

PERJURY TRIAL STARTED HERE

Main Witness in Goldman Case Defendant

The perjury trial of a 24-year-old barmaid who was once the state's main witness in the Susan Goldman case continued late into the night Thursday in the Criminal District Court section of Judge Matthew S. Braniff.

Miss Betty Jones is accused of making contradictory and inconsistent statements at two appearances before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury in 1968.

Her testimony in each case had to do with a former policeman, Robert F. Blanchard, and circumstances surrounding Susan Goldman, a 19-year-old, pregnant baby sitter, who was found strangled on the morning of Mardi Gras eve.

The State had rested its case, and two defense witnesses, Blanchard, and Jo Ann Townsend, Miss Jones' sister, have completed their testimony by late Thursday.

CHARGE DROPPED

Blanchard was indicted on a charge of manslaughter in the Goldman case, but the charge was later dropped, with the district attorney's office claiming that Miss Jones had been persuaded to change her testimony.

Miss Jones is accused of perjuring herself during testimony before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury on Oct. 3, when she denied that Blanchard mentioned Susan Goldman to her or asked her to visit her apartment during a conversation of Feb. 26.

This testimony was "contradictory of and inconsistent with" testimony she gave on May 16, the state charged.

In the earlier testimony, Miss Jones said that Blanchard asked her if she could leave work for about 15 minutes.

Blanchard went on to say, "There was an argument at Susie's house, and she fell, and I wanted you to go over and check to see if she is all right,"

Miss Jones testified earlier.

DEFENSE 'SIMPLE'

Assistant DA Shirley G. Wimberly in his opening statement to a five-man jury said that the state is not required to prove which statement is false, only that the two sets of testimony are inconsistent.

However, he said the state would show which statements were false.

Attorney Jerome Winsberg said his defense of Miss Jones would be simple. His client "did not commit perjury because one of the statements was not voluntary—one of the statements was induced by force, threats, or trickery," he claimed.

Winsberg said Miss Jones

would take the stand and testify about how she was the victim of "constant harassment" by the police and the DA's office.

THREAT CLAIMED

On April 23 she was held in the homicide office for 16 hours, and released, only to be returned on the morning of April 24 after having worked all night, Winsberg told the jury.

Finally, on the night of April 24, Miss Jones made a statement to police "under fear, threats and coercion," the attorney said.

On May 16, Miss Jones was taken to the grand jury room by police, who told her that if she did not tell the same story she told in the statements she would get 18 months in jail, Winsberg claimed.

SEES ATTORNEYS

Winsberg said he would show that there was no difference between the statements of April to the police and her testimony before the grand jury in May.

Later, Miss Jones was held incommunicado for five days in the Fontainebleau Motor Hotel, it was alleged.

Between her two grand jury appearances Miss Jones met with an investigator for two attorneys representing Blanchard.

The DA's office charged that the attorneys Steven R. Plotkin and Sanford Krasnoff, played on her affection for Blanchard to cause her to change her testimony against him.

The DA's office charged

Plotkin and Krasnoff with bribery of another state's witness, Linda Hodges, but the charge was later quashed.