

# TARRANTS CASE TO GO TO JURY

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## Arguments Concluded in Three-Day Trial

MERIDIAN, Miss.—A circuit court jury was handed the case against Thomas A. Tarrants III at 6:27 p. m. and immediately retired to begin deliberations.

By W. F. MINOR

(Times-Picayune Staff Correspondent)

MERIDIAN, Miss. — A jury of 11 whites and one Negro was expected to receive early Wednesday night the state's case against Thomas Albert Tarrants III in the June 30 attempted bombing of the home of a Jewish businessman active in a biracial community organization.

Final arguments concluding the three-day trial in Lauderdale County Circuit Court began shortly after 4 p. m. and Judge Lester Williamson was expected to hand the case to the jurors around 6:30 p. m.

The state is seeking the death penalty in the case.

Tarrants, a 21-year-old Mobile, Ala., school dropout, who had become an associate of Klan groups in Mississippi, was put on trial for charges of attempting to bomb the home of Meyer Davidson, which was under police surveillance following several night-rider incidents in the county earlier in the year.

### UNDER DELUSIONS

The defense spent most of the day building a case to support its contention that Tarrants took part in the attempted night-time bombing because he was mentally incompetent and under delusions from radical political views.

In the closing arguments the defense charged that the state had failed to prove that an alarm device produced as evidence was proved to be a bomb.

Defense attorney Thomas Haas charged to the jury "it's not your fault that the state did not bring in a demolition

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expert, that's the fault of the district attorney."

Only two witnesses, both police officers, who identified Tarrants as the man they saw place a bomb in the driveway of the Davidson home, were put on the witness stand in presenting the state's case.

Lauderdale County attorney Joe Hamilton contended in his closing arguments that the jury "should not relieve him (Tarrants) of his criminal responsibility just because he is under the false belief, a delusion, that these people were conspiring with the Communists to take over this country."

Tarrants was portrayed by Dr. Claude Brown, a Mobile psychiatrist, as a man who "found self-justification for any kind of endeavor in the Bible," and regarded "aliens, Communists, Jews and Negroes as undesirable citizens."

Dr. Brown, recounting his diagnosis of Tarrants from two sessions with him last month in the Lauderdale County jail, said the youth felt he was "almost on a sacred mission."

The attempted bombing of the

Davidson home, the psychiatrist related was "a product of his diseased mind."

"Was this defendant insane when he did this act in your opinion?" asked defense attorney Thomas Hass, Mobile.

"In my opinion he was," replied the grey-haired Brown.

### 'SCARE GESTURE'

The doctor, under questioning by the prosecution related from the witness stand that Tarrants had told him of taking the bomb to the Davidson house and "he intended to detonate the dynamite . . . but he said he had no intention of killing anyone. This was an intimidating, frightening gesture."

Tarrants had told him, Brown said, that he planned to set off the bomb in the Davidson yard, not to harm physically anybody but to have an emotional effect of intimidating the individual and thus dissuade him from supporting Communists."

This was all part of what Brown called a "delusion" of Tarrants in his "ill-advised and totally inappropriate efforts to combat what he thinks is Communism."

### INDIFFERENCE?

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