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Prosecution Hammers at Attica Defense Witness

By MICHAEL T. KAUFMAN

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BUFFALO, March 24—Under cross examination by the prosecution at the Attica murder trial here, the recollections of a former inmate changed on the witness stand today from hard-edged and clear to murky and vague.

The man, Gerald Jackson, beamed a confident smile as he climbed to the witness stand wearing a crushed velvet jump suit. In response to introductory questioning by William M. Kunstler, the lawyer for one of two defendants on trial here in the murder of William E. Quinn, a correction officer, he almost eagerly reviewed his life.

He now works, he said, for a "reputable car dealer." He had been sent to Attica for manslaughter, having killed a man he described as an unruly, knife-wielding patron of a bar in which he had been the manager. His only other conviction, he testified, was for larceny and resulted in an eight-month term in the Suffolk County Jail.

Quickly he unfolded his account of what he witnessed on the morning of Sept. 9, 1974, when inmates overran the critical Times Square prison checkpoint where Mr. Quinn was beaten. He was, he said, on his way to a group-therapy session when he saw a group of men rushing toward the barred checkpoint.

He said the men were screaming, "Pigs, Pigs, Kill the Pigs!" as they ran toward Times Square, where, he said, Officer Quinn and another guard were standing. Mr. Jackson insisted he knew Mr. Quinn well and had exchanged daily hellos with him.

As he "creeped backwards slowly," he said, he saw three men grab Mr. Quinn through the bars. The gate popped open and the witness said he saw one of the three strike Mr. Quinn twice with a club. He named that man as his former prison football coach, a man he knew as "Cody." He identified the assailant as black, "the same color as I was."

"Cody" was later identified in court today as Emanuel

Johnson, one of the 39 prisoners and guards killed during the retaking of the prison by the state police.

When the defense ended its questioning, the witness seemed relaxed. The effect of his testimony was similar to that of two earlier former inmates who said they had seen inmates other than the defendants, John Hill and Charles Joseph Pernalice, strike Officer Quinn.

Then the prosecution began whittling away at Mr. Jackson's story.

Louis Aidala, a deputy attorney general presenting the state's case, asked Mr. Jackson whether he hadn't been convicted at least one other time. The 37-year-old Mr. Jackson at first said he couldn't remember, but under prodding, said yes, he had served three and a half years in a Virginia prison for breaking and entering. He also conceded that the man he had described as an unruly patron had been a rival suitor for a girl.

Mr. Aidala pressed on. Didn't the witness remember, he asked, that the investigators had asked him to pick out photographs of

Mr. Quinn and of the other officer he saw being attacked. He showed Mr. Jackson two such photos and asked whether these weren't the ones he had chosen and signed.

"That's my signature," said the witness.

Then, without any unnecessary flourish, the prosecutor introduced the photos as evidence in the trial. They were, he said, pictures of George Sonricker and David Leslie, both Attica correction officers, neither of whom was near Times Square when the riot started. With that, Mr. Aidala ended his cross examination.

Mr. Jackson was the fourth defense witness in the trial, which today entered its fifth week.

Argentine Plant 'Powerful'

BUENOS AIRES (UPI)—Argentina's first nuclear power plant, at Atucha, 120 miles north of here, has achieved an output of one billion kilowatt hours. The Atucha plant started producing electricity in March, 1974, for the Buenos Aires area and cities on the Parana River. It uses uranium from Argentina deposits.