

THE HERALD-NEWS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 1967

A Well-Handled Murder Case

THE conviction of Rubin Carter and John Artis of Paterson for the brutal, senseless killing of a bartender and two patrons in a Paterson saloon was the climax of a job well done by Prosecutor Thevos and his staff.

The investigation of the grisly case was handled by the authorities unhurriedly, without fanfare and with most careful consideration for the rights of the murderers. The killings, done with shotgun and revolver, occurred on June 17, 1966. It was not until the middle of last October that Carter and Artis were arrested and charged with murder, although they had been stopped on the street several blocks from the scene a quarter-hour after the killings for questioning and subsequently testified before the grand jury investigating the murders.

The defendants had their innings before the trial started. They sought to be released on bail, tried to find out who the state's eye-

witnesses were and to suppress evidence at the coming trial, and asked that the indictments be dismissed. Not until they had exhausted legal maneuvers did the trial open on April 17.

The jury was chosen with exceptional care. Before the selection of the jury of 14 (12 jurors and two alternates) was completed on May 8, a total of 377 prospective jurors had been questioned. Testimony at the trial took 29 days more.

The jury's verdict was guilty of murder in the first degree with a recommendation of mercy. This normally means that in 15 years the defendants will be eligible to ask for freedom, although in this instance, because three persons were killed, they may face a longer mandatory term.

The verdict was not a triumph for justice. The authorities and the jury had a painful, difficult duty to do and they did it. For that, they are deserving of the public's thanks.