narrow area" of Couwenberg's past, his attorney, Edward P. George of Long Beach, said the judge has been diagnosed with "pseudologia fantastica," a psychological term for pathological lying.

The condition, which George described as a "matrix of fact and fiction," resulted in Couwenberg's "compulsion to provide information for self-aggrandizement." The psychological impairment resulted from Couwenberg's upbringing "in a concentration camp atmosphere" when his family lived in Indonesia,



COUWENBERG

George told the three-judge panel. The condition is "very treatable," George said, and Couwenberg is already undergoing therapy.

During probing questioning by commission attorney Jack Coyle, Couwenberg admitted lying about the colleges he attended, even about seemingly inconsequential details such as the dates he graduated.

A distinguished-looking man with salt-and-pepper hair and beard, Couwenberg acknowledged that he lied to his wife about having a master's degree in psychology from California State College at Los Angeles "to make more of an impression on her." But when asked why he repeatedly lied on official questionnaires about attending Loyola Law School, being a Vietnam veteran and working for the prestigious Los Angeles firm of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher, Couwenberg appeared mystified himself.

"I don't know," he answered. "It kind of puzzles me."

Attempting to play down the significance of lying about which schools he attended,

Couwenberg explained, "I didn't think educational history was important. The important thing was the cases you handled and why you wanted to become a judge."

Couwenberg had also told attorneys that he had been late to court one day in the past "because of a medical appointment for strychnin in the groin" that he sustained during combat. During Wednesday's hearing, he continued to assert claims about his involvement in a secret CIA mission in Laos, but admitted he only suffered a knee wound.

When Coyle pressed for details of his claimed South East Asia spy missions involving Scandinavian mercenaries, Couwenberg said he couldn't recall, because "it was over 30 years ago."

Though the jurist initially adopted an unrepentant tone during questioning about a long litany of falsehoods, after being forced to acknowledge that he had also perjured himself in the commission last year, he left the witness stand slightly shaken.

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■ JUDGE: Admitted Pathological Liar

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When asked why he told retired Judge Charles Frisco, prior to his 1997 enrobing ceremony, that he had served in Vietnam and was awarded a Purple Heart, Couwenberg offered this strained explanation: "I didn't affirm it, but I didn't correct him," he said. "I thought it was basically a 'roast' as he had done before — a humorous thing."

Two groups — the governor's office and the State Bar's Commission on Judicial Nominees Evaluation — are

responsible for checking judicial candidates' credentials. After the disciplinary charges against Couwenberg were filed, both offices acknowledged that neither academic nor military backgrounds are verified. To check professional experience, the State Bar panel sends forms to firms listed on the applicant's official Personal Data Questionnaire, but doesn't check if the forms are not returned.

Couwenberg was appointed to the bench by Gov. Pete Wilson in April 1997.

Bill Edlund, a San Francisco attorney, who chairs the Commission on Judicial

Nominees Evaluation, acknowledged during questioning that the group does not verify applicants' educational backgrounds, saying it lacked sufficient staff.

If Couwenberg is found culpable for wilful misconduct, he could be removed from the bench by the commission.

The hearing continues today before the masters, judges Ina Geyman of San Francisco, Thomas Hansen of San Jose and Peter Sifers of Stockton. They will make findings of fact, but not recommendations for discipline, to the commission.