

FACES MARCH TRIAL IN SLAYING OF TROOPER

Cops surround Chesimard's Jersey return

By LAWRENCE NAGY

Joanne Chesimard, the Black Liberation Army member accused of murdering a state trooper in 1973, was returned to the Middlesex County Jail yesterday amid maximum security.

Dozens of police officers stood guard with automatic rifles and shotguns poised as she was led into the jail.

An armed motorcade of eight police cars arrived in New Brunswick with lights flashing and sirens wailing shortly after 11:30 a.m. The law enforcement agents, led by Sheriff Joseph DeMarino and Sheriff's Officer Paul Pianko, had picked up Chesimard about 90 minutes earlier at the Riker's Island Prison in New York.

Chesimard, 28, her wrists and ankles shackled, was lodged in a special cell constructed for her in 1973.

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She is scheduled to stand trial early in March for the May, 1973, slaying of Trooper Werner Foerster, who was killed in a shootout on the Turnpike in East Brunswick.

Clark Squire, another BLA member, was convicted and sentenced to life in prison in the slaying, but Chesimard's trial was severed when it was discovered during jury selection that she had become pregnant while in custody in New York.

Chesimard has been acquitted three times of charges in New York involving two bank robberies and the kidnaping of a bartender during a holdup.

Some 50 officers from nine law enforcement agencies were involved in the transfer of Chesimard yesterday, reflecting tight security in the wake of last week's breakout attempt at Trenton State Prison which officials suspect was an attempt by the BLA to free Squire.

Sheriff's officers, state troopers and prosecutor's detectives escorted the caravan down the Turnpike after it left New York, where city and Port Authority police had provided security.

The Kennedy Square area in front of the jail entrance

was cleared of traffic by police and parked cars were towed from the scene.

Expressionless and appearing calm, Chesimard was surrounded by police who scanned the area as she was moved several yards from a car to the jail entrance.

Sheriff DeMarino and Pianko hustled the defendant through a basement entrance to the same cell she occupied during the 1974 attempt to try her for murder.

The jury for her trial is expected to be selected in Morris County. Superior Court Judge Theodore Appleby will preside

at the trial in New Brunswick.

The trial of Squire was dragged out by jury selection procedures after he contended an impartial jury could not be seated in Middlesex County.

The trial of Chesimard is expected to proceed under the same strict security provisions that were in force when Squire stood trial. Only a limited number of spectators were permitted in the courtroom, and only after being searched for weapons.

Chesimard is also charged with the shooting of Trooper James Harper, who was wounded after he stopped the

car in which Chesimard, Squire and James Costan were riding in the early morning of May 2, 1973.

Harper made his way 200 yards to the State Police headquarters in East Brunswick after the shootout in which Foerster and Costan were killed.

Chesimard, who was shot in the chest and the arm, was captured on the Turnpike about five miles from the scene of the shooting. Squire was picked up by police in a wooded area after an intensive 40-hour manhunt through Middlesex County.

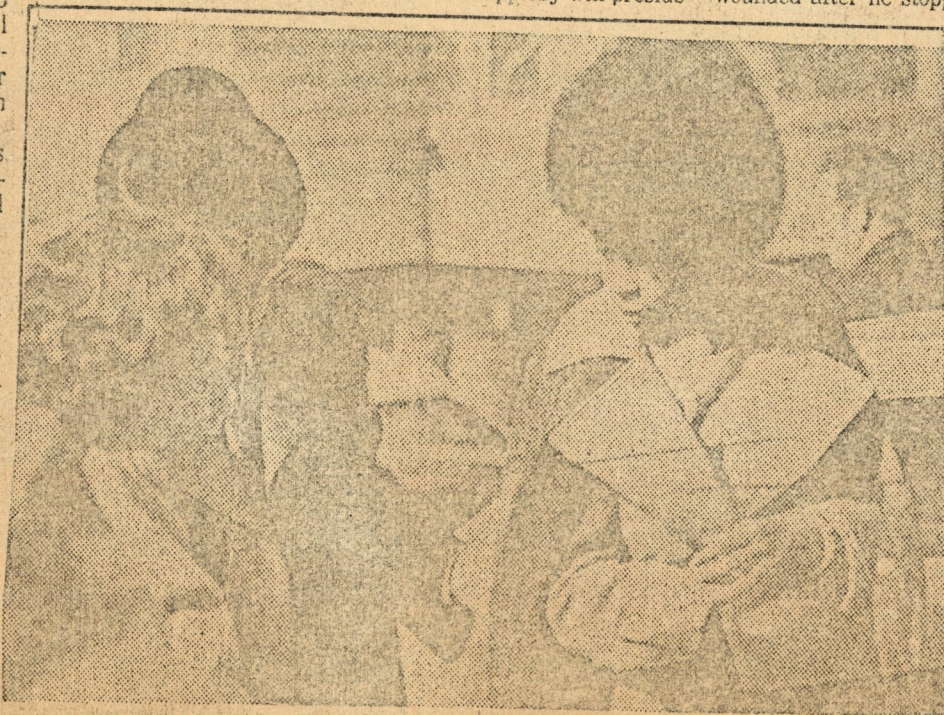


Photo by John Gibson

Joanne Chesimard, right, is escorted to the Middlesex County Jail in New Brunswick by Middlesex County Sheriff Joseph DeMarino