

Jury Selection Begins in Seale Trial

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NEW HAVEN, Conn. Nov. 17—The kidnap-murder trial of Black Panthers Bobby G. Seale and Ericka Huggins

began today with the jury selection expected to take several weeks.

None of three prospective jurors questioned was seated as the defense and the prosecution each used one of the 60 peremptory challenges available to each side, and the third juror was excused.

Superior Court Judge Harold M. Mulvey sternly warned spectators against any outbursts and mildly admonished Seale's lawyer, Charles R. Garry of San Francisco, for speech-making.

The judge also warned Garry not to tell jurors who otherwise might not know that Seale was gagged and shackled during the "Chicago 8" conspiracy trial. Among the spectators in court today was attorney Leonard Weinglass who with William Kuntzler defended Seale and the other defendants in Chicago.

Rulings by the judge also blocked further line of Garry's questioning in which he asked about "white racism"

and said the defense would include an "attack on the (New Haven) police department for racism."

One incidental exchange between Garry and the judge prompted a hearty laugh from everyone. Garry asked if the large courtroom clock which was both noisy and an hour fast could be fixed. Judge Mulvey said the matter had been suggested and looked into but found to be expensive. The clock, the judge said, was connected to others throughout the building and "the whole system is out of whack."

"Right On" shouted someone from the gallery. Even the judge laughed.

The first of the 60 prospective jurors summoned for Tuesday's session was questioned for nearly two hours.

State's Attorney Arnold Marble took less than two minutes, asking in general terms if the man, a white production worker at a North Haven factory, could be fair and impartial.

Catherine Reback, attorney for Mrs. Huggins, spent

more than an hour asking about the man's associations and feelings toward black people in general and the Black Panthers in particular. "I've heard they do good and do bad . . . good like their break-case," he said.

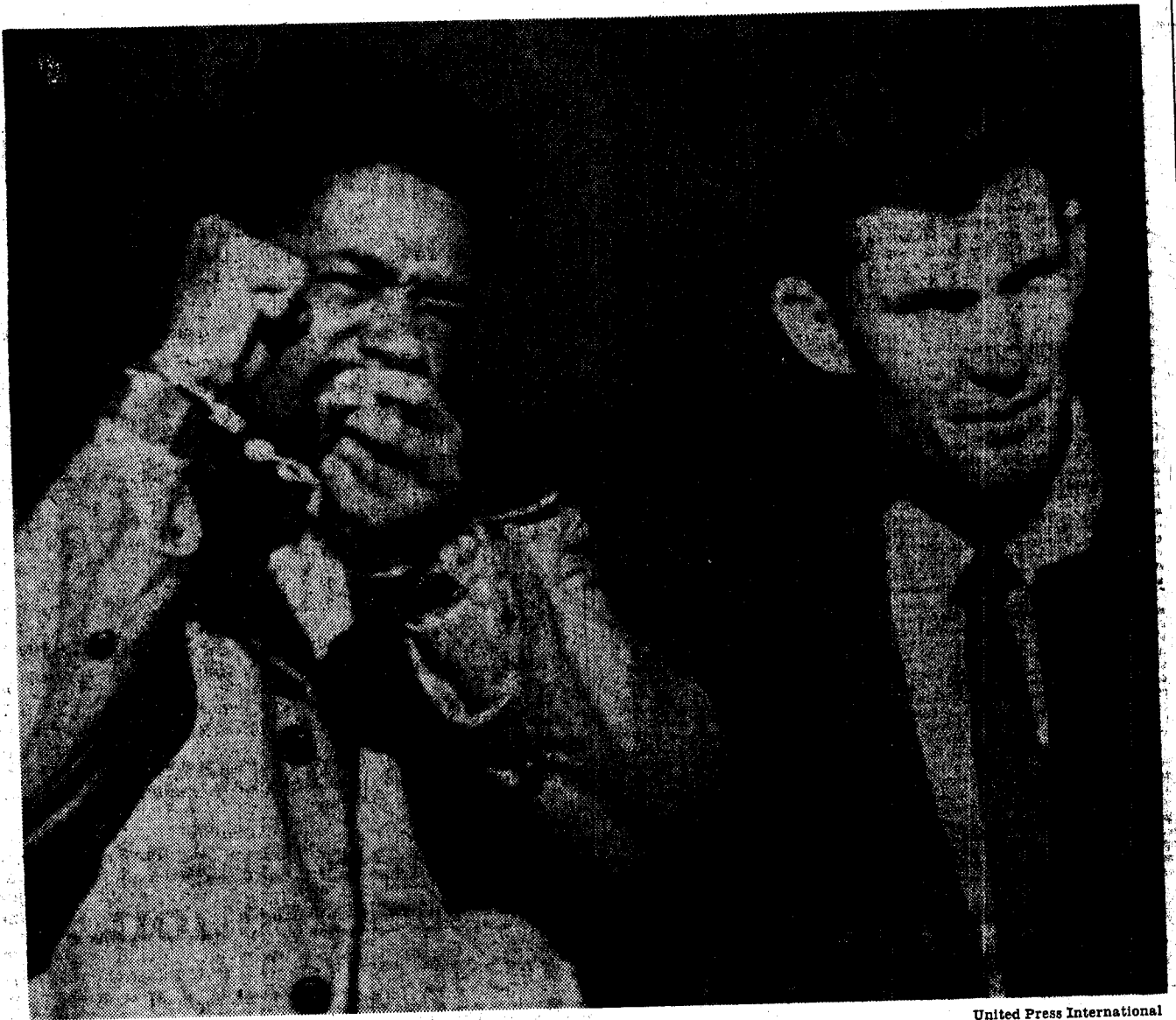
Asked if the indictments charging murder and kidnaping resulting in death meant anything, the man said, "Yes, but it's got to be proven . . . there's no question about guilt or we wouldn't be here."

Judge Mulvey refused to excuse the man for cause and the defense exercised a challenge.

The second prospective juror was a college student. He was excused after both sides agreed that a four- or five-month trial would interfere with his schooling.

The third prospect, a white middle-aged man whose son is a lawyer, said he was open-minded and had no knowledge of "what the Black Panther Party is or what it stands for." He was challenged by the prosecution.

Seale, the 34-year old national Panther Party chairman, and Mrs. Huggins, the 22-year old Connecticut Panther leader, are charged with murder, kidnaping and conspiracy in the May 1969 death of fellow Panther Alex Rackley, who had been suspected of being a police informer.



United Press International

Black Panther Party chairman Bobby Seale raises his handcuffed hand in the black power salute as he leaves

the Montville, Conn., Correctional Center for the start of his trial in New Haven in the afternoon.