Federal Court Weighs Plea of 7 In Mississippi Rights Slayings

ATLANTA, May 26 (AP)—A three-judge Federal court has taken under advisement the appeals of seven men convicted in the Mississippi slayings of three civil rights leaders in 1964.

The court's action came after oral arguments were heard on behalf of the seven.

Attorneys for one of the men, Horace Doyle Barnette, argued that his rights had been violated because agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation had not informed him that he could have court-appointed counsel before he signed a statement.

Barnette was convicted of conspiracy. His statement was used in the trial of 18 others.

Of the 18, seven were convicted and their appeal is before a three-judge Federal panel.

Three years after Barnette's statement, the Supreme Court ruled that officers must advise persons in custody that they have a right to an attorney before they make any statement at all.

However, United States Attorney Robert Owens argued that the Supreme Court ruling —in the Miranda case—did not apply to Barnette because he was not in custody.

The seven men were convicted in the death of Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman of New York, and James E. Chaney, a Negro of Meridian, Miss.

Others appealing besides Barnette are Cecil Ray Price, Billy Wayne Posey, Sam H. Bowers Jr., Wayne Roberts, Jimmy Arledge, and Jimmy Snowden.