

Lawyer Sentenced in Narcotics Case

By Jim Mann

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A Washington lawyer was sentenced to five years and was confined immediately yesterday for his conviction on narcotics conspiracy charges growing out of the Lawrence W. (Slippery) Jackson drug case.

U.S. District Court Judge Aubrey E. Robinson imposed the sentence on Alan V. Roberson, 34, formerly of 4660 Martin Luther King Ave. SE. Roberson, a Howard University law school graduate who has practiced here for seven years, is the son of another Washington attorney, Eugene Roberson.

Roberson was one of 49 persons convicted in the past two years in the biggest single narcotics conspiracy case of the Washington area for two decades. He was the only attorney in the group.

He was convicted last February after government prose-

cutors argued that he sold capsules, facilitated the sale of heroin, channeled funds into legitimate enterprises and provided counterintelligence about law enforcement for the Jackson narcotics group.

During the sentencing, the judge excoriated Roberson for what he said was a lack of judgment and maturity.

"You know what his problem is?" asked Judge Robinson. "He's got a momma and a poppa that protected him throughout his adult life."

Roberson stood in the courtroom behind his own attorney, John Shorter, sometimes whispering into Shorter's ear while Shorter argued.

He tried desperately to persuade the judge that he should be freed pending appeal, but the judge refused. "Can I have a week to clean up my affairs?" Roberson finally asked. The judge refused again, and Roberson was led from the courtroom muttering.

The felony conviction makes Roberson subject to disbarment, but such proceedings do not begin until after the formal sentencing.

He must serve at least 44 months of the five-year conviction, which was the minimum sentence under a statute that provides for as much as 20 years in jail.

The sentencing of Roberson was the latest, and nearly the last, step in a lengthy courtroom process that began when law enforcement officials, after gathering evidence through court-authorized wiretaps, made a series of drug arrests in August, 1969.

Authorities said those arrested were members of an elaborate narcotics operation headed by Jackson and Enrico (Harry) Tantillo, in which heroin was brought to the Washington area primarily from New York City.

In all, 55 persons were indicted in the case. Last month, the final 30 of them were

scheduled to go to trial, but 29 of them pleaded guilty, nearly all of them to felonies (serious charges). One case was dropped.

In all, the 55 indictments produced 47 felony convictions and two misdemeanor convictions. One prosecutor, Roger E. Zuckerman, spent more than two years working full time on the case.