

Aloof Jury Foreman

John A. Hoffar

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 1 — When the jury at the Water-gate cover-up trial began its deliberations, defense attorneys were reportedly happy to learn that John A. Hoffar, a retired policeman with the National Park Service's local police force, had been selected as

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foreman. Although he gazed blankly for long periods during the trial, his facial expressions during crucial testimony caused some of the defenders to see him as a friend.

He was one of only two Republicans on the jury — and he was white. The lawyers for the defense, early in the trial, had asserted that the district's black population was anti-Republican, and they argued for a change of venue.

As it turned out, the hope the defense apparently placed in Mr. Hoffar was fruitless.

"The guy has an unquestionable dedication to the principle of right and wrong," said a policeman who had worked for Mr. Hoffar. He asked his name be withheld.

The thin, pale, dark-haired former policeman was at heart a lawman, according to his former compatriots. And neighbors of Mr. Hoffar, almost none of whom knew him very well, agreed that he was the embodiment of rectitude in their middle-class neighborhood on Military Road in the mostly white northwest section of the district.

Retired in 1971

Since his retirement in May, 1971, Mr. Hoffar and his wife, who have no children, have lived quietly in their single-family house. Now 57 years old, Mr. Hoffar retired as a patrol sergeant after 21 years in the department.

Like most of the people who live on the street, which is a heavily used thorough-

fare, the Hoffars are not seen out often, except in the summer, when Mr. Hoffar is very attentive to his yard.

"He's a very meticulous man," one neighbor said. "He even sweeps out the alleyway when the district street cleaners fall down on the job."

Fellow officers admired Mr. Hoffar's style as a policeman. The park police here, who patrol certain parkways and parklands in and around the district, have substantial public contact, although their duties are not so broad as those of the Metropolitan Police Department's officers.

"He was always very good at dealing with people, and he handled his men well," said one officer.

Politeness Noteworthy

"He was very careful with words, and he was polite to the citizens," he said. The officer considered this significant in a city that has a large majority of blacks and where there is danger of conflict between the police and residents.

Former associates do not recall that Mr. Hoffar often expressed any outspoken or elaborate political views. He has not socialized much with many of his former patrolmen associates since his retirement.

Mr. Hoffar married his wife Catherin Ann shortly before his retirement four years ago. Neighbors say the Hoffars have lived in the neighborhood for several years and are among the newest residents.

Mrs. Hoffar firmly declined to speak to reporters.

Neighbors seemed to agree that although the Hoffars were aloof, they were exemplary citizens. "I would call them high-class middle-class people," said Mrs. Leonard Wilbert.