

Panther Testifies on Torture

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NEW HAVEN, Conn., Aug. 19 (UPI) — Lonnie McLucas testified in his own defense today that he was shocked and could not watch when George Sams Jr. poured scalding water on another Black Panther who allegedly turned police informer.

McLucas, 24, a New Haven Panther captain who is charged in the torture-murder May 21, 1969, of Alex Rackley, testified about events Sunday, May 18, when he said he walked in on a quarrel at Panther headquarters between Sams and Rackley.

"George Sams was hitting Rackley," McLucas testified. "When I asked him why, Warren Kimbro explained that he (Sams) was from national." McLucas said the usual Panther discipline was doing push-ups.

Sams and Kimbro both have pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the death of Rackley and testified for the prosecution.

McLucas told a jury of nine whites and three blacks that Sams, who has been characterized by defense witnesses as a madman, was carrying a .45 calibre semi-automatic pistol. He said Sams ordered Kimbro and himself to take Rackley into the basement.

"Sams ordered Rackley to bend over, gave Kimbro a paddle and ordered Kimbro to paddle him," McLucas said. He estimated Kimbro hit Rackley seven times.

McLucas said Sams then ordered Rackley bound and began questioning him about the arrest of 21 Panthers in New York in an alleged bombing plot. McLucas said Sams was not satisfied when Rackley said he didn't know anything.

"He said he had ways to make him talk. He ordered water boiled," McLucas said. "I

thought it was more intimidation, like pointing the gun at Rackley's head and waving it."

He said water was carried to the basement, but Rackley still insisted he didn't know anything about the arrest of the New York Panthers. He said Sams cursed Rackley, called him a liar and ordered him gagged.

"He started to pour water on him. Rackley was frantic. I was shocked. I turned away. I couldn't look," McLucas testified. He said only Sams poured the water.

McLucas said that after Rackley was ungagged and further interrogated he gave Rackley a cold shower.

"I thought it would help him," he said. "He had bruises on his body."

Dr. David Spain, a New York pathologist, testified earlier today that the first shot that was fired into Rackley's body in a Middlefield swamp probably killed him. Kimbro has testified he fired the first shot and McLucas fired the second.

Spain said the second bullet found in Rackley's body passed through the lung and

heart and out the other side through the arm. "That would be a fatal bullet wound if he were alive," he said.

McLucas's girlfriend, Margaret Hudgins, 21, one of seven other Panthers awaiting trial in the case, said Sams was concerned about finding a

lost child during the torture of Rackley.

"We have this violent, sadistic man sending everyone out to look for a lost child?" prosecutor Arnold Markle asked the defense witness during cross-examination. "Yes," she replied.