

Chapin Claim Of D.C. Trial Bias Disputed

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The chairman of the Association of Black Psychiatrists took issue yesterday with suggestions that former aides to President Nixon cannot get a fair trial from a predominately black Washington, D.C., jury.

The claims were made in U.S. District Court here last week on behalf of former White House aide Dwight L. Chapin, who faces trial April 1 on charges of lying to a federal grand jury.

In a supporting affidavit filed by Chapin's lawyers, Dr. Elvin Mackey, a black psychiatrist on the staff of the American Psychiatric Association, said "widespread feelings of anger, hostility and rage in the black population" here could prevent a fair trial.

Dr. James Comer, associate dean at Yale University medical school, said the Association of Black Psychiatrists, which has more than 3,000 members, disagrees with the conclusion.

"The voting record of blacks in the last election indicates that the Nixon administration is not highly favored by blacks," Dr. Comer, who is chairman of the association, said. "But on the other hand, it doesn't follow that blacks as a group won't be fair to individual people accused of crimes. We do not want to be on record as stating that blacks could not be fair to any member of the administration."

U.S. District Court Judge Gerhard A. Gesell has already rejected the contention of Chapin's lawyers and called it "an affront to the jury system." He ordered the trial to be held here.