

SF Chronicle
An Attica
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Coverup
Is Charged

New York

A key member of the Attica special prosecutor's office has resigned and charged Chief Prosecutor Anthony G. Simonetti with covering up possible crimes by law-enforcement officers who put down the rebellion at Attica prison in September, 1971.

The accusation was made by Malcolm H. Bell, once Simonetti's chief assistant. Bell charged that the inquiry into whether crimes were committed by state troopers and correction officers "lacks integrity" and is being "aborted" by Simonetti.

Bell made the statements in his letter of resignation to Attorney General Louis J. Lefkowitz last December 11.

A copy of the letter has been obtained by the New York Times.

After Bell concluded that Lefkowitz did not intend to pursue his charge, he sent a 160-page report on January 30 to Governor Hugh Carey.

Carey asked the attorney general yesterday to submit a written report responding to Bell's charge. At the same time, Lefkowitz said he has been exploring the allegation since it was made. He declined to comment on the merit of the charge.

Simonetti said that the allegation was "both false and shocking" and that "we have held a very open investigation of Attica and we will continue to look at all aspects in a logical and thorough manner."

Before his resignation, Bell conducted most of the grand jury hearings on possible crimes by state troopers, prison guards and other officials in connection with the Attica rebellion.

Although what he termed "substantial evidence" pointed to crimes by law-enforcement officers during the bloody quelling of the four-day Attica uprising.

The 43-year-old lawyer wrote to Lefkowitz that "Mr. Simonetti has repeatedly refused to allow witnesses to be called, questions to be asked, leads to be followed and legal and logical conclusions to be utilized which will allow a fair presentation, leads to be followed and legal and logical conclusions to be utilized which will allow a fair presentation" of the cases to the grand jury.

New York Times