

Life Writer Testifies in Libel Case

Life Magazine writer David L. Chandler today was called to the witness stand by an attorney for Vial J. Blanke Sr., former Jefferson Parish councilman who is suing Time Inc. for \$300,000 for alleged libel.

Chandler was the third witness called in the case which began before a jury of 12 members and one alternate juror in the federal courtroom of Judge Alvin B. Rubin.

JUDGE RUBIN told the jurors the case would last two and possibly three days.

Nathan Greenberg, attorney for Blanke, filed a suit after a picture and caption was published in Life, Sept. 8, 1967.

The story accompanying the picture was one alleging organized crime in Louisiana and linking Blanke with Jefferson Parish rackets figure Carlos Marcello.

Greenberg in his opening statement to the jurors said the Life story was printed with "utter disregard for the truth."

GREENBERG contended that Blanke, a liquor and wine salesman, was at the Mist Restaurant on Highway 90 several miles west of the Huey Long Bridge in connection with his business when the picture was taken.

The picture reportedly shows Blanke and Joseph Armenio, manager of the restaurant.

Robert Winn, attorney for Time Inc., told the jury in his opening statement that the Life team which published the picture had no reason to suspect falsity in the article.

Blanke charges that the reference to him in Life was "an unwarranted false, malicious and libelous attack" on his personal and public reputation. He said the article "effectively and deliberately" ended his campaign for office.

Blanke was defeated in 1967 as a candidate for councilman in Jefferson Parish.