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Magee Trial -Dullsville Revisited

By Harold V. Streeter

The guarded courtroom proceedings behind a \$15,000 bullet-resistant barrier for Ruchell Magee, a San Quentin convict, have become about as exciting as a television rerun.

This morning — as he has eight other times this week — Magee walked out of the court after a 10-minute appearance during which the judge stopped him short lecturing his honor on the law.

The wonder is that the 20 or so spectators who gather daily in the Department 21 courtroom of Superior Judge Morton Colvin on the third floor of the Hall of Justice are willing to undergo the photographing and intimate body search for what they will hear and see.

Yesterday — and the day before that — and today it goes like this:

Magee, who is in the preliminaries before his trial on charges of being a gunman in the quadruple slayings Aug. 7, 1970 at Marin Civic Center, shuffles into the courtroom under escort. Carrying a big brown enve-

lope of papers, he sits down by his bearded attorney, Robert Carrow of Novato, without a greeting. He wants Carrow fired.

Judge Colvin tells Magee he must behave or else be taken out to a holding cell.

Then the judge tries to say what is next on the agenda. Magee grabs the loudspeaker microphone on his desk. He has another in his never ending series of motions.

The quiet-voiced judge tells Magee to speak through his attorney. Magee pays no mind. He holds up a paper.

"Mr. Magee, will you please be quiet," says the judge.

Magee will not.

Having failed to oust the judge and his attorney, he now demands either that the case be transferred to federal court — or somewhere else than the state of California.

The judge has a bailiff bring him Magee's latest handwritten plea. He studies it, says, "Received but not filed."

Magee snorts in disgust, picks up his papers and strides out, with bailiffs fore and aft.

Yesterday, with Magee out of sight in a holding cell, both sides dealt with 73 items of "discovery" — such as what Department of Correction files are available to the defense. Today there's an argument over a defense move to quash the grand jury indictment as unconstitutional.

The subject matter varies. But the modus operandi remains the same. Magee helps see to that.