

2 San Francisco Chronicle Tues., June 11, 1968

Jury Selection

The Thoresens' Trial Delayed

By Charles Howe
Chronicle Correspondent

Fresno

The trial of William and Louise Thoresen—gun czar and czarina of San Francisco—was abruptly postponed yesterday for two weeks.

The joint defense motion to defer the matter here until a more "representative jury" can be impaneled was granted by Federal Judge William N. Goodwin.

Defense lawyers successfully argued that some 50 prospective jurors has been

picked almost exclusively from Fresno county.

Fresno county contains only one-third of the total population within the Federal Eastern District, where the matter is being tried. Only one juror was picked from seven other counties within the district, the lawyers contended, depriving the defendants of their rights under the 14th (due process) Amendment to the United States Constitution.

In granting the motion, Judge Goodwin said he will remain here throughout the balance of this week, "as long as it takes to impanel a jury in compliance with the law."

Court is now scheduled to reconvene at 9 a.m. on Monday, June 24.

DISCORD

Earlier in the day, rumblings of marital discord between the handsome young couple came up during a series of other defense motions.

Mrs. Thoresen's lawyers sought to introduce — unsuccessfully — an affidavit whose contents Judge Goodwin said could be interpreted as "grounds for divorce."

Contents of the affidavits were not made public, even though U.S. Attorney Cecil Poole and Thoresen's lawyer, John J. Flynn, sought to give it a full public airing.

SEPARATE

Mrs. Thoresen's alleged disenchantment came up as lawyers for the couple sought, among other things, to get separate trials for the two, who are charged with unlawfully shipping guns and ammunition a cross state lines.

Flynn told the court Louise may "take a position entirely prejudiced" to Thoresen if both are tried together and hinted strongly she might then testify in a manner "so severe" that Thoresen cannot get a fair trial.

Mrs. Thoresen's attorney, Urban A. Lester, declined to say what his future strategy will be. But he, too, unsuccessfully moved for separate trials.

MOTIONS

Matters got off to an otherwise slow start in the morning as Judge Goodwin denied a series of defense motions that would delay or destroy the government's case against the Pacific Heights couple.

A huge man who looks more like a professional football player than a jurist, Goodwin told the Thoresens' lawyers at one point:

"I have reviewed six volumes of testimony. Four or five Federal judges have heard these matters. Sometime, somewhere, we have to get on with the trial."

MUNITIONS

The Thoresens were arrested in April, 1967, in San Francisco after local and Federal police began uncovering what eventually amounted to more than 70 tons of munitions they had coached around the Bay Area.

As motions were brought up — and denied — the young couple looked rather like character actors out of the play, "Separate Tables."

Thoresen doodled on a notepad, while his wife, clad in a brown shift, alternately dozed or looked at the judge.

STRANGERS

The couple spoke to each other only once or twice; they acted like strangers who had nothing to do and no one to do it with.

As the first day of the trial got underway, Judge Goodwin, brought in from the State of Washington to try the case, asked the press to go easy on how it covered the trial, lest a higher court reverse whatever happens here.