

MY GUESS ON KONTOGIANNIS

TPMM reports that there is a non-public hearing on whether the plea bargain hearings for Tommy Kontiagiannis will be unsealed.

Tomorrow morning, three judges of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals will gather in a courtroom inside an elegant 104-year-old building in Pasadena for an extraordinary hearing involving one of the co-conspirators in the Randy “Duke” Cunningham bribery scandal.

The court hearing will be closed to everyone “the public, the newsmedia, the defense attorneys” save for the judges and a few lawyers from the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

The extreme secrecy is highly unusual. Veteran lawyers could not remember another time when the appeals court held a completely closed hearing.

The subjects to be discussed are transcripts and documents related to the February guilty plea of Thomas Kontogiannis, a New York developer who admitted to a single count of money laundering in the Cunningham case. Kontogiannis’ checkered past includes convictions for bribery and bid-rigging, an estimated \$70 million fortune, and a knack for staying out of prison.

Now, the problem here, for District Court Larry Burns is that the government didn’t say the contents of those hearings were classified until recently. Which is why we’re at the Appeals Court in the first place.