

A black woman suffering 'justice'

Editor's note: The following is reprinted from the Buffalo Challenger, a black weekly newspaper. Mrs. Geraldine Robinson, originally scheduled to be sentenced on June 20 now faces sentencing on September 4.

Once again a member of the black community has been singled out and made to suffer under the hand of the Buffalo city government. Mrs. Geraldine Robinson, who resides with her five children at 15 Storz, was convicted last Thursday night for sale of narcotics and interfering with an arrest. Her trial took place one year and ten months after the alleged sale on July 14, 1967. That was a long time black community have not forgotten the circumstances surrounding

Mrs. Robinson and her co-defendant, Martin Sostre's arrests.

Earlier in July of 1967 Martin Sostre's Afro-Asian Bookstore at 1412 Jefferson was drenched with high power fire hoses and the plate glass windows were broken. The fire at the nearby tavern had not posed any threat to the bookstore, but the police directed the destruction of the store because they felt the threat of the books about black liberation and black nationalism being sold there.

July raid

This intimidation did not close down the bookstore, however. Immediately creative displays of pictures and literature of interest to the black community were pasted by Mr. Sostre over the plywood enclosures which replaced the broken windows.

It was on the night of July 14, then, when police again came down on Sostre's bookstore. Martin Sostre was arrested in the raid and charged with two counts of sale of narcotics, inciting to riot, arson and resisting arrest. Mrs. Robinson was charged with sale of narcotics and interfering with arrest.

The "inciting to riot" and "arson" charges against Mr. Sostre were later dropped testifying to the absurdity of charging one man for the June - 1967 Buffalo rebellion.

Contradictory testimony

Geraldine's Black defense attorney, Mr. Charles T. McKinney of New York City conducted a detailed and revealing

defense on her behalf. All the witnesses for the prosecution Mr. McKinney cross-examined contradicted both themselves and the testimony of other witnesses. The errors included such things as the amount of money alleged to have been used in the transaction, to whom the money was given and when, where and by whom each of the bills was alleged to have been marked. The serial numbers of the bills were supposed to have been recorded at police headquarters, but no copy of such numbers was produced as evidence. Lacking minimal proof to establish them as evidence, the five one dollar bills alleged to have been used in the sale and later found in Mrs. Robinson's purse were not even admissible as evidence!!

No proof

The heroin supposedly sold to the informant, Arto Williams, could not be even remotely traced to Sostre or Mrs. Robinson. The informant also said he had gone to school with Mrs. Robinson (to

establish recognition and credibility of testimony), but Mrs. Robinson attended an all-girls high school!

Also, a witness for the prosecution testifies that he had observed the bookstore for a period of time through a telescopic lens across the street. But, when cross-examined by Mr. McKinney, he had to admit that he had no pictures as proof of his observations - even though his telescopic lens was attached to a camera and he was supposed to be eye-witnessing a crime! Further when he was aware that the informer was about to make the alleged "buy" at the bookstore, he said he left the police station after dark with the wrong film for taking night time pictures in his camera. Despite this obvious fabrication, he testified that he saw "the whole thing" - right through the plywood enclosures and the state troopers standing in the doorway.

Justice?

The other "proof" offered by the prosecution was similarly

dismantled by Mr. McKinney. The "justice" of the white courts in America again became glaringly evident during the course of this trial, i.e., no justice for black people.

The all-white, predominantly male jury still found such ridiculous testimony as proof - beyond a reasonable doubt - of Geraldine's guilt!

Immediately after the verdict was given, the court attempted to remand Mrs. Robinson to the Erie County jail. Only through the vehement pleadings of Mr. McKinney was Judge Colucci persuaded to allow Geraldine to remain on bail until noon Monday, June 2. At that time she had to produce another \$5000 bail (she has been free since July of 1967 on \$5000). This is just another example of intimidation of members of the black community who rarely have the money to meet such exorbitant bails.

Mrs. Robinson's trial is over, but she hasn't been incarcerated yet. Both she and Martin Sostre will appeal their cases.

Famous
Last
Words
of 1968

"Safety belts? Too much fuss and bother."
—Janet Body (1921-1968)
What's your excuse?



'Higher!'

Sly and the Family Stone will headline Sunday's Kleinhans Music Hall performance. Appearing with them at the 8 p.m. show will be the Sir Douglas Quintet and the Cism Revival.

Art Show—Paintings and sculptures on trees, on grass, surrounded by the Hudson valley, will be displayed. Accomplished artists, "Ghetto" artists, and would-be artists will be glad to discuss their work, or the unspoiled splendor of the surroundings, or anything else that might be on your mind. If you're an artist, and you want to display, write for information.

Crafts Bazaar—If you like creative knickknacks and old junk you'll love roaming around our bazaar. You'll see imaginative leather, ceramic, bead, and silver creations as well as Zodiac Charts, camp clothes, and worn out shoes.

Work Shops—If you like playing with beads, or improvising on a

guitar, or writing poetry, or molding clay, stop by one of our work shops and see what you can give and take.

Food—There will be cokes and hot dogs and dozens of curious food and fruit combinations to experiment with.

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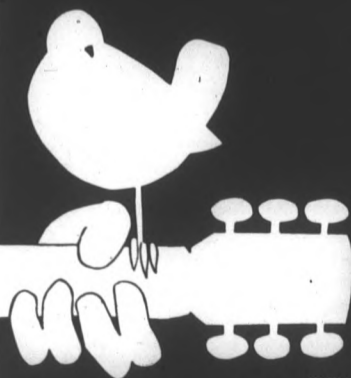
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All programs subject to change without notice.