

# 2 Panthers alter plea in New Haven

By John Bancroft  
Special to the Guardian

New Haven, Conn.

Two members of the New Haven Panther 14 have pleaded guilty and a third has testified for the state.

These developments took place last week as superior court judge Aaron Palmer heard evidence on the request of five of the accused for bail. He reserved decision.

The 14 Black Panther party members have been held without bail since May—all accused of participating in the murder of Alex Rackley, 25. The state alleges the Panthers tortured and killed Rackley, a party member, for being a police informer. The party denies the murder and maintains Rackley was a member in good standing.

Party chairman Bobby Seale, currently serving four years in jail for contempt of court stemming from the Chicago trial of the Conspiracy 8, was charged in the New Haven case in August and is in a California prison awaiting a hearing on whether to extradict him to Connecticut.

Seale was named in the indictment by George Sams Jr., 23, who was arrested in Toronto early in August. The Panther party insists Sams is actually the police informer and that he is part of a government conspiracy to frame the other New Haven defendants.

Sams, as expected, pleaded guilty to second degree murder Dec. 1. The second confession—for conspiracy to commit kidnapping—was made by Loretta Lukes, 22, who is eight months pregnant and who has been held in prison under deplorable conditions for the last six months. She originally pleaded innocent. Defendant Jeanie Wilson, 16, at first refused to testify but later, under threat of being sent to jail until she was 21 if she remained silent, decided to turn state's evidence. Her testimony did not include any statements about torture or murder.

Rackley was allegedly kidnaped by party members, subjected to a kangaroo trial, tortured, murdered and dumped into a swamp in Middlefield, Conn., May 21.

None of the five Panthers seeking bail or the six others who did not seek the bail right have confessed to any crime.

A bail hearing is called for under Connecticut law in a capital case when the prosecution and judge agree bail should be denied. In order to have bail denied when challenged, the state must demonstrate "the proof is evident and the presumption against the defendant great." Under these conditions, the state can use a bail hearing to produce any evidence—even when highly questionable—for the record. Thus, even if the prosecution relies on the testimony of unreliable police agents or persons they have forced to testify (which is what the Panthers charge about the evidence in this case) a bail hearing is an opportunity for the state to reveal such testimony for later use—before witnesses change their minds or repudiate confessions acquired under duress.

During the 11-day bail hearing the prosecution played two

tape recordings which implicated the defendants in Rackley's death. The defense argued the tapes were illegal evidence because identification of voices is unreliable and that they were illegally seized.

Since he was only presiding over a bail hearing and not a trial, the judge admitted the tapes.

When finally played—the prosecution has revealed their contents to the press for months—the recordings turned out to be vague and suspicious in nature. For example, the first tape began, "My name is Ericka Huggins . . ." and then went on to an alleged interrogation of Rackley. Although the tapes contained much purported questioning of Rackley, there is no indication that Rackley (or the voice alleged to be Rackley) feared for his life, had been tortured or that anyone planned to murder him. It is also not explained satisfactorily why Ericka Huggins would have incriminated herself so directly.

The Panthers charge the tapes are a fraud.

Miss Lukes, brought to the stand to hear the tapes, displayed an amazing ability to identify the voices after hearing only one or two words—even though she had been in the party for only a brief period before her arrest and was not closely familiar with several of the voices.

Commenting on her testimony, a Panther spokesman said: "Loretta Lukes has been kept in near solitary confinement for the last six months. We say she is either an agent or has been intimidated."

Speaking of Sams' confession, the spokesman declared: "Last July Sams was exposed as a police agent." When arrested in August on the basis of Sams' revelation to police, Seale said Sams was ousted from the party in April 1968 but was allowed back in at the request of another Panther official. Interviewed in jail Aug. 22, Seale stated that "Sams is an agent. He's clearly the one who murdered this person."

The two other defendants called to testify at the bail hearing were Maude Francis, 15 and Miss Wilson. Since both are juveniles, they can be held indefinitely without a trial until they reach age 21.

Maude Francis, put on the stand first, refused to testify. She was sent back to jail, which could be for six years, until she agreed—not to mention possible sentence when her case actually comes to trial.

Miss Wilson also refused to testify but later changed her mind—perhaps in fear of shaming the same fate as Maude Francis. Her testimony, for all the publicity it got, did not describe torture, trial, murder, or anything of that nature.

Throughout the bail hearing the defense was severely limited because it could not—for strategic legal reasons—put any of the defendants on the stand to counteract the state's testimony.

Commenting on the hearings and government efforts to smash the party, the Panther spokesman summed up: "As long as there are Black Panthers, as long as there are black people, there will be a Black Panther party."

# Panther chief jailed in San Francisco

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ad hoc committee of "impartial Congressmen" investigate what he termed "the effort to bring about a fascist police state in this country."

Hilliard was accused of "knowingly and willfully" threatening the President's life during a speech at the mass antiwar protest in San Francisco Nov. 15. The charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in jail and a \$1000 fine.

Hilliard was jailed when he was unable to meet \$30,000 bail set by U.S. district court judge Stanley Weigel.

The indictment against Hilliard, handed down by a secret federal grand jury, accused him of referring to Nixon as "the man that's responsible for all the attacks on the Black Panther party nationally" and stating that "we will kill Richard Nixon."

Referring to the charge at the press conference, movement attorney Terrence Hallinan stated: "While it is true that David said, 'We will kill Richard Nixon,' it was in the context of a sentence that went on to say, 'we will kill any motherfucker that stands in the way of our freedom,' with the emphasis on the 'any'—clearly a political and not a criminal prediction."

Hallinan, a West Coast co-chairman of the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, pledged the Mobe would give "all-out support" to Hilliard. He called President Nixon "an evil man who is attempting to unleash a war of repression in our nation—a war exemplified by the indictment of David Hilliard."

Announcing a public campaign to free Hilliard, Garry predicted the Panther chief of staff would be freed within a week. The party attorney strongly criticized \$30,000 bail as excessively high, calling it ransom money.

Hilliard, who was recently acquitted of a misdemeanor charge of disturbing the peace, still faces assault and attempted murder charges arising out of the April 6, 1968, shootout in which Bobby Hutton was shot dead and Eldridge Cleaver wounded by Oakland police. His first trial on the charges ended in a hung jury. Two other Panthers, Charles Burse and Warren Wells, are now serving long prison terms on convictions in connection with the case.

As party chief of staff, Hilliard is technically third in command of the national organization. The two ranking officers and founders of the party, Newton and Seale, are presently in jail.

Newton, minister of defense, is serving two to 15 years on a manslaughter conviction involving the death of an Oakland policeman in October 1967. The conviction was much criticized at the time as police admitted that Newton was unarmed. Trial evidence indicated the officer might have been

killed by a bullet from his partner's gun. The case is presently under appeal. Seale, party chairman, presently in San Francisco City Jail, is fighting extradition to Connecticut on a murder conspiracy charge involving the death of former Panther Alex Rackley (see article below). He also must stand trial again in Chicago on a federal conspiracy charge stemming from the confrontation during the Democratic convention in August 1968. He is serving four years in jail for contempt of court as a result of his first appearance in the Chicago conspiracy trial.

Seale declared two weeks ago that a sheriff had beaten him in jail for refusing to surrender his legal papers. He required medical treatment. Jail officials did not deny the charge. One official commented the use of force was often necessary to "pacify troublesome prisoners."

Since the party's inception in the fall of 1966 in Oakland, party offices throughout the nation—notably Panther headquarters in Chicago—have been the location of armed assaults by police. In one incident in Oakland in September 1968, two allegedly drunk policemen shot up the Panther national headquarters. After a departmental investigation, the two officers were suspended. The national headquarters has since been moved to nearby Berkeley.

According to Attorney Garry, Hampton's death in Chicago was the 28th "legal murder" of a Panther since January 1968.

Hewitt estimates over 300 Panthers are presently in jail. About 50 are being held without bail.

Compounding the party's financial problems as a result of high bail, Hewitt said, vendors of the Black Panther newspaper—which provides much of the party's revenue—"have been systematically harassed by pigs." In one such incident in San Francisco, Dec. 5, a Panther newspaper vendor was arrested and charged with threatening the life of the President. The charges were dropped, but they interrupted sales.

Arrests involving Black Panther party members vary from a Mt. Vernon, N.Y., Panther's arrest for an "unlawful table in front of office" to the murder charges lodged against the New Haven 14.

According to statistics compiled by Panther national headquarters, arrests of members in Los Angeles alone totalled 86 for the first half of this year. Total bail there was \$213,415.

Panther free breakfast programs for school children have been another target of police action. In Philadelphia last week police entered a church where breakfast was being prepared for children and dumped food on the floor. Another police tactic is to arrest a Panther for possession of a stolen vehicle if the party member is unable to produce car registration.

This reporter, along with many others, examined the scene shortly after the killings. The physical evidence completely contradicts the police story.

There is only one bullet hole in the front door leading into the living room, a hole made from the outside. Behind it is a pool of blood, the spot where Mark Clark is presumed to have died. The rear wall of the living room has a minimum of 40 bullet holes in it in a downward sloping pattern as though fired by a machine gun. The shots which made the holes were fired from the living room and the paths of the bullets can be traced back through the plasterboard walls of the two bedrooms. The two rooms have at least five patterns of holes made by shotgun fire into them from the kitchen and the hallway. The only two broken windows in the apartment are in Hampton's bedroom and in the kitchen leading onto the back porch. The kitchen window is broken along a perfectly straight horizontal line where it was scored by a glass cutter.

Nowhere in the apartment is there any evidence that any shots were fired out of the bedroom or out of the front door. It is absolutely impossible that there could have been a gun battle such as claimed by the police. All bullet holes lead into the bedroom from the front and back entries. Hampton's bed is covered with blood stains, with blood running over the side of the

# Panther chief Hilliard jailed

By Francis Furey  
Guardian West Coast Bureau

All nationally prominent leaders of the Black Panther party are either dead, behind bars or in exile.

The day before Illinois party leader Fred Hampton was murdered by police in Chicago, party chief of staff David Hilliard, 27, was arrested by Secret Service agents here and charged with threatening the life of President Nixon.

San Francisco

With Hilliard in jail, Raymond Masai Hewitt, party minister of education, has taken over the Panther apparatus as acting national party leader.

In a news conference Dec. 4, Hewitt announced plans for a Panther-led delegation to the United Nations to protest U.S. government oppression of black people.

Panther attorney Charles Garry, in whose office the conference was held, characterized Hilliard's arrest as "part and parcel of a scheme to commit genocide on the Black Panther party."

Linking Hilliard's arrest with Hampton's murder and the imprisonment of Bobby Seale and Huey Newton, the exile of Eldridge Cleaver and the murder, imprisonment and trials of scores of other Panthers, Garry demanded that an

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Again staging their attack under the pretext of a search for weapons, police smashed down the doors of Rush's South apartment at 5:30 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 5. Rush escaped certain death by not being home at the time of the raid. So of the attack on Hampton's apartment said police told the "Rush is next." Police announced the seizure of an unregistered gun and a warrant was issued for Rush's arrest. He surrenders Saturday morning to the president of the Afro-American man's league and was immediately freed on bond.

Hampton's assassination came as the climax of a recent police attacks in Chicago in which the Panthers have successfully defended themselves. Three days before the Panther apartment was invaded. Shots were exchanged one was hit. Three Panthers, including Illinois laborer Lynn French, were arrested and beaten. On Nov. 13, a South shoot-out resulted in two cops dead and one Panther killed. Illinois Panther office has been attacked three times, on July 31 and Oct. 4.

Response throughout Chicago to Hampton's assassination was immediate, disciplined and overwhelming. Rallies and protests were held at numerous high schools and colleges. Several city high schools calling special (official) memorials in a desperate attempt to head off more militant Whites as well as black students walked out of Kenwood School in protest.

On Friday morning, a special memorial mass was held at Holy Angels Catholic Church at the request of the student black parochial Holy Angels school. Militant black priest George Clements decorated the altar with a huge black fist portrait of chairman Hampton. More than 1500 people at Young black students from the school delivered eulogies the service closed, the priest asked the assemblage to raise clenched fists, which they did together, shouting, "fight on."

At noon on Friday several hundred people stood in vigil in the Civic Center Plaza in downtown Chicago. Twelve signs with the names of 20 Panthers who have been dered by the police.

A special memorial service at the Malcolm X Community College heard school president Dr. Charles Hurst say that the der of Hampton was "an atrocity that ought to shock every dom-loving person in this country." Hurst announced the main conference room in the school was being renamed in of Hampton who was, at one time, a student at the college.

At the Chicago campus of the University of Illinois over students demonstrated outside the office of the police in on campus. In North suburban Evanston 10 students from western University and Kendall College were arrested while a march protesting the assassinations.

Throughout the city individuals stood on street corners outside film showings collecting funds for the Panthers. Five were arrested for soliciting funds in violation of city ordinance. High school demonstrations also took place in downstate Illinois and Lafayette, Indiana.

Representatives of 110 black community groups met

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# Top Illinois Panthers murdered

By Clark Kissinger  
Special to the Guardian

Chicago

A special assassination squad of the Chicago police department, in a pre-dawn "search and destroy" mission, last week murdered Fred Hampton, chairman of the Illinois Black Panther party and Mark Clark, a Panther leader from Peoria, Ill. Four other Panthers were wounded.

The murders, the most obviously staged of the scores of attacks on the Black Panther party across the country over the past two years, brought the total of party members and leaders assassinated by the government to 28.

The killings took place early Thursday morning, Dec. 4, in Hampton's apartment on Chicago's West Side, one block from the Panther party office. Hampton, 21, died of two gun shots, one in the left side of his head and one in the back of his neck as he lay in bed sleeping in the rear of his apartment. The mattress on which Hampton was lying was soaked with blood and riddled with bullet holes. Clark, 22, was found dead behind a door. The others wounded in the police attack were Brenda Harris, 18, gunshot wounded in the hand and right leg; Verlina Brewer, 17, wounded in the buttocks and right knee; Blair Anderson, 18, wounded in the groin and right leg and Ronald "Doc" Satchel, Illinois minister of health for the party, 19, wounded in the right leg, right flank and right hand. All four were taken to Cook County Hospital where they are reported in fair condition.

Three other Panthers escaped injury and were arrested, charged with attempted murder and aggravated battery. They are Deborah Johnson, Lewis Truelock and Harold Bell, a student at Rock Valley College. Deborah Johnson, who is eight months pregnant, was released on \$25,000 bail the next evening. True-lock and Bell have had bail of \$100,000 and \$35,000 respectively.

According to the police version, 14 Chicago police assigned to the State Attorney's office went to Hampton's apartment at 4:45 in the morning to serve a search warrant for illegal weapons. Sgt. Daniel Groth, who led the raid, says police knocked on the door, announced they were officers with a search warrant and repeatedly demanded entry. When he finally pushed the door open, says Groth, he was fired upon by a girl with a shotgun. Police claim a general gun battle ensued during which officers entering the apartment from the front and back were fired on by six or seven Panthers with both shotguns and pistols. Police claim they called for a "cease fire" several times, but that the Panthers insisted on "shooting it out."

The Black Panther party through its Illinois defense minister, Bobby Rush, immediately charged Hampton was killed in bed while he slept by police who had slipped in the rear of the apartment and that no gun battle ever took place, but that police simply sprayed the apartment with gun fire in an attempt to kill everyone there. The apartment was immediately opened to the press by the Panthers as soon as the police left the scene.

This reporter, along with many others, examined the scene shortly after the killings. The physical evidence completely con-

bed onto the floor. The police admit that his body was found on the bed.

The police admit to two "casualties." One police officer was treated for a slight wound in the hand. He had entered from the rear and may have been shot accidentally by officers firing from the front of the apartment. Another officer cut his hand on broken glass, presumably while climbing through the back window. Both were treated and released.

The police version of the incident has come under attack from officers of the Afro-American Patrolman's League, an organization of black policemen in Chicago and several local political figures. Patrolman Renault Robinson, president of the Patrolman's League, said his organization did not believe the official story "by the physical evidence. The powder burns from the bullets were on the outside of the door, meaning the shots were fired in. By the front door was a large pool of blood, meaning whoever opened the door to let them in got his then and there."

Black Alderman A.A. Rayner called the incident an "assassination" and charged that it was part of a "systematic extermination" of Black Panther party leadership.

Meanwhile police continued their rampage against the Panther leadership with an early-morning raid the following day on the apartment of defense minister Rush, who had been on television all day exposing the spurious official account of the murders.



Chairman Fred

Weanne staging their attack under the pretext of a search for illegal weapons. Police smashed down the door of Bobby South's car.

# ...Hampton

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Friday evening rally to lay plans for a shutdown of all schools and businesses in the black community while Hampton's body lies "in blackness." The funeral was scheduled to be held Monday, Dec. 8, at the First Baptist Church in Melrose Park.

On Saturday afternoon the Panthers held their own memorial rally, which became a rally of armed defense. The crowd of 3000 spilled out of the Church of the Epiphany onto surrounding streets. Dozens of representatives of black and Latin organizations spoke. The highlights were addresses by William Hampton, chairman Fred's older brother; Deborah Johnson, the only survivor of the assassination who has been freed on bond; Dr. Hurst and at the end, a surprise appearance by Bobby Rush who had surrendered to police only a few hours before. Dr. Hurst promised to turn the Malcolm X campus into a recruiting ground for a black liberation army. Rush brought the crowd to its feet stomping and cheering as he declared the Panther's intentions to carry on their program.

Hampton, chairman of the Illinois Black Panther Party for the last year and a half when he and a few friends founded the organization, was unquestionably the most respected revolutionary leader in Chicago. Intensely political and universally respected for his tirelessness in the cause of liberation, Hampton's life had been devoted to the creation of a mass revolutionary force in the black community. He had a reputation for being undogmatic, patient in his analysis of concrete situations, self-critical and completely fearless. He was an eloquent public speaker and always said that he was "high on the people." He especially involved himself in developing party ties to the people and to coalition organizations. His work included building links with black street gangs, participation in the Rainbow Coalition with the Young Lords (Puerto Ricans) and Young Patriots (poor whites). He spoke frequently to both black student unions and white student groups, visited black communities up and down the state and conducted political education classes within the Party.

Chairman Hampton grew up in Maywood, a western suburb of Chicago. An "A" student at Priviso East high school, he was also on the football, basketball and baseball teams and in the Junior Achievement program. At that time his ambition was to become a lawyer.

In 1966 he was elected president of the West Suburban Youth Council of the NAACP and immediately launched a campaign to have a swimming pool built in the black community in Maywood. In 1967 he was arrested for mob action in a swimming pool demonstration and later that year he was arrested again for "inciting to riot."

After founding the Black Panther party in Illinois in 1968, Hampton was arrested in connection with an incident in which a large group of black youth "liberated" a Good Humor ice cream truck and distributed ice cream to children. He was found guilty of stealing \$71 worth of ice cream and given a 2-5 year sentence in the state penitentiary. He served several months before being freed on appeal bond. Since that time, Chicago police have never missed an opportunity to hang more charges on him and at the time of his death he had at least a dozen cases against him pending in the courts.

With an acute sense of realism, Hampton lived every moment as though it were his last. It was as though he wanted to get as much political work done as possible before the end which he knew was inevitable.

In the last speech he made before his assassination, Chairman Hampton said: "This system is out to kill us and we know it. Some say we are not ready to take on this monster. We say that we do not want to, but that is not the question any longer. The monster has taken us on and we have to deal with reality."