

Selection of Jury to Hear Black Panther Trial in New Haven Bogs Down at 2

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NEW HAVEN, June 17 — Efforts to select a jury to hear the case of a Black Panther charged in the kidnapping and murder of a fellow party member were at a standstill today.

Three prospective white jurors indicated they had made up their mind as to the defendant's guilt, while three others said they feared retaliation if he was convicted.

All of the 15 prospective jurors who took the stand on the second day of the trial of Lonnie McClucas were white, and only one, a woman, was seated.

She is Mrs. Clara B. Kenney of Wallingford, Conn., who is employed as a bartender. She testified that many of the potential jurors, in conversations among themselves, had said they were afraid of revenge should Mr. McClucas be found guilty. Mrs. Kenney said she did not share that fear because she had several black friends.

The seating of Mrs. Kenney represented no gain in the effort to find 12 jurors and four alternates because one of the two jurors seated yesterday was excused this morning.

Nicholas J. Coscia, a 32-year-old electrician from Waterbury, Conn., appeared in court in an agitated state and asked to be allowed to read a statement he had written on two little pieces of paper during breakfast at his home. The statement told of a conversation among several blacks that he had overheard yesterday on his way out of the courthouse.

"How is Lonnie going to get a fair trial when they are picking white people on his case?" one of the blacks was reported to have said.

Mr. Coscia said he had concluded that "the only way

Lonnie can get a fair trial in his friends' eyes is by having an all-colored jury."

He added that he was almost sure that he would have voted for acquittal because he thought the way Mr. McClucas looked at him yesterday showed that the defendant had plenty of confidence in him.

"This was one white person who was surely out to help you get a fair trial," he said, looking at Mr. McClucas. "Good luck and God help you."

State's Attorney Arnold Markle contended that the statement showed that Mr. Coscia would not be able to listen to the prosecution case with an open mind, and Judge Harold M. Mulvey agreed and excused him from the panel. Within an hour the electrician

was seated on another jury, this one hearing the case of a blackman charged with assault with intent to kill.

Mr. McClucas is charged with kidnapping resulting in the death of Alex Rackley, a Black Panther who was shot and killed at Middlefield, 25 miles from here, on May 21, 1969.

His lawyer, Theodore I. Koskoff, exercised today the first three of the 35 pre-emptory challenges to jurors that he will be allowed. Mr. Markle used one against a 22-year-old woman from West Haven, Mrs. Toni Judge, who had expressed anxiety about retaliation in the event of a guilty verdict and doubts about capital punishment. The prosecutor has an-

nounced that he will not seek Markle did not challenge a black woman, Mrs. Alice Blandshaw, who was seated on the jury after saying she opposed capital punishment.

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