Prosecution Rests in New Haven Trial of Black Panther

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NEW HAVEN, Aug. 11—The prosecution rested its case against Black Panther Lonnie McClucas today after testimony that the defendant acted on his own when he fired a second shot into Alex Rackley.

Confessed murderer George Sams Jr., who claims he was ordered to kill Rackley by national Panther officials, told a superior court jury, "I didn't order Lonnie to go back . . . He went back on his own. I said make sure and see if he's dead. I didn't tell him to shoot the man."

However Sams, the last of the state's 12 witnesses in its four week presentation, admitted under cross examination by the defense that he had lied to his superiors about who had actually killed Rackley.

"Didn't you lie and tell Landon Williams you shot him nine or ten times," asked attorney Theodore I. Koskoff.

"Yes," Sams said. Sams also admitted under cross examination that he was high on marijuana at the time of the shooting.

Sams, who has pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, testified that Williams, a national Panther official, relayed the orders to kill Rackley from national party Chairman Bobby G. Seale. Sams is the only witness who claims to have overheard Seale giving the order. Williams and Seale are among the seven Panthers still to be tried.

The only other prosecution witness whom Sams said was in the room when Seale gave the order to "do away with" Rackley was Warren Kimbro whose apartment served as local Panther headquarters. Kimbro, who like Sams, has pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, testified he was asleep at the time Seale visited his apartment.

Kimbro, who admitted firing the first shot into the back of Rackley's head, testified that the first time he knew Rackley was going to be killed was when Sams handed him a .45 automatic and said, "Ice him, that's from national."

Asked if they talked about the discrepancy in testimony at the jail where both are being held, Sams said Kimbro "made an excuse. He said he had a family outside."

Sams, who has admitted arguing with Seale in 1967, said he was outspokenly against party philosophies and as a result "I was never trusted by some members of the party that was under Bobby Seale's orientation."

Koskoff asked why Sams had followed orders to kill Rackley even though, according to his own testimony, he didn't believe him to be an informer.

"I went against the party, but that doesn't mean I'm going to take myself and become part of the swamp, too," Sams said, referring to the swamp where Rackley was killed.