

JAN 15 1972
SF Chronicle

Judge at Soledad Trial Gets Angry

By Charles Howe

Angered by what he called "cynical laughter" from a handful of spectators at the murder trial of the so-called Soledad Brothers, Superior Court Judge S. Lee Vavuris threatened yesterday to lock them all up on contempt charges.

Minutes later, with the jury excused, the angry jurist threatened to jail defense attorney Richard Silver.

The brouhaha developed during the 13th day of the trial of Fleeta Drumgo and John Clutchette, charged with the murder of Soledad Prison guard John V. Mills on January 16, 1970.

Defense attorney Floyd Silliman had been attempting to discredit the testimony of a former Soledad inmate, William Worzella, who gave evidence for the prosecution on Thursday implicating the defendants.

The jury was excused while opposing attorneys argued whether or not Worzella should be allowed to see a transcript of a statement Silliman implied Worzella unknowingly may have given an investigator for the defense.

The jury was midway out of the courtroom in the Hall of Justice when some in the audience — partisan to the defense — tittered after they fancied Silliman had scored a legal point.

Vavuris shouted: "If I hear any more of that cynical laughter I'll hold you all in contempt and give you all

five days (in jail) and fine you \$500! You don't know me! I can be as rough as broken glass!"

Minutes later, Silver attempted to enter into Silliman's argument that the witness had no right to see the document "to refresh his memory."

Vavuris, who has imposed the tightest security arrangements in memory for the trial, exploded again.

Striking the bench, he ex-

claimed: "Just a moment, Mr. Silver, or I'll hold you in contempt!"

Silliman asked for — but did not get — "a public apology in front of the jury" from Vavuris because the judge, said Silliman, "diluted my case" and "sided with the prosecution in front of the jury."

The trial resumes at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, January

18.