

Cuban Boat Captains Convicted

By Matthew T. Kenny

KEY WEST, Fla., Feb. 19 (UPI) — Four Cuban fishing boat captains were convicted today of violating U.S. waters and sentenced to \$500 fines and six-month jail terms.

Criminal Court Judge Thomas Caro said he would suspend the jail terms upon payment of the fines.

The 72-year-old jurist dismissed charges against 25 crewmen from the vessels, reasoning the crewmen were under orders of their skippers

at the time of their arrest. The defense indicated an appeal would be filed.

The day-long trial was slowed by the fact the testimony had to be translated into Spanish for the defendants.

All four of the captains sat stony-face throughout the proceedings while the prosecution produced witnesses who testified that the defendants' boats had violated the U.S. 3-mile limit.

Cuban Premier Castro cut off the fresh water supply to

the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay in retaliation for seizure of the fishermen.

Defending the captains was Leonard Boudin, whose New York firm was retained by the Czechoslovakian Embassy. He was aided by Frantisek Telicka, the Spanish-speaking first Secretary of the Embassy.

Joseph Jacobs, First Assistant Attorney General for Florida, prosecuted the Cubans on charges of violating a new state law barring aliens from fishing in state waters with-

out a license. The law also specifically prohibits the issuing of licenses to fishermen from Communist nations.

Boudin took the position the Cubans were "unlawfully arrested by the Coast Guard and unlawfully turned over to the State of Florida."

"There is no basis in Federal law for the turning over of seamen of another country to state authorities because Federal authorities do not have the power to execute state law," he said.



Associated Press

On Hijacked Plane

Richard Wright, 23, above, was pilot of a charter, twin-engine plane that was hijacked while en route from Miami to Key West Tuesday by two Cuban exiles, who forced Wright to fly them to Havana. The Cuban government confirmed yesterday that the plane had landed at an airport near Havana. Navy jets attempted to intercept the small plane but failed.