

Black Panther Trial in Jersey Is Quiet and Orderly Process

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Special to The New York Times

4/3/70

JERSEY CITY, April 2—The trial of three members of the Black Panther party on charges of machinegunning a police precinct house moved into its second month this morning in an atmosphere of quiet propriety that has pleased the officers of the court and disappointed hangers-on who seek excitement.

The decorum is in sharp contrast to the disorders in recent trials in Chicago, New York and elsewhere involving Panthers, radicals and others.

The three defendants here have sat in their places—neatly groomed, silent and intent, whispering only occasionally to their lawyers. The spectators, including relatives, friends and supporters of the defendants, have listened to lawyers' statements, to rulings from the bench and to testimony from witnesses with quiet concentration.

The spectator section of the eight-floor courtroom of the Hudson County Courthouse has been virtually filled for all sessions. Slightly more than half of the 50 to 60 persons able to find seats each day are women and five men rarely trouble to glance in the direction of the spectators.

Defense Claims Credit

The orderliness appears to be the handiwork of a defense lawyer and the principal defendant, both of whom take modest credit for the results.

"I told Mr. [Isaiah] Rowley, my client, that if I could not be assured that we could conduct his defense in a proper manner with all respects to our courts and our legal system," explained Raymond A. Brown, "I could not conduct his defense."

"I passed the word," Mr. Rowley explained. He is a 26-year-old truck driver and a leader of Jersey City's Black Panthers. He is accused of leading the machinegunning attack.

Mr. Rowley has said his reasons for wanting quiet and decorum at the trial were not precisely the same as Mr. Brown's.

County Prosecutor John J. Carlin. Maximum punishment on conviction for all three men could be 30 years each.

So far, the prosecution has presented two witnesses whose testimony sought to put the three men at the scene of the shooting on the night of the incident.

One young Negro girl, a friend of the defendants who has attended a few of the sessions, moaned and giggled during parts of the testimony this week. Mr. Rowley asked her to stay away for a while and she has.

Spectators who appeared early in the trial to "see the fun" expressed genuine disappointment in the corridors.

"Ain't nothing like Chicago at all," mumbled a retired clerk who added, "I never miss a good one."

"You see," he said, "I'm in a frame-up, along with these two guys. We're not going to give the cops or the prosecutors or the court or anybody else any excuses to make things worse for us than they are. Demonstrations and that stuff won't change anything here."

On trial with Mr. Rowley are Charles Hicks, 35, a welder, and Victor Perez, 20, who has worked at odd jobs.

Jailed 16 Months Ago

They are charged with making the machinegun attack on the police station on the night of Nov. 29, 1968. Several people were slightly injured.

The defendants have been in the Hudson County Jail for nearly 16 months awaiting trial, but Mr. Rowley was released in \$30,000 bail earlier this week. The two other defendants have not made bail.

Mr. Hicks and Mr. Perez are being defended by Seymour Goldstaub. The prosecution is being conducted by Assistant