BRARY

Supreme Court of the United States

OCTOBER TERM

In the Matter of:

JOHN DAVIS,

Petitioner;

vs.

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI,

Respondent.

:

Office-Supreme Court, U.S.
FILED

MAR 11 1969

JOHN F. BAVIS, CLERK

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Place

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Date

February 26 1969

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IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

October Term, 1968

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John Davis,

Petitioner,

v. : No. 645

Mississippi,

Respondent.

Washington, D. C. Wednesday, February 26, 1969.

The above-entitled matter came on for argument at

1:57 p.m.

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BEFORE:

EARL WARREN, Chief Justice
HUGO L. BLACK, Associate Justice
WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS, Associate Justice
JOHN M. HARLAN, Associate Justice
WILLIAM J. BRENNAN, JR., Associate Justice
POTTER STEWART, Associate Justice
BYRON R. WHITE, Associate Justice
THURGOOD MARSHALL, Associate Justice

APPEARANCES:

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PROCEEDINGS

MR. CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: No. 645, John Davis, Petitioner versus Mississippi.

THE CLERK: Counsel are present.

MR. CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Mr. Zarr.

ORAL ARGUMENT OF MELVYN ZARR, ESQ.

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER

MR. ZARR: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it please the Court.

This case is here on writ of certiorari to the Supreme Court of Mississippi, to review petitioner's criminal conviction. Particular, John Davis, a 14-year old Negro boy was convicted of raping an 86-year old white woman for whom he had done yard work and he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

This court granted Petitioner's petition for writ of certiorari to consider whether the police conduct evidenced by this case contrary to the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States and if so, whether the product of that illegal police conduct, Petitioner's finger-prints, was properly admitted into evidence at Petitioner's trial.

Briefly the facts are these.

Starting December 3, 1965, the police of Meridian,
Mississippi, took into custody for investigation some 65 to 70
Negro boys. Now what they were investigating was a complaint

6.00

of rape by an 86-year old white woman who had reported to the police that she had been attacked in her home by a Negro youth, on the evening of December 2nd, apparently around 7 o'clock.

The nature of her description is uncertain but its quality can be inferred from the number of suspects it appeared to cover.

Two partial fingerprints had been found on the outside of a window and a partial palm print had been found on the
inside of the window sill. On this basis the dragnet began.

Particular, a 14-year old Negro boy who had done yard work for the woman was one of the 65 to 70 Negro boys taken into custody. Petitioner was taken to police headquarters on December 3rd, questioned, fingerprinted and released. The others apparently went through a similar procedure.

Now it is quite clear from the record that there was no warrant for petitioner's detention. Why? The reason is best capsulized in Respondent's brief at page 2 in these terms and it is quoted that none of these 65 or 70 who were interrogated or picked up were suspects but were only interrogated and printed by the police in an effort to get leads to establish probable cause to arrest the guilty party.

That is at page 2 of Respondent's brief.

Now at that December 3rd detention which was the Petitioner's first detention, he was fingerprinted and those sets I will show refer to as a first set. They were never

analyzed or introduced into evidence and nothing further has been heard of them.

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Now between December 3rd and 7th, he was taken into custody in the words of the police juvenile officer Keller about four or five times. Officer Keller testified that he was picked up in an attempt to get leads. Those are his words.

And on at least one occasion Petitioner was taken to the hospital and exhibited to the prosecutrix for a "gage to go by on size and color." However, there was apparently no positive identification even though the record is clear that the petitioner had done some yard work for her as recently as two weeks before.

The last detention from which the fingerprints that were introduced into evidence, the second set was gained, began on December 12th, again without a warrant. He was driven to Jackson and picked up by Officer Keller and Chief Beddingfield, kept overnight in a Jackson jail, given a lie detector test the following day and returned to the Meridian jail.

On December 14th this second set was taken and sent off to the FBI laboratory in Washington, together with the prints of approximately 23 other Negro boys who were still under suspicion at that time.

On December 14th, although the record does not show it, he was charged with juvenile delinquency for breaking into the woman's home. Three days later his case was certified by

the juvenile judge after hearings in the Circuit Court of Lauderdale County, in which court he was indicted and tried.

- Q What was the -- breaking into the woman's home part of the same offense?
 - A Yes, sir.

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- Q He has now been tried and convicted?
- A Yes, sir.
- Q I see.

A At the trial the testimony presented by the State -- well, before I get to that, let me first say that preliminarily Petitioner's counsel moved to suppress the introduction evidence of the second set of fingerprints as violative of his rights under the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments. After a hearing his motion was denied.

The prosecution's case consisted of the woman's testimony which is capsulized at pages 4 and 5 of our brief to the effect that he had done yard work for her, a description of the attack which is contained, set out in the brief, there was no medical evidence. The second set of fingerprints came in over objection and he was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

- Q Why were the second set of fingerprints used rather than the first?
- A I have no idea, your Honor. The testimony in the record when that was asked by Mr. Young of the Detective

Skyborough. He merely said that they were very busy and they just never got around to sending the first set out.

Q Would it make any difference to you which set was used?

A No, sir, except for this: The Respondent argues that even assuming, for purposes of arguing which he is willing to do that the second attempt — and that is the last attempt — and that is December 12th which yielded the second set, even assuming that that detention was illegal this court should still uphold the conviction because on a retrial this first set which possibly is setting in the file someplace ——

Q And the probable cause for arrest applies to the first set of circumstances, too?

A Yes, sir.

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Q Well there might not have been any arrest at the first occasion?

A Yes, we contend that there was, your Honor.

Q I know you do but the facts are different.

A Well, your Honor, the only testimony as to this first detention which we call an arrest, that of December 3rd, was by Officer Griffin on page 6 and Officer Thompson on page 6 and 7, he was asked the question, "Did you have occasion on December 3rd, last year, to arrest John Davis?"

"I did.

"Can you tell the Court whether or not you had a

warrant for his arrest?

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The answer, "I did not.

Question, "You did not have a warrant for his arrest?"

Almost the identical testimony was conducted by

Mr. Young of Mr. Thompson, Officer Thompson, and that is the only evidence in the record about that December 3rd arrest.

- Q Well, they didn't take him to the station house did they? The first occasion?
 - A Yes, they did.
 - Q Oh, they did?
 - A Yes, they did. On December 3rd.
- Q And then on December 12th which you now tell us was the time that the fingerprints were taken that were actually used, where is the testimony about that episode, I mean the circumstances of the arrest?

A It is scattered throughout the record, your Honor. On page 8 the Police Chief Beddingfield testified near the middle of the page that he went with the Petitioner to Jackson on the 12th. On page 10 Officer Kelbr testified near the bottom of the page,

"Question: Now when you picked him up, did you have a warrant at that time for his arrest?

"Answer: No."

A few lines previous to that his testimony was to the effect that they in fact did pick him up on the 12th. The

Mississippi Supreme Court held that on the 12th he was arrested.

Page 58 of the appendix, about ten lines down, it says, "However, on December 12th, appellant after he was arrested, brought to Jackson and subjected to a lie detector test" of course that is supported by the record.

Let me back up for one moment and discuss what the Mississippi Supreme Court held. Two things.

One, that the detention yielding the prints was not an arrest. This apparently based on the mistaken assumption that the prints had been taken as a result of the first detention. Those that were introduced in evidence were the product of the first detention, and secondly, apparently alternatively, the prints should not be excluded because they are authentic.

Now, Respondent argues and I better complete this argument that even though, even assuming arguendo that the prints, the second set of prints, are to be excludable as a result of an illegal arrest, the conviction must yet be affirmed, because on an assured retrial the first set which is presumably lying around someplace hasn't been used, could be introduced and, therefore, to reverse this conviction would be a "useless gesture".

Quoting from the brief at page 8 to reverse this conviction only to permit the first set of prints to be introduced in evidence at John's retrial. This argument, of course,

assumes that the first detention was legal and we maintain quite the contrary and urge the court to set at rest the constitutional salients of both sets of prints in order to forestall the necessity of further review by this court.

Q What if both sets were excludable, what about still another set?

A Well, your Honor, we assume that traditional scope ortaint principles will apply and the petitioner would be free at some subsequent time if there is a trial to challenge a new set of prints as the product of the original taint.

Q What if the police just go around to his house and ask him for his fingerprints? And he says no, and they say well we want them anyway and we are going to take them and they get his fingerprints?

A You mean not in this case, your Honor, but just in some hypothetical ---

- Q No, in this case. Assume it is reversed.
- A Yes.

Q And they say, well, we will go around and get his fingerprints now. They go around to his house and say, "Give us your fingerprints," and he says, "No." And they take his fingerprints. That is all they do is take his fingerprints.

A I would assume, your Honor, that they would have to go to his house if they were willing to do this legally this time, with a warrant, and it would depend upon what that warrant

was based on. If, in fact, it was based on her affidavit, Mrs. Key's affidavit, the prosecutrix' affidavit, and that affidavit was in fact tainted by this price of the fingerprints, then we would assume the Scope of Taint Principles would apply and actually be excluded.

But it would upon what the facts at a later hearing ---

Q But you say there is no way, no legal way that officers may, or the police or investigators may get a set of fingerprints of a suspect until and unless they have probable cause to arrest as long as he objects to it?

May be a narrow exception for true voluntary detention. In think that it is possible that one could conceive of a situation which a citizen actually voluntarily gave his prints in order to eliminate any suspicion of himself.

But, of course, this court's voluntariness test would have to apply. He would have to knowingly and freely and voluntarily give up his prints and knowing that he could refuse and nothing would happen to him that he would have to knowingly give up his prints.

- Q Didn't this lady identify him at the trial?
- A Yes, she did, your Honor.
- Q And on sworn testimony that is the man?
- A Yes, sir. She said she was pretty sure.
- Q And do you suppose a warrant could issue on that

kind for his arrest now?

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A It might very well, your Honor. And then we would be free to argue, we contend, that the affidavit with that warrant was tainted.

- Q By what?
- A By the fact that he had already been convicted and apparently her testimony ---
 - Q Yes, but she testified at the trial?
- A Yes, sir, but her testimony at the time was influenced very much by what the police had done to him, including this statement he confessed it all. I think that we would be free to argue. This would be open, a retrial, I think your Honor that was tainted. I am not sure the court has to get into it at this point.

It seems just sufficient to say the petitioner would be able to argue at some subsequent proceeding that a new set, however obtained, was tainted.

- Q I assume that she is still living?
- A I believe so.
- Q She would be 90 now?
- A Just about, your Honor.
- Q But you do have, what appears to be, her positive identification of him made under oath occurring at page 5 in your brief and certainly now if this conviction is reversed, there would be plenty of probable cause to arrest him, wouldn't

there be?

A Your Honor, yes, and that is what you put your finger on what is essentially fishy about this case. That is, her original identification was apparently so fuzzy that it covered these 65 to 70 at the hospital, sometime prior to the 12th and after the 3rd, she wasn't able to identify positively the petitioner and now a year later she is able to say that she is pretty sure that it was Johnny.

Q No, she says, no doubt in my mind about it.

Page 5 of your brief.

A Well, she says at another point that she is pretty sure.

Q "Over yonder in that white shire, yes sir, that's him. No doubt in my mind about it."

A On page 30 of the ---

Q Wasn't she cross-examined about her previous identification for her failure to identify?

A No, no, she was not.

Q She wasn't?

A No, she was not, your Honor. The only testimony by the hospital, failure to identify positively in the hospital was by a juvenile officer Keller on page 51.

He questioned did Mrs. Key identify him? The answer, "Not positively."

"Question: Mr. Keller, did you say that Mrs. Key did

not identify the defendant at the hospital?

"Answer: That is right."

That is all that is in the record about that hospital identification.

- Q I have a great problem with your point that if a statement is made under oath that this man is guilty of raping me the fact that she wasn't sure before makes that statement under oath insufficient for probable cause for warrant. I have great problems with that.
 - A I do, too, your Honor.
 - Q You did seem to know ---
 - A My point, your Honor, is this ---
- Q The point that was asked was on the basis of her testimony if a new trial is granted couldn't they get a new set of fingerprints and you said no.
- A I was willing to assume they might. And my only point was that if there were a new warrant that this court need decide nothing about that at this time, my only point was that the petitioner would be free to argue at some future time that a new set was tainted. That is all my point was, your Honor.
- Q Where does it appear in the record about her previous inability to identify the defendant?
- A Your Honor, the only testimony that I cited was on page 51 of the appendix where the police juvenile officer in describing one of those detentions between the 3rd and the

12th he said it was somewhere around the 5th, 6th or 7th, referred to that hospital short.

- Q And yet she was never cross-examined about that?
- A That is right, your Honor.

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Q Nor was the gentleman called the witness, well I guess he was. Yes, he was.

A Now we assert that both arrests, the first and the last are illegal. But first we have to deal with the decision by the court below that although the second detention was an arrest the first detention was not. And why?

Well, both times that he was taken into custody, detained at the station house, interrogated and fingerprinted, but the difference the court below holds is that the first time the police had no intention of charging the crime but merely wanted to investigate it.

There are two answers to this. The first is that there was no testimony about police intention as to December 3rd. The only testimony as to the arrest of December 3rd is that which I have quoted from earlier, pages 6 and 7 of the record, by the arresting officers.

There is a sharper answer called for in this case.

The fact is this. The fact that the officers had an investigative intent only in taking him to the station December 3rd, does not dispense with the constitutional requirements in obtaining a warrant or under circumstances where a warrant may

be excused, showing a probable cause.

To the contrary, and this is our central point in the case, to the contrary the fact that there was an investigative intention only reinforces the illegality of the detention, reinforces the conclusion that there was a violation of constitutional safeguards.

Because you can't get a warrant under the law of the land for an investigative arrest and you can't show probable cause or you can't take someone down to the station in order to get probable cause to detain him further.

Q Your argument is this: It is entirely based on the Fourth Amendment aspect or the Fourteenth Amendment, isn't it?

- A Yes, sir.
- Q Entirely?
- A Entirely.
- Q Not at all on the Fifth Amendment aspects nor on generalized due process?
 - A No, your Honor.
 - Q Explicitly on the Fourth on the illegal arrest?
 - A That was compelled by Schmerber.
- Q What else happened during this period of the detention?
- A Well, your Honor, let me capsule and go over it again and see if we can narrow it down.

There was the arrest of December 3rd, the number of pickups by Keller between the 3rd and the 12th, he said four or five times in attempts to get leads and the final detention of December 12th from which he has never been released and that simply is it.

Do you want to direct my attention to ---

Q No, I just wondered -- these fingerprints were not the result of the arrest necessarily. Those are his finger-prints whenever they had been taken. I just wondered what else happened at the time his fingerprints were taken on the 12th.

Was he interrogated?

- A Well, he was taken 90 miles, given a lie detector test.
 - Q That was later?
 - A Yes.
 - Q Over to Jackson?
- A Yes. And then brought back, kept some more in the jail and finally his prints were taken the 14th and those were sent out to Washington and those were introduced in evidence. That was called the second set.
- Q And fingerprints of what, 23 or 24 other young Negroes were sent to Washington in connection with this case?
 - A Yes, your Honor.
 - Q The record shows?
 - A On the 14th. The same day that the second set

were taken.

Q Had all those 23 or 24 been arrested? Does the record show?

A It is best one refer to it. It is a very skimpy record, your Honor. The best I can tell, though, the same kind of treatment had been meted out to them. They were taken to the station house ---

Q Taken over to Jackson and given a lie detector test?

- A Oh, no, I don't think ---
- Q Not that?
- A No, I don't think that.

Therefore, to return to the thread of my argument the failure to obtain a warrant or to make any attempt to show probable cause for the two arrests is explainable by the fact that this is just an investigation, an investigative arrest but is not excusable.

Now, I turn to the warrant point. The record is clear that there was no warrant for his arrest, both on the 3rd and 12th. As I indicated the police can't get a warrant under the law of the land for such an investigative attempt so that we can understand why no warrant was obtained, even though we cannot excuse it.

I see my time is running short so I will ---

Q What if they just hadn't arrested him at all,

but what if they had just gone to a neighborhood and said we want to take the fingerprints of all young Negroes in this neighborhood between the ages of 15 and 20?

A Your Honor, I think that under most circumstances you would actually have to have an arrest warrant in order to take their fingerprints except ---

- Q Why? My fingerprints are on file with the FBI just because I was in the military service.
 - Q The boy that refuses to give them voluntarily?
- A Well, that is like the stop and frisk problem, they escalate into a situation where he then becomes under greater suspicion.

I am willing to concede that there may be a very narrow category of cases called voluntary giving of fingerprint cases in which the person knows that nothing will happen to him if he refuses to comply. But that is not this case.

Q Well, my question really is, is it your claim at all that the taking of his fingerprints as such violated any provision of the Constitution?

A No, your Honor.

Our contention is grounded upon the fact ---

- Q It is only at the time and place when they were taken he was under you say illegal arrest?
- A Yes, sir. Our contention is grounded upon the fact that it was illegal police conduct, outrageously illegal

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police conduct and the fact that these fingerprints were the product of this illegal police conduct means that if the exclusionary rule means anything that these fingerprints should be excluded.

Yes, but in the argument saying that if they did go around the neighborhood and take the fingerprints and he says no and they say we are going to get them anyway and they take his fingerprints right there on the pot and turn him loose.

- You have to have a warrant for that.
- That is right. So you do say that to take involuntary taking of fingerprints violates the Fourth Amendment?
 - Yes, sir, without a warrant. A
 - Without a warrant? 0
 - A Yes, sir.
 - Or without a legal arrest? 0
- That is right unless there is one of these narrow category cases that is really voluntary giving of fingerprints.
 - I know but I thought everybody was involuntary.
- Let me continue quickly to the point that there was no attempt to show the cause for either arrest, that of December 3rd or December 12th, again it was impossible for the police to do so. It is clear from the record that all they wanted to do was to investigate.

Well finally I come to the court below's ruling that

fingerprints are excluded from the operation of the exclusionary ruling in the Fourth Amendment.

I start with this Court's landmark ruling in Napthe,
Ohio that all evidence obtained by searches and seizures in
violation of the Constitution is inadmissible in State proceedings.

I do want to save some time for rebuttal and so I think I will stop here.

The argument on fingerprints and their subjection to the exclusionary rule is contained in our brief and I will save the remaining time for rebuttal.

MR. CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: Mr. Lyell.

ORAL ARGUMENT OF G. GARLAND LYELL, JR., ESQ.

ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT

MR. LYELL: Mr. Chief Justice and may it please the Court.

I will be as brief as possible. I concede that most of the things that counsel has argued and that no probable cause appearing in this record of the second arrest and I really am not concerned with the second arrest. And I don't mean to use that word second arrest in the sense that there was a first.

Because the State's position is this: That there is a heinous crime, unsolved. The only leads they have got is two latent fingerprints from the window sill and the window pane with a big component.

This has got nothing to do with the merits of the case but the Court might be interested to know that this Mrs. Key is the mother of Al and Fred Key, who in the 30's set the world's endurance flight plane record, plane flight record which still stands. They kept a light in the air over something 30 some days.

Now here we have this crime. Now the record is slim as to what led the police to pick this boy up but evidently he was one of the first, if not the first picked up, and interrogated.

I tried him on the proposition to please the court generalized statements from cases like Culombe versus

Connecticut, which was reversed for other reasons that this is a general inquiry into an unsolved crime.

And often there is little else the police can do
than to interrogate suspects as an independent part of a
criminal investigation and to further quote from the opinion
and probable the most restricted case this court has ever
handed down on a criminal investigation, Miranda, general on-thescene questioning as to facts surrounding a crime.

I wish to emphasize this language, or other general questioning of citizens in the fact-finding process is not affected by a holding. And further, that fingerprints for all the different categories, testimony levels, is held in Schmerber versus California, that even the taking of blood over objection

was declared proper as long as it is done in clinical conditions as it was done in that case.

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Q While you are on Miranda, didn't Miranda also say when a person was being held in restraint?

A Mr. Justice Marshall, if the State possesses that in a case of this kind where you have got no positive identity and the record is slim as to what leads the police could get from Mrs. Key.

I believe the original Mississippi Supreme Court record is here and you will see pictures of Mrs. Key in her hospital bed with bruises about the face and I think on the neck, and it is just my conjecture that in her age and having gone through what she had she was not in a position to give very much information.

But suffice to say, our State Supreme Court went along with my argument that this boy, and incidentally he was only 14 at the time of this, and I am satisfied that because of his youth that he didn't get the death penalty. His youth and the age of the victim.

Q My question was, was he in restraint when the fingerprints were taken?

A My answer, sir, is this: He was in restraint, but not under arrest in the legal sense of the word.

- Q Well, doesn't restraint put him under Miranda?
- A Well, Miranda has only to do with testimonial

evidence, Mr. Justice Marshall.

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A Yes, well you have said that this was distinguished from Miranda. I was waiting to get to where you were going to distinguish.

Q The distinction is set out in Schmerber versus California and other cases cited therein.

Q Your adversary is not relying one bit on Miranda. That is the Fifth Amendment.

Q That is right.

A But I am getting back to the Fourth Amendment now on the arrest and it is our position that it was not an arrest in the legal sense of the word that it was part of a fact-finding process.

Q Do you contend that his appearance at the police station was voluntary or that he was brought there involuntary?

A Mr. Justice, I wouldn't say it was voluntary. I don't know.

- Q So they would have brought him down there ---
- A Fourteen year-old boy?
- Q Yes.
- A I can say but I wouldn't say it was voluntary.
- Q How many did they bring down there voluntarily?
- A Mr. Justice Marshall, I think the record shows they interrogated between 60 and 70. Nobody remembers for sure and I think they brought ---

And they interrogated them all at the police? gua 0 A No. 2 Where did they interrogate the other one? 0 3 The record doesn't show. Apparently home, 4 A school. 5 Well, why did they bring this one down there? 6 They brought this one and around 26 -- twenty A 7 some odd others. 8 Well, twenty-some odd others, the police went up 9 and said would you mind coming along with me or did they say 10 come on boy? 11 It doesn't show. A 12 What do you think? 0 13 Well, Mr. Justice Marshall, that is pure con-A 14 jecture on my part ---15 Very well. 16 I know at least there is no indication in this 17 record that anybody was intimidated. I am sure that is what 18 you are getting at and as a matter of fact what little there is 19 in the record about the trip to Jackson, I believe the record 20 shows -- I am almost positive -- that the boy's mother approved 21 it. 22 But I am trying to forget the second, the part what 23 actually is the first legal arrest and the trip to Jackson 24 because nothing as a result of his arrest and the trip to 25 24

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- A I think it does. I think that is the question.
- Q You think that is the case they presented?
- A In my way of thinking that is the question, was he arrested when he was first interrogated and printed at police headquarters.
- Q Well, the fingerprints taken at Jackson were used in the trial?
 - A Well, there in ---

Jackson was used at the trial.

- Q But you are just saying that they were the same fingerprints as that taken before?
- A It was sort of a clerical error and the officer of the police department over there in Meridian and it is certainly under check in Schmerber versus California beyond a reasonable doubt.

MR. CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN: We will recess now, Mr. Lyell.

(Whereupon, at 2:30 p.m. the Court recessed, to reconvene at 10 a.m. Thursday, February 27, 1969.)

