5/14/71 N.Y. Times P.20

Jurors Join Happy Victors After Trial

By JUAN M. VASQUEZ

For eight months, they gathered as strangers in the same courtroom, divided by the barrier separating the jurors from the judged; but yesterday they finally met to exchange handshakes and congratulations.

In a post-trial scene in the lobby of the Criminal Court Building, at least half of the jury members milled about and told defense lawyers what they thought of the long, drawn-out conspiracy case against 13 Black Panthers.

"The really extraordinary thing," Fred Hills, a juror, told Gerald P. Lefcourt, one of the defense lawyers, "was to go into that jury room, not knowing how most of the others felt, and discovered that we all agreed on an acquittal."

Mrs. Afeni Shakur, one of the first defendants into the lobby, spotted Mr. Hills, gave him a tearful smile, and shook his hand wordlessly.

"We're really glad you're out here," Mr. Hills, a book editor at McGraw-Hill, told Mrs. Shakur, who is eight months pregnant.

Then Mrs. Shakur spotted James I. Fox, the black foreman of the jury.

She went up to him and they embraced quietly amid the exhilaration and joy of [illegible] of well-wishers, both black and white.

One Ballot Taken

Explaining the jury's quick verdict, Mr. Fox, a 57-year-old musician who lectures at universities on African music, said:

"We started by kind of feeling each other out, you know, to see how everyone felt, and then one of the others said, 'Let's take a quick ballot and then we'll go on from there.'

"Well, we took the ballot and it was surprising. Everyone was for acquittal."

Mr. Fox said one written ballot had been taken on each individual count.

Another juror, Stephen Chaberski, a 30-year-old graduate student in political science at Columbia University, said he might write a dissertation based his experience on the jury.

"They just didn't have enough hard stuff," he said of the prosecution's case.

Sanford M. Katz and William E. Crain, two other defense lawyers, were jokingly admonished by Mr. Chaberski for the repeated courtroom spats between the defense and prosecution.

"We thought you were each trying to get points on each other, and that really had nothing to do with the case," he said. The lawyers, still exuberant from the verdict, grinned and nodded in return. "We'll try to avoid that," Mr. [illegible] said in mock serious tones.

Mr. Hills said he found the conspiracy law "disgusting." He added: "It's a large leap to bring in people for so many things."

Another juror, Benjamin Glass, a black retired [illegible] said he felt that "the undercover agents really testified that they didn't see the defendants do anything or plan anything."

Others felt that the agents' testimony was "plausible," but that substantial "reasonable doubt" remained.

Two of the jurors apparently had wanted to bring in no verdict on the two defendants who fled to Algeria—Richard Moore and Michael Tabor—but finally settled for acquittal.