

ATTICA WITNESS ON STAND 6 HOURS

MAR 12 1975

Defense Seeks to Impeach Murder-Trial Testimony

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

BUFFALO, March 11—William Zimmer, a 25-year-old prosecution witness in the Attica murder trial, spent some six hours on the stand today as defense lawyers sought to impeach his testimony.

Through repetitious questioning that centered on his account of the opening hours of the 1971 prison rebellion, the steelworker and former inmate remained stolid and unruffled. He held to his previous testimony that he had seen both defendants on trial for murder here, John Hill and Charles Joseph Parnasilice, strike Correction Officer William Quinn in separate instances.

His only moment of embarrassment came after he had told William M. Kunstler, a defense counsel, that he could not remember a detail of his interview with state investigators three and a half years ago.

'How Old Are You?'

"You don't even remember how old you are," snapped Mr. Kunstler and asked, "How old are you?"

"Twenty-five," answered the witness, acknowledging that he had been mistaken the day before when he said he was 24.

Mr. Zimmer, who will be 26 on Aug. 26, smiled and blushed in embarrassment.

This lapse was perhaps the most serious that the defense was able to elicit during the day's cross-examination.

With the witness repeatedly

contending that he could "not remember" or could "not recall," Mr. Kunstler and Ramsey Clark, a former United States Attorney General who is representing Mr. Parnasilice, were unable to draw from Mr. Zimmer the kind of contradictions they had brought in their questioning of previous former inmate witnesses.

The lawyers asked, for example, whether Mr. Zimmer had any hope of an early release when he volunteered his information to state investigators. He insisted he had not.

Mr. Kunstler at one point introduced in evidence a letter written to the parole board by the investigators in Mr. Zimmer's behalf. The letter asked that the inmate be given "every consideration for his early re-

lease," in light of his co-operation with authorities.

In fact, the witness, who was serving a term of up to four years for motorcycle theft, was released a year and a day after he entered prison, the shortest legal sentence.

He insisted that he knew nothing of the letter and that there had been no promises made him.