

# Woman charged with bid to bribe a Mandel juror

By SHERIDAN LYONS

A federal grand jury charged a Glen Burnie woman yesterday with attempting to buy information in October, 1975, from a member of the grand jury that indicted Marvin Mandel a month later.

Donna B. Brown, 35, of the 300 block Monticello court, is also charged in three other counts with making false statements under oath to a special grand jury in 1978.

She is an employee of the optical department of Montgomery Ward & Co.

Mrs. Brown is accused of offering Diane Lawrence, 36, a member of the 1975 grand jury, an undisclosed amount of money in return for information about the grand jury's investigation of Marlboro Race Track and other matters.

Mrs. Lawrence reported the offer immediately to the United States attorney's office and co-operated in an effort to learn who might be behind the offer and what information they wanted, said Russell T. Baker, Jr., now United States attorney for Maryland.

According to the indictment, which was returned by the grand jury that handles routine criminal matters, Mrs. Brown told the special grand jury October 30, 1978, that she knew nothing about the offer to Mrs. Lawrence.

Portions of the grand jury transcript for that day, included in the indictment, cite a statement by the prosecutor that Mrs. Lawrence asked Mrs. Brown whether the people interested in the information were "for real" and "serious" and asked Mrs. Brown "for some money up front."

Mrs. Brown testified that nothing like that ever happened, according to the indictment.

Mr. Baker refused to say why Mrs. Brown was charged more than three years after the alleged attempt to buy information or to identify her further. The time limit for prosecuting the charges is five years.

The special grand jury before which Mrs. Brown testified also has been making renewed efforts to determine who was behind two efforts to fix the first trial of former Governor Mandel, which ended in a

mistrial in December, 1976, after several trial jurors saw news reports of attempts to influence the jury.

Barnet D. Skolnik, the former assistant U.S. attorney who prosecuted the Mandel case, has been participating in the new grand jury investigation. Mr. Skolnik recently left the prosecutor's office for private law practice, but has been given the title of special assistant for the renewed investigation.

A federal appeals court last month reversed the convictions of the former governor and his five co-defendants on mail fraud and racketeering charges. The six were convicted in August, 1977, after testimony that Mr. Mandel accepted thousands of dollars in gifts and bribes in return for his influence on legislation that would increase the value of his friends' financial interest in Marlboro Race Track.

The prosecution has until February 24 to ask the appeals court for permission to argue for re-instatement of the convictions.

Sources said that the new grand jury was again trying to learn who may have been behind the two attempts, but that its investigation may not lead to any significant charges being placed.

Walter Weikers, 69, a former Pikesville furniture salesman who was convicted of offering a \$10,000 bribe to a juror at the first Mandel trial, appeared before the special grand jury last October 30. Weikers served 17 months in jail for the jury tampering attempt that led to the mistrial.

The grand jury also has called witnesses in search of information about Charles E. Neiswender, of New Jersey, who was convicted of obstruction of justice for offering to fix the outcome of the first trial.

## Index

Bridge.....	B4	Movies.....	B6
Business.....	A13	Obituaries.....	A12
Comics.....	B7	Shipping.....	A15
Crossword.....	B7	Sports.....	C5
Editorials.....	A18	TV-Radio.....	B5
Lotteries.....	C7	Weather.....	C2

3 sections

Baltimore Morning Sun, Feb. 7, 1979