

Post 9-11-71

4 Sentenced For Moving Stolen Arms

RICHMOND, Sept. 10 (AP) —Four self-described Black Panthers were sentenced to prison terms ranging from four to eight years today in U.S. District Court for transporting stolen firearms to Washington.

Judge Robert R. Merhige Jr. was urged by defense counsel JeRoyd W. Greene not to sentence the men for their political convictions.

"You don't feel this court would sentence them on grounds other than crimes for which they have been convicted?" Merhige asked.

"No your honor, I do not," Greene responded.

Merhige said he didn't know anything about the Black Panther's political philosophy "but transportation of weapons by members of an outfit committed to force is a shocking thing."

Greene said there was no evidence in the trial that the Black Panther party believed in force.

Greene said the Panthers wanted the weapons for defense.

Merhige wanted to know "defense against what?" adding that there are agencies of government to provide protection.

Merhige imposed sentences on the following:

Jacob P. Bethea of Washington, eight years; Charles Leonard Brunson of Richmond, four years; and Albert Douglas Moore of Richmond, eight years.

Earlier in the day Judge Emory Widener sentenced Howard Clayton Moore to four and one half years. Howard Moore was charged separately after his first trial ended in a mistrial.

Albert Moore and Bethea were found guilty on a second count forbidding felons to transport weapons in interstate commerce. Both had previous records.

Merhige continued bail for the four pending appeal to the 4th U.S. Circuit Court.