

Counsel to Attica Study Group

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Arthur Lawrence Liman

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By LAURIE JOHNSTON

For Arthur L. Liman, general counsel to the New York State Special Commission on Attica which released its report yesterday, the personal sense of a job well done is shadowed by a mood of doubt.

"This was to be the time our work was done, a time of relief if not of

Man honors — no one can take honors out of Attica," he said. "In-

News instead, here I am, reacting with the most emotion of my life and confronting myself with a troubling thought: Public service may not be a place for a man of conscience."

Mr. Liman has called it "an incredible betrayal" that the special state prosecutor preparing criminal cases stemming from the uprising has subpoenaed the records of 3,000 confidential interviews conducted by the commission.

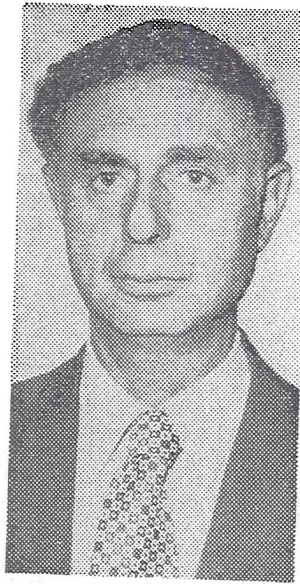
"I have not slept well since the state proposed to use this commission as a Trojan horse, to get at 3,000 people to whom I'm responsible for giving the commission's word," he said yesterday in his law office 32 stories above Park Avenue.

Confidence Is Won

"I looked into the eyes of a lot of prisoners," he added, in his rather soft, light voice. "They are saying to the Establishment, 'How can you understand us? How can we trust you?' There is little for them to identify with in my background. But we won them over."

Now 39 years old, Mr. Liman is a partner in the law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, which he joined immediately after graduating magna cum laude from Yale Law School in 1957.

He is credited with being



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"The law is my life"

the individual most responsible for the research and the written report of the commission, which was headed by Robert B. McKay, dean of the New York University Law School.

A tall, trim man in a sober gray suit, Mr. Liman has a serious, generous-featured face that breaks up in a broad, warm but slightly diffident smile.

"I have a love affair with the law. The law is my life," he said. "The state, even beyond the commission, was my client and one can only operate on a basis of trust with a client."

Mr. Liman has reportedly said he would destroy the records of the confidential interviews, or even go to jail, before he would turn them over to anyone outside the commission. He declined to speculate on future legal developments, saying only, "I don't think it will come to the point where the state will require this commission to dishonor its reputation."

"He just might go all the way with it," said Amos Henix, a black member of the commission who is a former convict and now director of Reality House, a drug rehabilitation center in Harlem.

"He's a beautiful person — that's right up front when you know him," Mr. Henix said. "It hurt me that Governor Rockefeller, in his response to our questions, was disrespectful to Mr. Liman and his position as counsel."

Born Nov. 5, 1932, and brought up in Lawrence, L.I., Arthur Lawrence Liman was graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

He and his wife, the former Ellen Fogelson, live with their two sons and a daughter, aged 7 to 11, at 135 Central Park West in a turn-of-the-century apartment house.

"I'm addicted to the architecture, the moldings — and the noise from the pipes that goes with it," he said.

Mrs. Liman, a Barnard College graduate and interior designer, is the author of "The Money-Saver's Guide to Decorating" (Macmillan) and is working under contract on two more books.

The long hours required for the commission's work, Mr. Liman said, have cut into his time for family bicycling, fishing and tennis, as well as opera and theater.

Describing the commission's staff as "remarkable young men and women," Mr. Liman said he hoped the report would not be "one of those that changes nothing."

"Besides the direct victims of crime, every person who feels himself a prisoner in his own apartment has a self-interest in changing the system," he said. "And not just the prison system — which is the end of the line and just a sample of those caught up in the cycle."