

Seale's Lawyer Scores Grand Jury Selection

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NEW HAVEN, Conn.—The attorney for Black Panther Chairman Bobby G. Seale charged Thursday at a pretrial hearing that his client was indicted for murder here by a grand jury packed with "hand-picked cronies" of the local sheriff.

However, J. Edward Slavin, New Haven County high sheriff, denied any wrongdoing and said on the witness stand that he selected the 20-member grand jury impartially.

Connecticut state law only requires that grand jurors be "electors," and those he picked met that test, Slavin said.

Meanwhile, at nearby Yale University, a majority of faculty members voted Thursday to suspend the "normal functions of the university indefinitely" as about 75% of students boycotted class in protest of the proceedings against Seale and 13 other Panthers accused of murder.

Attorney Objects

Charles R. Garry, Seale's attorney and general counsel for the Black Panthers, told Superior Court Judge Harold M. Mulvey that the 18 jurors and two alternates chosen by the sheriff last August were "not representative of the people of this community."

The jurors that indicted Seale included the sheriff's barber, the owner of the barber shop, an ex-jail guard who worked under Slavin for two years, and a lawyer that the sheriff recruited in a courtroom corridor after a subpoenaed grand juror failed to appear.

"Isn't it true," Garry asked the balding, 73-year-old sheriff, "that most of

10 of the jurors, according to his testimony, were already over the age of 50.

"But I don't have cronies," he said. "I'm a loner. I have acquaintances who tell me about decent people, people who are electors in this county. . . . If they are decent people, whether they are colored or white, I select them."

Garry said the sheriff's method of choosing grand jurors "leads to a star chamber form" of indictment. He is asking for dismissal of murder charges against Seale on grounds that the selection and composition of the

grand jury was illegal.

When Garry asked Slavin if he checked to see if one of the jurors was a registered voter, the sheriff replied, "I didn't have to check her. I see her at all the Democratic conventions."

At times throughout the three-hour cross-examina-

tion, Garry complained about what he called the sheriff's "unresponsive answers."

"Can I get a responsive answer, Your Honor?" Garry asked.

"You can try," the judge answered as most of the persons in the crowded courtroom laughed.