Trial of 18 Charged With Conspiracy

By WALTER RUGABER

MERIDIAN, Miss., Oct. 18—
The case of 18 men charged with conspiracy in the 1964 lynching of three young civil rights workers went to an all-white jury in Federal District Court this afternoon.

The panel of five men and seven women retired at 4:24 P.M. and began to consider one of the most celebrated criminal cases to emerge from the direct assault waged on racial segregation in the nineteen-sixties.

The jury began its delibera-tions after a nine-day proceed-ing in which it heard about 160 Government and defense wit-nesses, final arguments by lawyers for both sides, and a charge by United States Dis-trict Court Judge W. Harold

The prosecution itself asked the jurors to acquit one of the 18 defendants. Robert Hauberg. the United States Attorney for Southern Mississippi, said "we do not feel the evidence was sufficient" to convict Travis

M. Barnette, Barnette, a 38-year-old garage mechanic in Meridian, had been mechanic in Meridian, had been identified by the Government as a member of the lynch party. But a key prosecution witness, James E. Jordan, acknowledged during the trial that Barnette was not an actual participant. Judge Cox turned down a defense motion to direct a verdict

fense motion to direct a verdict of acquittal, however, and re-peated his view that to do so before the jury considered the case might prejudice it in reaching a decision on the 17 other defendants.

The jury, drawn from across the southern half of Mississippi has a predominantly working class background. It includes a school cafeteria cook, a laborer, an electrician, a textile worker,

an electrician, a textile worker, and a pipefitter.

The panel also consists of three housewives, a secretary, a clerk, and a grocery store owner. The foreman, Langston S. Anderson of Lumberton, is an oil exploration operator and a member of the state Agricultural and Industrial Board (AIB).

The dead rights workers were

a member of the state Agricultural and Industrial Board (AIB). The dead rights workers were Michael H. Schwerner, 24 years old, of New York, a white field worker for the Congress of Racial Equality; Andrew Goodman, 20, of New York, a white college student, and James E. Chaney, 21, of Meridian, a Negro plasterer.

In a summation of the Government's case by John Doar, the Assistant Attorney General for civil rights, the other defendants were portrayed as the authors of a "diabolical plot" to stage "midnight murder" in nearby Neshoba County.

Mr. Doar pointed dramatically to Cecil R. Price, the chief deputy sheriff of Neshoba County, and charged that the defendant had used "the machinery of his office—the badge, the car, the jail, the gun." to further the conspiracy.

The Government has argued

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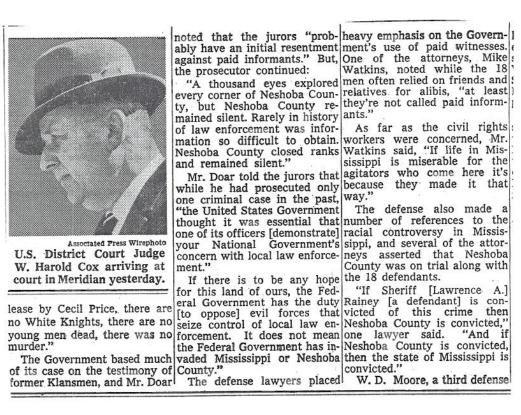
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in Mississippi Goes to All-White Jury

that Mr. Price arrested the three victims on the afternoon of June 21, 1964, released them from jail that night, recaptured them, and turned them over to be shot.

The prosecution has also argued that the lynching stemmed from a plot hatched by the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, an organization established to oppose the civil rights advocates who poured into Mississippi during the summer of 1964.

"If you find them not guilty," Mr. Doar said of the defendants today, "it would be as true to say there was no nighttime re-



political reasons.

The Federal authorities were volve only one person.

awyer, charged that the Government's prosecution was instigated by President Johnson,
Vice President Humphrey, and
Senator Robert F. Kennedy,
Democrat of New York, for
splittical reasons since a conspiracy cannot in-

The Federal authorities were sent into Mississippi in order to bring in a conviction, Mr. Moore said. "They commenced to distribute monye the likes of which I have never heard." Herman Alford, a fourth attorney, declared:

"They (the defendants) are as innocent and pure as the driven snow. They have been harrassed by the Federal Government. Neshoba County is innocent; these defendant are innocent."

Judge Cox, drawing on suggestions from both sides in the case delivered a careful explanation of the legal questions involved. He pointed out that the defendants were accused of conspiracy under Federal law, not murder.

Judge Cox explained to the mer nightclub bouncer.