

P. 01 8/14/72

Hanrahan Trial Focuses On Panther Raid Details

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CHICAGO—The trial of State's Attorney Edward V. Hanrahan on obstruction of justice charges has focused attention again on details of the 1969 police raid in which two Black Panther leaders were killed.

Hanrahan, one of his top assistants, and 12 policemen—eight of whom took part in the raid—were indicted by a special county grand jury in April, 1971, on charges of conspiracy to obstruct justice after the raid. They are accused of tampering with evidence in an attempt to block the possible prosecution of police who conducted the raid.

A central issue in the trial, which resumes on Tuesday in Cook County Circuit Court, are the events on the morning of the raid—Dec. 9, 1969.

Special prosecutor Barnabas Sears contends that what occurred during the raid is not germane to the charges, which cover acts committed after the raid.

Defense counsel, however, disagree. According to the defendants' version, the police were threatened first with gunfire and the Panthers fired as many as 15 shots during the raid. Defense attorneys argue the police were forced to defend themselves from the attack by the Panthers.

Furthermore, they argue, if the police version is correct—that Panthers fired first and first several shots—the defendants would have no reason to alter evidence since they committed no crime.

Now, questions have arisen about a report by a federal grand jury which said Chicago policemen assigned to Hanrahan's Cook County prosecutor's office fired 99 shots during the raid and

the Panther occupants of the West Side apartment fired only once.

New evidence uncovered by Sears and his staff includes statements that four Panther survivors allegedly gave their own lawyers shortly after the raid.

They show, defense counsel say, that the Panthers lied to the county grand jury in testifying they fired no shots and handled no weapons in the raid.

After an inconclusive hearing to determine the authenticity of the statements, defense attorneys moved that Judge Philip J. Romiti, who is hearing the case without a jury, issue a verdict of acquittal.

During the hearing, Panther attorneys refused to testify about the statements, citing lawyer-client privilege.

Romiti denied the motion for acquittal, saying it was premature but added the new evidence raised "important issues" in the case.

When the trial resumes, Harold Bell, one of the four Panthers whose statements, the defense contends, contradicts his grand jury testimony, will return to the witness stand for what is expected to be intense cross-examination.

Blair Anderson, another survivor, refused to testify about the raid or his statement and a contempt citation is being prepared against him.

A warrant was issued for the arrest of a third survivor, Brenda Harris, who failed to appear as scheduled to testify in court.

She and Louis Truelock are the other two Panthers whose statements led to questioning by the defense of the federal grand jury report.

None of the Panther occupants testified before the federal grand jury and,

partly on that basis, it did not return any indictments.

Truelock, however, told Romiti he is anxious to testify and said he wants to dispute the defense contention of perjury.

Among the surprises sprung at the trial which started July 5 is an assertion by John Coglean, one of the defense attorneys, that nine unaccounted for spent cartridges recovered from the apartment could have been fired by the Panthers and the weapon disposed of through a living room vent.

The federal grand jury said the nine spent cartridges matched neither the weapons police used nor the 19 weapons seized from the Panther apartment.

Under cross-examination by Coglean, Deborah Johnson, the first of the Panther survivors to testify, said that before the incident Fred Hampton had crawled through the heating vent several times into the basement. Coglean said Hampton was trying out an escape route from the building.

Coglean said the missing weapon could have been fired, dropped through the heating vent and recovered at a later time.

Hampton, 20, chairman of the Illinois Panther Party, and Mark Clark, 21, a party leader from Peoria, were killed in the raid and four of the survivors were wounded.

Miss Johnson and Bell both testified under direct examination they saw no occupants of the apartment fire or handle weapons during the raid.

Democrat Hanrahan is seeking re-election in November. Although he lost Mayor Richard J. Daley's endorsement in the March primary due to political pressure over the indictments, Hanrahan went on to an overwhelming victory.