

2 Surprises Complicate Panther Quiz

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The House Internal Security subcommittee, looking this week at the operation of the Black Panther Party, extricated itself from one complication yesterday only to find itself in another.

On Tuesday Donald L. Berry, 38, who identified himself as a former leader of the Panther chapter in Detroit, described what he said was a "revenge" plan by the Panthers a year ago to kill policemen in Detroit and Chicago as retaliation for the deaths of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, who were slain in a police raid on a Panther house on Chicago's West Side last December.

Taking the stand again yesterday to "clarify" his earlier testimony, Berry conceded that Hampton and Clark were alive and well at the time of the purported "plot" to avenge their deaths.

Having testified the day before that the "revenge" was planned at a National Committee to Combat Fascism meeting in Oakland last July, Berry said yesterday. "It couldn't have been for Fred and Mark because they were at the conference." Instead, he said, their deaths merely served as "a stepping stone" to later Panther violence.

That settled, the subcommittee brought on Barron Howard, 21, of Indianapolis who talked about white support for the Panther chapter there, including a shipment of guns.

He named a white Indianapolis man as a benefactor—and said the man was now a leader of the Indiana Communist Party.

Clearly taken aback by the charge, Rep. L. Richardson Preyer (D-N.C.) decided he would hear more about it in executive session.

Stephen H. Romines, the subcommittee counsel who conducted the questioning of both men, was asked later if he knew the charge was going to come up.

"I knew his name was going to come up," Romines said, "but I wouldn't know how to answer that question" about the alleged Communist Party connection.