

# Hanrahan Cleared In Conspiracy Case

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CHICAGO, Oct. 25—Cook County State's Attorney Edward V. Hanrahan and 13 other law enforcement officers were acquitted today of charges that they conspired to obstruct an investigation of the raid that killed two Black Panthers here nearly three years ago.

Cook County Circuit Judge Philip Romiti ruled that a special prosecutor had failed to present evidence of a conspiracy and directed the verdict of acquittal from the bench before a packed courtroom.

The family and friends of Hanrahan and his codefendants burst into applause. A smiling Hanrahan later contended that the ruling vindicated the police who conducted the raid.

The acquittal is expected to help the controversial, quick-tempered state's attorney in his bid to win reelection next month in what has been regarded as a close race with



EDWARD V. HANRAHAN  
... directed verdict.

the Republican challenger, Bernard Carey.

The politically charged case had come to be viewed as a test of Hanrahan and his promise to be a tough law-and-order prosecutor. His role

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has made him widely unpopular in black communities but also has enabled him to attract support in suburban white neighborhoods that normally vote Republican.

Judge Romiti called it "one of those 'damned if you do and damned if you don't' cases. The only question is which way is one going to be damned."

However, he found that during 14 weeks of testimony special prosecutor Barnabas Sears failed to produce evidence of a conspiracy. He described the case in this language: "An inference drawn from another inference which in turn is drawn from an inference—inferences pyramiding inferences—amount to not much more than conjecture and speculation."

Sears seemed to have anticipated the judge's ruling. Seconds after it was announced, he released printed copies of a statement that said: "The

court has spoken. It is my duty as a lawyer-participant in the case to treat that judgment of the court with respect."

Romiti said he was not judging the conduct of the police officers who, early on the morning of Dec. 4, 1969, burst into a Black Panther apartment and killed Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. That issue was not before the court, he said.

However, Hanrahan later appeared at a news conference with several of the raiding policemen and claimed that the evidence "showed the conduct of the police and the other defendants was lawful."

"The police certainly did not deserve the abuse and anguish they and their families have endured for almost three years," he said.

"Rather, the courage of the police in doing their duty in the face of the Black Panthers' armed resistance deserves the praise and thanks of every law-abiding citizen."

The indictment had charged that Hanrahan, his top assistant and 12 policemen had conspired to obstruct justice dur-

ing the investigation of the raid in order to protect the raiders from prosecution. It charged that they conspired to "plant false evidence and furnish false information" as part of a cover-up.

Most of the charges involved alleged faulty investigation at the scene of the shootings and lax interrogations by the police department's Internal Investigations Division.

Hanrahan was accused of trying to influence public opinion by leaking inaccurate information to a newspaper and by presenting on local television a mock reenactment of

the raid from the police point of view.

Hanrahan had claimed the police fired into the Panther apartment only after being met by bursts of gunfire. A subsequent FBI investigation determined that only one shot was fired by the Panthers inside but that more than 80 were fired into their apartment by the raiders.

But during the trial this summer, documents were produced that contradicted the Panther version. Statements from four of the surviving Panthers had been given earlier to their lawyers and were introduced into the trial record. They said that at least five occupants of the apartment held weapons during the raid and that they had fired five shots.

Politically, the indictment seemed at first to have ruined Hanrahan's promising career. Last winter, Mayor Richard J. Daley dumped him from the Democratic slate in Cook County. But Hanrahan startled everyone by bucking the mayor and defeating his substitute candidate in the primary.

Daley called the court decision "a lesson for all of us. We are sometimes too willing, too anxious to believe."

The mayor said he talked to Hanrahan by telephone and "I congratulated him." Asked about the decision to unslate Hanrahan in the primary, he replied, "Well, it was just a mistake."

Hanrahan is now viewed as the probable next Democratic candidate for mayor if Daley decides not to seek reelection in 1975.

The acquittal today should enhance his position. U.S. Sen. Adlai E. Stevenson had refused to support Hanrahan for reelection so long as he was under indictment. Stevenson's office said today he will now support Hanrahan.