

Police in Chicago Demote Three Involved in Panther Raid Inquiry

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CHICAGO, May 14 — Three high-ranking Chicago police officers were demoted last night, apparently as a result of a controversy over a police raid last Dec. 4 on a Black Panther apartment in which two Panther leaders were killed.

The demotions were announced the night before the release of a Federal grand jury's report criticizing the police activities in the investigation that followed the raid.

Tonight, a lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union said at a news conference that he believed a "deal" had been made in which the grand jury had declined to return any indictments against the police in exchange for the dropping of attempted murder charges against the seven Panthers who survived the raid.

"There is nothing I've seen so far that would alter the clear assumption that a deal was made," said the lawyer, Kermit Coleman, who also assisted in the defense of the Panther survivors.

But Jerris Leonard, head of the Federal Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, who came to Chicago earlier this week to handle the final actions of the grand jury, said he was personally satisfied with the report "under the circumstances."

'Jury Handicapped'

He said "the grand jury was handicapped in returning indictments" because six of the seven survivors who appeared before it had declined to answer any questions, saying they were not appearing before a jury of their peers.

Mr. Leonard said that "in a practical sense" the case was closed and heatedly denied that any "deal" had been made.

In the police demotions, Deputy Superintendent John F. Mulchrone, head of the Bureau of Inspectional Services, was shifted to command of the general assignment section in the detective division. The move will mean a reduction in his pay from \$27,500 a year to \$19,000.

Also demoted were Capt. Harry Ervanian, who headed the Internal Inspections Division, and Capt. David J. Purtell, director of the police crime laboratory.

Captain Ervanian had charge of the police department's internal investigation of the raid and was under the direction of Mr. Mulchrone. Captain Ervanian's report exonerated

the 14 Chicago policemen who conducted the raid on special assignment for State's Attorney Edward V. Hanrahan.

The police have said that the two Black Panther leaders were killed and four other Panthers were wounded in a gun battle that lasted for 10 minutes.

The survivors of the raid contended that the police had broken into the apartment and begun shooting without warning. The police testified at two coroner's inquests that the Panthers had opened fire first as the lawmen forced their way in after the occupants of the apartment refused to open the door.

Last week, all charges against the seven Black Panthers who survived the raid were dropped by the State's Attorney. The seven had been indicted by a Cook County grand jury for attempted murder and illegal possession of arms.

Insufficient Evidence

Mr. Hanrahan, in moving for the dismissal, conceded that he did not have enough evidence to prove that any of the surviving Panthers had opened fire on the police.

The State's Attorney also said that the methods used in gathering evidence against the surviving Panthers "might have prevented our satisfying judicial standards of proof."

Earlier, Mr. Hanrahan was privately critical of the manner in which the Chicago police handled the case after the special unit under his command left the scene. He also criticized the police crime laboratory's role in processing the ballistics evidence in the case.

Mr. Hanrahan, once considered a leading Democratic party prospect to challenge Gov. Richard B. Ogilvie in 1972, has himself been privately criticized by Democratic party leaders for his handling of the Panther raid.

In announcing the demotions, Superintendent James B. Conlisk Jr. said only that the changes had been made to strengthen police operations. But the direct connection of the three officers with the Black Panther case left little doubt that this was the reason for their transfers.

Captain Ervanian was reassigned to the patrol division and Captain Purtell was sent back to head the crime laboratory's documents section, the position he held before he became laboratory director two years ago.