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Boss of Panthers Called 'Madman,' Witness Says

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP)—Black Panther defendant Lonnie McClucas announced he was going to a "bus stop" when he left New Haven Black Panther headquarters last May with Alex Rackley, a woman who described herself as McClucas' girl friend testified Tuesday at McClucas' trial.

When he returned she testified McClucas broke down and cried in her lap, saying "Crazy George" is a madman."

The testimony came from Mrs. Margaret "Peggy" Hudgins, who is one of eight Panthers including McClucas, charged with plotting Rackley's kidnaping and death. McClucas is the first of them to come to trial.

Mrs. Hudgins testified for the defense after a defense lawyer sought immunity from prosecution for her, but was turned down.

HER TESTIMONY concerned the day when, according to earlier testimony introduced by the prosecution, McClucas and two other Panthers took Rackley to rural Middlefield in a car and then shot him.

George Sams Jr., one of the other two Panthers, was in charge at the time, according to Sams and others.

Mrs. Hudgins' testimony appeared to corroborate a statement of McClucas' referred to earlier, in which he told an FBI agent he believed that the three

of them were simply taking Rackley to a bus station to send him out of town—not to Middlefield to kill him.

The FBI agent had testified McClucas said he didn't know anything about plans to kill Rackley until Sams gave the order to do so. And, the statement said, Sams made him afraid for his own life.

Sams, who has confirmed in testimony that he was nicknamed "Crazy George" has said he was the one giving the orders on that day. He has said his own orders came from national Panther leaders who suspected Rackley of being a police informer.

Sams has pleaded guilty of second degree murder in the case and has testified as a key prosecution witness.

MRS. HUDGINS testified that McClucas had sat in the living room of Panther headquarters for much of the time while Rackley was being held in the basement.

Then, shortly before Rackley was taken away, she said, McClucas told her: "I'm riding along to drop the brother off at the bus stop."

Sams and the third Panther, Warren Kimbro, led Rackley to a car outside, she testified, and when they returned McClucas appeared "disturbed."

She said the others went to bed

and then she asked McClucas what was wrong.

"He put his head in my lap and he cried," she said. All he told her was "that 'Crazy George' is a madman," she testified.