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KIDNAP DEFENDANT JAILED IN CONTEMPT

PASCAGOULA, Miss., Feb. 5 (UPI)—Travis Buckley, a lawyer, was jailed today for contempt of court shortly after jury selection ended in his trial for kidnaping District Attorney Donald Cumbest said there had been evidence of jury tampering.

Buckley, Billy Roy Pitts, of Laurel, and three other men were accused of kidnaping Jack Watkins, of Pascagoula, last year and trying to force him to give the authorities a statement in connection with the firebomb slaying of Vernon Dahmer, a Negro leader near Hattiesburg in 1966.

Pitts, in a surprise development, pleaded guilty to the kidnaping last year. Circuit Judge Jarwin Maples sentenced him today to five years in prison.

Mr. Cumbest and Judge Maples conferred for about 90 minutes after the jury for Buckley's trial was empaneled. Then the judge said that "due to circumstances which arose last night and this morning" the jury was being dismissed until Wednesday.

"I find you in contempt of court and you're going to jail," he told Buckley. The judge did not disclose his reason for citing Buckley for contempt, although Mr. Cumbest said he might ask for a grand jury this week to look into the matter.

Buckley, a Bay Springs lawyer, was indicted with 11 other white men last month on state charges in the Dahmer slaying.

The whereabouts of Pitts, 25 years old, an alleged Ku Klux Klansman, had been a secret since his guilty plea last year. He was accompanied to court by a United States Marshal.

Lawyer Faces Sentencing in Kidnap Case

PASCAGOULA, Miss. (AP) — Lawyer Travis Buckley goes before Circuit Judge Darwin Maples again today to be sentenced for kidnaping and to answer charges he tried to tamper with a jury.

Buckley, 33, and his attorney, Albert Sidney Johnston III, were named yesterday in an indictment for conspiring to obstruct justice by influencing the first jury called for Buckley's kidnaping trial. In addition, Buckley was accused of obstructing justice in an attempt at tampering.

The first venire was called Monday and Buckley was cited for contempt of court, then a special panel was called for the kidnaping trial, which began Tuesday.

Buckley was convicted Wednesday and could receive a 10-year sentence.

The charges against Buckley and Johnston are misdemeanors. Johnston posted \$500 bond. Buckley was in the Jackson County jail.

The case is one of many confusing developments of the January, 1966, firebomb death of Vernon F. Dahmer Sr., a Hattiesburg area Negro businessman active in voter registration.

Buckley was defense attorney for 11 of the 12 men who were indicted on federal charges of conspiring to deprive Dahmer of his civil rights.

Buckley, in addition, is under state charges of arson in the Dahmer case. Eleven other men were indicted at the same time on charges of arson or murder and arson.