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EXPERTS DESCRIBE AID TO MISS DAVIS

Black Psychologists Helped
Defense in Jury Selection

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 1 (Reuters)—A group of black psychologists have described how they helped Angela Davis's defense attorneys to pick the all-white jury that acquitted her of murder-conspiracy charges.

The group's role was discussed in a paper presented here yesterday to the annual meeting of the National Association of Black Psychologists.

Five behavioral experts said that they sat through weeks of jury selection last March and observed prospective jurors in San Jose, Calif., courtroom.

Howard Moore, one of Miss Davis's defense attorneys, said that the five psychologists had been very important in helping the defense determine personality traits that would indicate whether or not a juror was likely to acquit Miss Davis.

A black former instructor in philosophy at the University of California, Los Angeles, who is an avowed Communist, Miss Davis was accused of murder, kidnapping and conspiracy in connection with an unsuccessful attempt to free three San Quentin prisoners at gunpoint in August, 1970, at the Marin County Courthouse. Four persons died in the attempt.

A black psychologist, Thomas Hilliard, said in his paper to the convention that the role he and his four colleagues assumed had been very unusual.

Influences on Jurors

"This was a novel approach," he said. "Our belief was that a juror's voting is influenced not only by the court evidence and his own attitude, but by the interaction of his own personality and the group dynamics in the jury room."

Among the factors the psychologists observed without knowledge of the spectators or newsmen attending the trial were whether a prospective juror spoke to other prospective jurors, how jurors acted at lunch periods outside the courtroom and whether these and other actions indicated attitudes toward a black defendant.

In addition, Mr. Hilliard said that the group had also interviewed Miss Davis at length to determine how she should present herself to the jury.

He said, "After volunteering our services to the defense attorneys, our first approach was to interview Miss Davis in depth to get a feel for the type of image she projects and to predict her courtroom behavior."

"We interviewed her on a number of different days to find out if she had transient moods," he went on. "Then, during jury selection, we sat quietly in the courtroom — we had to be very discreet — and we made daily observations on the variable and nonvariable behavior of potential jurors. We made extremely detailed observations which we presented to the attorneys and Miss Davis." He said.

In addition, he said, "We sometimes gave questions to the defense attorneys to obtain the data necessary to arrive at a decision."