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FBI agent knew of Panther guns

An FBI agent testified that he knew there were illegal weapons in a Black Panther apartment prior to a 1969 police raid, but didn't tell his superiors about the guns until after the raid.

The Panthers, Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, were killed in the Dec. 4, 1969 raid.

Roy M. Mitchell, assigned to the FBI racial matters unit at the time of the raid, said Thursday an informant told him on Nov. 19, 1969, that there was a sawed-off shotgun and a stolen police riot gun in the apartment at 2337 W. Monroe.

HE WAS TOLD of the illegal weapons by FBI infiltrator William O'Neal, Mitchell said, but did not pass the information along to his superiors until he wrote a memo dated Dec. 12.

Mitchell said he did tell the state's attorney's office and the police department about the guns.

Lawyers for the Panthers contend that if the FBI knew about the illegal weapons, the raid should have been conducted by federal authorities, rather than local police.

MITCHELL made his statements before U.S. District Court Judge Joseph Sam Perry and a jury during the trial of a civil suit brought by relatives of Hampton and Clark and survivors of the raid.

Immediately after the raid,

police said the raid was conducted to recover illegal weapons from the apartment.

The Panthers' lawyers are trying to convince the jury that the FBI masterminded the raid and then got the police to do "the dirty work."