

# Key Witness Acknowledges Quarrels

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NEW HAVEN, Conn., Aug. 7—George Sams Jr. testified today that he had quarreled during his Black Panther career with Panther Party Chairman Bobby G. Seale and was really taking his orders from Stokely Carmichael.

The key state's witness said he finally became disenchanted with the party because it began "brainwashing" members and preached an irrelevant Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

His disillusionment with the party's discipline of errant members, he said, was one reason he agreed to plead guilty in the Connecticut murder case in which he has turned state's evidence.

Sam's account of a turbulent career inside and outside the party occupied his second day of testimony in the trial of Lonnie McClucas, one of eight Panthers, including Seale, charged in the torture-murder of Alex Rackley.

Under cross-examination, Sams also acknowledged that he had fought with inmates in a mental institution, had been shot in the head by Detroit police and had been dubbed "Crazy George" and "Madman George" by his friends.

Sams' relationship to the party and particularly to Seale is a significant part of the Panther defense in the Rackley killing. The Panthers claim he was a "plant" who engineered the slaying to implicate Seale. Police claim Seale ordered the murder of Rackley because he was suspected of being an informer.

Sams testified that he was

Carmichael's bodyguard in the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee and was instructed by the former SNCC leader to find out about the Panthers and campaign to free Huey P. Newton, the jailed Panther defense minister who was released on bond this week.

Carmichael was briefly an honorary chairman of the Panthers but resigned. Sams, however, remained in the Panther Party in California.

He quarreled with Seale, Sams said, because Seale objected to his practice of reporting officially to another Panther leader, Don Cox.

"Who did you get your orders from?" asked defense lawyer Theodore I. Koskoff.

"From Stokely Carmichael," Sams answered.

"You were Stokely's man in the Black Panther Party, weren't you?" Koskoff asked.

"I don't understand what you mean by his 'man,'" Sams answered. "If you mean his friend, yes."

On another occasion, Sams said Seale "suggested" that Sams be expelled from the party for stabbing another man in Oakland, Calif.

After "performing revolutionary duties," he added, he was reinstated.

He said he finally came to distrust the Panthers because of their "brainwashing" tactics—"making people do what they don't want to do. This is wrong." He said their Marxist-Leninist philosophy "did not relate to black people in America."

Sams allowed his temper to flare a few times but for the most part kept cool under cross-examination. Occasionally, he bantered with the defense lawyer.

Sams said he was sometimes called "Crazy George" because of his reputation for unswerving dedication to his political organizations' rules and his unquestioning obedience under orders.

He told Koskoff: "It's more or less a nickname, like people may call you 'Foskoff' instead of 'Koskoff'."

"Weren't you called 'Crazy George' because of the crazy things you did?" Koskoff asked.

"I wouldn't say so," Sams responded.

At the end of the day, Sams slowly sauntered to the defense table, smiled

and said, "Good afternoon, Mr. Koskoff."

Sams admitted he had been sent as a youth to a New York State mental institution after mugging a man.

"I didn't get along over there," he commented. "I was told I'd be rehabilitated, but they had no facilities there. There was all types of fighting and discorruption (sic)." On one occasion, he was involved in a chair-throwing ruckus and assigned to a state reformatory, he acknowledged.

Later, he said, he was shot five times—once in the head—by Detroit police when he attempted to break into a store. "I had been drinking and I had no recollection of trying to break into that store," he said.

Asked if he flew into "rages" when he drank, Sams said, "It's possible."

He acknowledged breaking party rules by starting to smoke marijuana during the Rackley murder trip but he maintained that even top Panther leaders also broke party rules. Seale, he said, drank scotch after Panther rallies.

Sams reiterated previous

statements in which he claimed he was obeying orders of Panther leader Landon Williams when he, McClucas, and Warren Kimbro allegedly took Rackley out to be killed in May, 1969.