

12/8/69 Buch

# Mike Royko

CDN

## The Hampton bullet holes



State's Atty. Edward Hanrahan says it was only through "the grace of God" that his men escaped with scratches in their predawn raid on a Black Panther flat.

Indeed, it does appear that miracles occurred. The Panthers' bullets must have dissolved in the air before they hit anybody or anything.

Either that or the Panthers were shooting in the wrong direction — namely, at themselves.

I went through their flat, room by room, and there are a lot of bullet holes in the walls.

But none is where it should be if the people inside (the Panthers) were shooting at the people outside (the state's attorney's raiders).

**THE BULLET HOLES CAN BE FOUND** where one might expect the occupants of the apartment to be. It is not at all surprising that two of them were killed and four others wounded.

The front door is an example: Hanrahan's men say that when they tried to get in, somebody inside the parlor opened up with a shotgun. And that is why they started shooting.

There is only one bullet hole in the front door. It splintered on the inside. I'm told this means it came from the outside. One body was found inside the door.

There are no holes in the wall around the door, or in the floor near the door, or anywhere in that room near the door.

What happened to the holes left by a shotgun blast? The grace of God, possibly.

**THE ONLY BULLET HOLES FOUND** in the living room are in a wall at the opposite corner of the room from the door.

There are at least 42 of them. A ballistics man has put sticks in the holes to determine the trajectory of the bullets. At least one-third of the bullets came from the direction of the door. The others appear to have come from a few steps inside the door.

At the other end of the five-room flat — in Fred

Hampton's bedroom — is where another big batch of holes can be found. Their pattern is interesting.

There are two holes in the blood-soaked mattress. There are seven holes in the wall at the foot of the bed — the wall opposite the bedroom doorway. There are 24 holes in the blank wall next to the bed. There are nine holes on the other wall, near the ceiling.

But there are no holes in the doorway wall. And there are no holes in the walls of the dining room beyond the bedroom doorway.

**IT WOULD APPEAR TO A LAYMAN**, that if Hampton were shooting, he was shooting in every direction except where the raiding party was coming from. Either that or the bullets evaporated on their way into the next room.

The only other bullet holes in the flat were in a bedroom next to Hampton's. Once again, all the holes were in the room. None was in the walls opposite the room.

Some of the raiding party reportedly came in the back door, too. There are no holes in the kitchen, where the back door is.

One of Hanrahan's men said that the gun battle was so intense that "if 200 shots were fired, that would have been nothing."

Maybe so. But if the Panthers fired many of those shots, it is a puzzle as to why there are no bullet holes anywhere but in the innermost corners of the slum flat.

**WITH ALL DUE RESPECT** to Hanrahan's belief in the miraculous intervention of divine powers on the trajectory of bullets, I would prefer a more down-to-earth explanation.

If a heavenly miracle occurred, I'd rather hear it from a special grand jury, or from an impartial investigation by the Justice Department.

Thousands of people, black and white, have filed through that apartment since the shooting took place.

They saw what I saw. And regardless of anyone's feelings toward the Black Panthers, it will be hard to convince any of us that God had a hand in that night.