

Tape Recording of Torture Accepted at Panther Trial

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NEW HAVEN, Conn., July 22—Tape recordings of an alleged Black Panther torture and interrogation session were admitted as evidence in the New Haven Panther torture-slaying trial today.

Tapes of the questioning of Alex Rackley are scheduled to be played to the jury Thursday.

Rackley, later found murdered in a swamp, was being questioned by other Panthers to determine whether he was

a police informer and whether he knew the names of informers in New York City.

The tapes, it has been testified, were made by Rackley's inquisitors who wanted them sent to the Panthers' national headquarters as evidence against him.

Ruling Changed

Judge Harold M. Mulvey changed an earlier ruling and ordered them played for the jury after State's Attorney Arnold Markle argued:

"They are the most accurate

portrayal of what happened ... this is the chance the defendants take when they make tape recordings."

Mulvey at first ruled that the tapes could not come into evidence in the trial of Lonnie McLucas, 25, one of the interrogators who is charged with kidnaping resulting in death. A witness who made the recordings, Warren Kimbro, could use a transcript of the recordings to describe the scene instead, the judge ruled.

But late, after an extended argument over case law, Mul-

vey ordered them admitted.

Kimbro, one of the state's most crucial witnesses, largely corroborated previous testimony of the torture scene in initial testimony today.

Arrests in New York

He said George Sams, a Panther from California, ordered the "party discipline" in an attempt to find out who had informed on the 21 New York City Panthers arrested shortly before in a series of bomb plots.

Kimbro disclosed that at one point before the interrogation began Sams had decided to let Rackley go free and take a bus to New York. But, he said, Rackley had misplaced his coat and decided to stay.

Later, Sams accused Rackley of being an informer, ordered him beaten, and doused him with scalding water until he began naming names, he testified.

McLucas, Kimbro added, helped beat Rackley and tied his feet to the torture chair in the basement of party head-

quarters.

A slender, tense man with a thin mustache, Kimbro glanced nervously several times at McLucas, his one-time associate in the New Haven Party.

McLucas glared back icily at him from the defense table.

Picture of Body

Kimbro obviously was shaken when asked to identify a picture of Rackley's body lying in the swamp where he was found dead on May 21, 1969.

According to a confession admitted into evidence yesterday, McLucas told the FBI that Kimbro had shot Rackley in the head. McLucas, according to his statement, was ordered by Sams to fire the second shot into Rackley's body.

Kimbro was a highly respected local antipoverty worker and director of a residential center for poor youths before joining the Panthers last year.

He pleaded guilty to second-degree murder after agreeing to testify against other defendants. State's Attorney Markle disclosed today that he has promised not to oppose a parole for Kimbro after he serves part of his term and not to press other charges against him.