

Baltimore Morning Sun
July 3, 1979

Mandel case perjury punished

Donna B. Brown, who was found guilty in April of lying to a federal grand jury investigating jury tampering in the case of former Governor Mandel, was sentenced yesterday to four months in a work release program.

Evidence at her trial showed that Mrs. Brown told jurors that she knew nothing about an attempt to buy secret information from her best friend, Diane Lawrence, who served earlier on the grand jury that indicted Mr. Mandel and others.

In sentencing Mrs. Brown, 35, Judge Frank A. Kaufman commented that Mrs. Brown's statement to the grand jury "was the clearest case of perjury I have ever encountered." He added that the sentence was expected to be "a deterrent to others."

As explained by Judge Kaufman, Mrs. Brown will be required to spend four months in federal custody but will be released each day to go to her job in a Rosedale optical store.

The judge said he would recommend a local jail for her confinement and direct that federal probation officials and marshals work out a way to provide her with transportation and lunch, which was to be "not in a party place."

After four months, Mrs. Brown will be placed on parole for another eight months, making a full year of federal supervision. Judge Kaufman said he was concerned that Mrs. Brown face some confinement but not lose her job.

In a separate trial, Mrs. Brown and her husband, Robert, were charged with offering money to Mrs. Lawrence in exchange for information about the investigation of Mr. Mandel and his associates.

They were found innocent of those charges.

Federal prosecutors claimed that Mrs. Brown hoped to get \$1 million by selling the information on the progress of the investigation to a Harford county paving contractor, who said that one of Mr. Mandel's friends was interested.

However, Mrs. Brown, through her lawyer, Harold Buchman, convinced a jury that she and her husband were innocent of actually attempting to tamper with the federal grand jury investigation.

Mr. Buchman contended that the entire incident arose out of a conversation in a Baltimore county nightclub where the defendant was just "joking around" with her friend.

Kurt L. Schmoke, one of the federal prosecutors, said yesterday that his office felt a prison term was necessary after Mrs. Brown's perjury conviction as a way of preventing others from lying to grand juries.