

Castro Said to Snub Cleaver and Friends

By David Nagy

LONDON (UPI)—Eldridge Cleaver "lived like a king" in Cuba but left angrily because Premier Fidel Castro snubbed him and forbade him to start a local Black Panther party, according to a companion of Cleaver's in Havana.

Bunnye Hearne, a pro-Castro American now living in London, says Cleaver and other American Black Panthers grew so bitter about their isolation from politics and publicity in Cuba that they beat up and threatened North American whites like herself who defended Cuba.

Miss Hearne, 27, a former resident of Atlanta, said she was a confidant of Cleaver's in Havana from February through April of this year. A resident of Cuba for about a year, she described herself as a non-Communist Roman Catholic who is a partisan of the Cuban revolution and who was originally a sympathetic friend of Cleaver.

Writing About Cuba

She is writing a book about Cuba and plans to return there next year.

Miss Hearne said she was speaking only to rebut claims of one of Cleaver's former Black Panther comrades that white supremacy forced the Panthers to quit Cuba. She claimed the reason was jealousy and desire for hero status.

On Nov. 30, Earl A. Ferrell, who was with Cleaver in Havana, said in Paris that Castro

"created a dictatorship of white racists." Ferrell said Cleaver believed the same but reneged on an agreement to speak out.

Said Miss Hearne, a blue-eyed brunette, in an interview:

"Cleaver thought he would be welcomed in Cuba as Stokely Carmichael was welcomed (in 1967)."

"He thought he'd be able to appear on the podium with Castro. . . . During all the speeches, that he would be a close friend and confidante of Castro, that he would be allowed to tour the island and give speeches . . . that he would be able to start a Cuban Black Panther party . . ."

"He never appeared in public with Fidel Castro . . . and from the time I met him to the time I left he had never even met Fidel Castro."

Left Cuba in July

Cleaver, who is wanted for trial in the United States, left Cuba last July, a month after Miss Hearne, and went to Algeria.

She said Cleaver "lived like a king in Cuba" in a three-bedroom luxury flat near the Havana Libre hotel. She was a frequent visitor, she said, adding that Cleaver carried a gun that he said was a .45-caliber.

"I need protection; other Americans come and go and one might be paid to kill me," she quoted him as saying.

Cleaver had plenty of liquor, marijuana and money which he gave American stu-

dents to bring him newspapers and luxuries from the States.

Four other Black Panthers made Cleaver's home their headquarters and all of them, including Cleaver, refused to work at any occupation, Miss Hearne said. She added:

"Just before I stopped seeing him, he was in a rage one day and he told me, 'When I get out of this country I'm going to burn these people . . . What's Castro anyway? Nothing but a country Cuban with a beard!'"

Miss Hearne said she told him that if he did, Cuba could discredit him by publishing an account of the behavior of the "Black Panthers in Cuba."

"He replied, 'I won't personally make these (anti-Castro) statements, I'll get one of the Panthers to make them.'"

She Denies Racism

She said Cleaver began to complain to her about alleged racism in Cuba after he had been there about two months, and she rebutted him. "I told Eldridge some of the most talented artists, dancers, singers and directors of movies are black, and he couldn't tell me there was any racism in Cuba, because it just does not exist."

After one such argument in Cleaver's apartment, she said, he attacked her.

"He started slapping me with his fist and I thought, 'I've had it, he's going to kill me.'"

She said she talked her way out of it and never saw Cleaver again.