

Police Admit Panther Informer Lied and Was a Mental Patient

By EDITH EVANS ASBURY

A Brooklyn police detective testified yesterday that he had obtained information about Black Panther party activities for \$100 a week from a "confidential informant" who was a member of the party.

The detective, Richard Hodgson, admitted that the informant had lied to him, but asserted that "not all the information was false," and that "we had to trust him."

White men and women students who packed the courtroom laughed aloud, prompting Supreme Court Justice John M. Murtagh to warn that he would deal severely with anyone who failed to behave in an orderly manner.

Treated for Mental Illness

Detective Hodgson was called by the lawyers for 13 Black Panthers accused of plotting to bomb public places, to testify at a pretrial hearing of a motion to suppress certain wiretap evidence.

The evidence was gathered after wiretapes were approved on the basis of information supplied by the informant, who was identified as Sean Dubonnet, also known as William Fletcher, Barry J. Fisher and William Sales.

Gerald Lefcourt, a defense lawyer, sharply questioned the reliability of the informant in an attempt to prove

that the wiretapes were obtained illegally.

Detective Hodgson admitted that he knew Dubonnet had been treated for mental illness, but said he learned this after applying for the wiretap order in November, 1968. Mr. Lefcourt brought out the wiretap order had been renewed periodically and was in operation until March 15, 1969, two weeks before the 13 defendants were indicated and arrested.

The detective also admitted that Dubonnet had a criminal record, but denied knowing that the informant had been arrested for impersonating a policeman, a doctor and a student at Columbia University or that he had been twice hospitalized "for seeing and hearing things," as Mr. Lefcourt claimed.

The defense contends that the wiretaps, which were placed on the telephones of Brooklyn Panthers were illegal and that information obtained through them concerning the defendants makes their indictment invalid. The hearings will resume Monday.