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TARRANTS SEEKS APPEAL RULING

Petition Filed with U.S.

Supreme Court
F-P 12/10/70

(Special to The Times-Picayune)
MERIDIAN, Miss. — Thomas Albert Tarrant III, a Ku Klux Klansman convicted here in 1968 and sentenced to 30 years in the state penitentiary for placing a bomb at the home of Meyer Davidson, a local businessman, has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to take jurisdiction in the case and overturn the conviction.

Tarrant, a native of Mobile, Ala., filed a petition to the Supreme Court charging that his constitutional rights were violated in his trial in Meridian in 1968.

A Lauderdale County circuit court jury in November 1968 found Tarrant guilty on the bomb charge and Judge Lester Williamson sentenced him to 30 years at Parchman. This past summer the state supreme court upheld the conviction.

Tarrant was given a mental evaluation by the staff of the state hospital at Whitfield prior to the state supreme court's ruling and he was declared mentally competent at that time.

In the petition to the U.S. Supreme Court, defense attorneys charged that Tarrant's conviction should be overturned for a number of reasons, including the failure of the state to grant him a pretrial mental examination.

The petition also charges there was excessive pretrial publicity and the trial should have been transferred to another city or a continuance granted.

Attorneys also attacked the state statute under which Tarrant was convicted, contending it was not applicable and that evidence concerning juvenile records and privileged communications with a psychiatrist should not have been admitted into evidence.