

Bottone acquitted by federal jury

By A. W. GEISELMAN JR.
Of The Bulletin Staff

A federal jury acquitted former Philadelphia Teamsters leader Louis J. (Buttons) Bottone yesterday on charges that he ordered the killing of two other union leaders.

It was the second time the government failed to get a conviction while using self-declared mob hit man Charles Allen as a key witness.

The verdict in U.S. District Court in Philadelphia was followed by a noisy, tearful demonstration by the defendant's 14 children along with other relatives who waited with him for six hours while the jury deliberated.

Prosecutor Robert E. Courtney 3d wouldn't comment afterward and neither would his superior, Joel Friedman, head of the Philadelphia Strike Force on Organized Crime.

"The jury had serious doubt about the government's witnesses," Glenn Zeitz, a defense lawyer, said later.

Of the seven jurors reached last night, most refused comment.

One, Norval H. Copple, said the jury decided on acquittal because "the evidence was mainly circumstantial."

The jury did not believe Allen, Copple said. Tape recordings introduced by the government were "per-

plexing," he added. Copple said the jury had just about decided to acquit yesterday afternoon — its decision hinged on the tape. Once jurors had listened to it again, it made up its mind.

The presence of Bottone and his family in the courtroom yesterday made no difference, Copple said.

In the same court last February, after three hours' deliberation, another jury acquitted Bottone's codefendant, Wilmington Teamsters leader Francis Sheeran, on substantially the same charges. Courtney also prosecuted that case.

Allen, a federal informant with a long criminal record, including a number of admitted murders for hire, was a key witness in that case, too, but jurors said after that trial that they had doubts about his testimony.

Bottone is former president of the 10,000-member Philadelphia Teamsters Local 107. Formerly of South Philadelphia, he is 46 and lives in Roslyn, Montgomery County.

Sheeran and Bottone were accused of paying Allen to kill Francis (Big Bobby) Marino, a Teamsters organizer and convicted extortionist, and William Mario Brown, an officer of Philadelphia Teamsters Local 500.

Bottone was specifically charged with one count of conspiracy and one of racketeering.

District Judge Donald W. VanArtsdalen sent the case to the eight-man, four-woman jury Monday afternoon after six days of testimony. After deliberating briefly, the jury was sent to a hotel for the night and resumed its work at 9.30 A.M. yesterday.

At 3 P.M., VanArtsdalen complied with the jury's request to rehear two tape recordings Allen made secretly of conversations with Bottone about the killing of Marino and the effort to kill Brown.

While the tapes were being played, Bottone's wife, Catherine, suddenly began weeping and rushed from the courtroom.

Bottone then leaped to his feet and rushed outside to the corridor. There family members wept on each other's shoulders.

A few minutes later the jury left to resume deliberation. Twenty-five minutes later, it was back with the



Louis J. Bottone
Was charged in murder

Jury acquits Bottone of conspiracy

By Jan Schaffer
Inquirer Staff Writer

Former Teamsters Local 107 president Louis J. (Buttons) Bottone was acquitted yesterday by a federal jury of charges that he had hired admitted mob hit man Charles Allen to murder another Teamster official and a free-lance union organizer.

Foreman William Glass announced the verdict at 3:15 p.m. after the jury had deliberated more than six hours and had heard, for a second time, two conversations secretly tape-recorded in December 1978 by Allen, in which Bottone discusses the one murder that was carried out.

Bottone, 46, of Roslyn, Montgomery County, heaved a loud sigh of relief and dabbed tears from his eyes before rushing out of the courtroom to embrace his wife, Catherine, and most of his 14 children.

"God is good," he said. "He's always been good to me, raising the kids and all. Thank God He was with me."

The verdict came 45 minutes after a scene in which Bottone's weeping wife ran from the courtroom, saying, "I can't take it anymore," as the jurors listened again to the tapes. Her children ran out after her, and Bottone, ripping the earphones off his head, swiftly followed.

Afterward, Mrs. Bottone hugged defense attorney Glenn Zeitz.

"Terrific," she said. "We knew all