

Order Marcello Trial Transferred to Texas

The trial of Jefferson Parish rackets figure Carlos Marcello on charges that he assaulted an FBI agent has been ordered transferred to a federal district court in southern Texas.

District Judge Frederick J. R. Heebe yesterday directed the change of venue and ordered that all actions in the case, including pre-trial motions, be considered by the Texas court.

At the same time, expressing astonishment at the defense tactic, the judge denied a motion by Marcello's lawyers that he reconsider moving the trial from New Orleans.

JUDGE HEEBE excoriated Life magazine for a story about Marcello last year which the judge termed "highly inflammatory . . . in this area," adding:

"This court is of the opinion that the publicity which the defendant has received has been so highly prejudicial in nature and so pervasive in this area that it would prevent the defendant from receiving a fair and impartial trial in this state.

"For many years the defendant has been the subject of very extensive and damaging publicity. This publicity undoubtedly imprinted upon the mind of the public

the image of the defendant as being a most sinister and evil character.

"In fact, it is assumed, in a rather cavalier fashion, that Marcello is the 'gangland leader' in Louisiana of the most ruthless and corrupt crime syndicate in the nation."

THE JUDGE SAID he seriously doubted that citizens of the area could "expunge this long-standing and prevalent notion from their minds . . ."

Marcello is charged with assault on FBI agent Patrick J. Collins Jr. at the New Orleans International Airport as he stepped off a plane from New York. Marcello has said he mistook Collins, who was taking pictures, for a press photographer.

The Southern Texas District Court meets in Houston, Corpus Christi, Brownsville, Laredo, Galveston and Victoria.

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