

Conviction Of Klansmen Makes A Brand New South

MERIDIAN, Miss. - (NPI)--The Ku Klux Klan received one of its first setbacks in this state when seven Ku Klux Klansmen--one, a deputy sheriff--were convicted of "conspiracy" by an all-white jury in the 1964 slaying of three young civil rights workers.

The hooded hoods will be sentenced late this week. At least one of them is expected to receive the maximum penalty of 10 years' imprisonment and \$5,000 fine.

As the 12-day trial ended, U.S. District Judge Harold Cox accused two of those convicted--Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price and Alton Wayne Roberts, 28-year-old former Meridian night club bouncer--of threatening to bomb him. Declaring that he would not let "any wild man loose on civilized society," he ordered them jailed without bond.

"It would be unthinkable for the jury to bring in any other verdict than guilty on this defendant," the judge added, with reference to Roberts.

"Nobody will have to be frightened or concerned about his bluster or bluff for a long time," Judge Cox said, hinting that he may impose the maximum penalty on Roberts.

Conviction of the seven hooded hoods was unbelievable in a state where killing civil rights

workers has long been ignored.

A NEW ERA of interracial justice appeared to be on the way. And not too happy at the prospect were another group of Klansmen, who are to go on trial Nov. 13 in the 1966 firebomb death of Hattiesburg civil rights leader Vernon Dahmer.

Cox will preside at the Hattiesburg trial, as he did in Meridian.

Sam H. Bowers, Jr., of Laurel, one of the 18 tried at Meridian, is also accused in the Dahmer case. The FBI has identified Bowers as imperial wizard of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

According to the FBI, the Klan masterminded the death of Dahmer and also the slaying of civil rights workers Michael Schwerner, 24, and Andrew Goodman, 20, both white New Yorkers, and James Chaney, 22, a Negro from Meridian.

The cases have had to go to federal court because state courts have failed to act. As murder is not a federal crime, those accused in civil rights slayings must be tried on "conspiracy" charges with a maximum of 10 years' imprisonment.

ADDED DUTIES FOR JUSTICE MARSHALL

CHICAGO - (NPI)--The appointment of newly installed Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall to the additional post of Circuit Justice for the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals for Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana, was announced last week.

The new appointment means that, in addition to his Supreme Court duties, the history-making Marshall will act on certain motions, such as requests for extensions of time for the Court of Appeals. He will also represent the Supreme Court at the Circuit's next judicial conferences in May.

Marshall's predecessor on the high court, ex-Justice Tom C. Clark, also represented the Supreme Court in the Seventh Circuit.

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