

# Jury Told Seale Knew Victim Was Prisoner

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NEW HAVEN, July 29—Black Panther Party Chairman Bobby G. Seale was aware that a suspected party infiltrator, who later was slain, was being held prisoner by other Panthers, a defendant told police in a tape-recorded interrogation played to a jury today.

But Seale also said that he would have nothing to do with the case of the captive, Alex Rackley, according to the defendant's answers to police questions.

The defendant, Lonnie McLucas, told police that Seale had left the Rackley case up to George Sams.

The 13-month-old tape-recorded interrogation of McLucas provided the most extensive trial testimony so far on Seale's involvement in the case of Rackley, who was tortured and shot to death.

It was the first suggestion that Seale knew that Rackley was held captive here during the day that the Panther chairman came to New Haven in May, 1969, for a speech at Yale University.

But it did not coincide with the police claim that Seale specifically ordered Rackley's murder. The victim was slain after Seale had left the city, according to testimony.

McLucas, first of eight Panther defendants to go on trial here, was being interrogated on June 11, 1969, by Det. Sgt. Vincent DeRosa of the New Haven Police.

## Meeting Recalled

The defendant recalled a meeting of local Panthers and Seale the day after Rackley allegedly was tortured in the local headquarters.

At first, McLucas is heard on the tape saying that he was not sure whether Seale had been informed of Rackley's "house arrest." DeRosa promptly claimed that McLucas had told him the day before that Seale knew about it. "That's right," McLucas acknowledged.

He then quoted another Panther, Ericka Higgins, as telling Seale that Sams sus-

pected Rackley of having something to do with the police arrest of 21 Panthers in New York City.

DeRosa asked, "What was Chairman Seale's reaction?"

McLucas replied, "He said George (Sams) will deal with that, because he (Seale) didn't have time to relate to nothing like that."

Asked how he interpreted Seale's response, McLucas said, "I don't know . . . it indicated to me that Sams was in charge of the situation."

He also said he never heard anyone tell Seale that Rackley had been tortured.

In the evidence made public so far, the police claim that

Seale ordered Rackley's murder rests on a statement by Sams, the volatile Panther who, according to several witnesses, ordered the torture.

Sams asserted that Seale gave the order to kill Rackley during a confrontation in the apartment bedroom where the victim was tied down.

## Queried on Seale Visit

McLucas was asked by DeRosa about a visit Seale made to the apartment the morning after his speech. McLucas said Seale stayed only a few moments to make a telephone call and left. Asked if Seale went upstairs to Rackley's room, McLucas replied, "No, sir."

According to McLucas's answers in the interrogation, Sams later emphasized that he was acting in Rackley's case on orders from Panther national headquarters.

"What ever I say from now on is orders from national and they have to be carried out," McLucas quoted Sams as saying.

Sams then gave orders to find a car and to prepare Rackley for the trip to a wooded, swampy area where his body later was found.

As he did in a statement to the FBI, disclosed earlier in the trial, McLucas admitted to De Rosa that he fired a second shot into Rackley's body. Another Panther, Warren Kimbro, shot him first in the head, McLucas told the sergeant.