

U.S. Will Ask Court to Dismiss Contempt Case Against Seale

CHICAGO, Sept. 27 (AP) — The Government announced today that it would ask the United States District Court to dismiss contempt charges against Bobby Seale, the Black Panther leader who was an original defendant in the Chicago Seven conspiracy trial.

Mr. Seale, 35 years old, was severed from the other defendants midway in the trial, and Judge Julius J. Hoffman sentenced him to four years in prison on 16 separate counts of contempt.

The United States Court of Appeals for the seventh circuit reversed the sentence earlier this year and ordered a new trial.

James R. Thompson, United States Attorney for Northern Illinois, said that the Government would not seek to prosecute Mr. Seale on the contempt charges.

The appeals court had ruled, in ordering a new trial, that the contempt proceedings must be dropped unless the Government permitted Mr. Seale and his lawyers to inspect transcripts of electronic surveillance introduced in Judge Hoffman's chambers during the trial.

Mr. Thompson said in a letter to Chief Judge Luther M. Swygert:

"It would be inimical to our national security interests to disclose the contents of the transcripts to the defendant as required. Therefore, we conclude that the interests of justice would best be served by withdrawing the contempt charges against Seale."

The Government had previously decided not to bring Mr. Seale to trial on the original charges of conspiracy to cross state lines with the intent to riot at the time of the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968.

Five of the other defendants were convicted of crossing state lines to incite rioting, but they were acquitted of conspiracy to do so. They were sentenced to five years in prison and fined \$5,000 each.

All seven defendants and two defense lawyers were sentenced at the end of the trial in February, 1970, to prison terms for contempt.

The Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit also reversed these sentences and ordered new trials. Appeals of the trial conviction are still pending.