

Police Still Deny

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Book

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Is the Chicago Police Department attempting to hide the fact that a police officer was involved in Tuesday's shoot-out at 8055 Merrill in which three alleged members of the Black Panthers were arrested?

Police officials yesterday from Superintendent James Conlisk on down

continued to deny that there was a fourth suspect involved, let alone that he was a policeman, or that he was wounded in the exchange of gunfire.

Fourth District Commander Francis Nolan said yesterday he knew of no fourth suspect in the case. Conlisk had denied the existence of the fourth suspect late Tuesday afternoon. Other police officials have maintained this official denial.

South Chicago Community Hospital officials in line with this, also continue to maintain official silence in the

matter. The fourth suspect was reportedly transported to the hospital in mid-morning Tuesday immediately after the shooting incident on Merrill, "seriously wounded."

Nonetheless, The Daily Calumet has learned that in addition to the trio of suspects taken into custody at the scene, a mysterious 5th Police District (Kensington) officer who resided at the 8055 Merrill address, was wounded and whisked off to the hospital before newspaper and television reporters arrived on the scene.

Panther Cop Shot

The question is whether the police officer was involved with the trio arrested, or whether he was on an undercover mission. Though the trio seized had an abundance of Black Panther materials, and were heavily armed, they denied to police that they were Black Panther members.

There was speculation that the official Police Department denial of the existence of this fourth suspect is an effort to handle the matter quietly behind the scenes and avoid a scandal. That assessment leads to the assumption

that the fourth suspect was involved with the armed trio.

Witnesses at Tuesday's arrest scene have reported their observations to The Daily Calumet.

One resident of the 8000 Merrill block reported seeing a man, known to have lived in the 8055 Merrill apartment building, taken from the building, "bleeding seriously." This witness reported that this "seriously injured" man was one of two men escorted from the building by police officers, in addition to the two women arrested.

Another witness also has reported that two men and two women were taken separately to waiting police vehicles Tuesday morning during the course of the arrest.

One man who lives in the 8055

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SUPT. JAMES CONLISK

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building reported that he observed two suspects, a man and a woman, in the apartment's back stairway. He reported that both apparently left the apartment through the back stairway door as he did not see any arrestees taken from the building through the front entranceway.

Another person who witnessed part of the arrest action Tuesday reported observing two suspects being taken at separate times from the building's front entrance to waiting police cars. This observer stated one suspect appeared to be a woman and the other a man, though he could not be certain of the arrestees' sexes.

In addition, this witness reported that one of the two suspects he saw leaving

the building from the front appeared to be bleeding.

Though neither the three suspects nor any police officers were reported to have been seriously injured, blood was evident at the arrest scene. Police did report that the male suspect, Robert Anthony Harris, received a head cut when he tripped leaving the back stairway. The wound was bandaged at South Chicago Hospital.

A few drops of blood had dried on the building's rear stairway Tuesday at noon when Daily Calumet reporters examined the apartment area.

Blood was more evident in other areas of the building where the male suspect, Robert Anthony Harris, reportedly had not been during the arrest action. Smears of blood were evident along the front stairway which leads to the basement level apartment. Also, dark blotches and streaks of dried blood were seen on the side of a squad car parked along 81st St., just to the south of the building.

It was assessed that Harris' wound was minor and bled only slightly, and that the large amount of blood on the squad car and in areas of the apartment building was that of the mysterious fourth suspect police officials deny exists.