Ron Carter's Attorney Says:

Black Panther Arrest

Ridiculous, Stupid

Ron Carter, head of the Atlanta chapter of the Black Panther Party, was arrested late Saturday night at his home on charges stemming from a beating incident in New Jersey some months ago.

At the press conference today, Carter's attorney, Horn, called attention to the article on the arrest in Monday's Constitution, which he labelled "absurd." The article mentioned that ballistics tests on rifles found in Carter's apartment have been sent to New Orleans "to find out if the rifles may have been involved in the murder in that city in January." The article then goes on to talk at some length about the shootings by Mark Harris and Horn, as "bizarre" at the Constitution in terms of the New Orleans incident "since they didn't have a murder of evidence." Bessie Bessie said, "Adolph Richman had some controls," as what he said, Horn explained.

O'Dell Lewis, a legal investigator for this, told the reporter that the arrest of Carter was definitely part of a "conspiracy" of some sort. The idealistic shootout, Lewis said, was part of the same plot.
Guarded Words, Welcomes
Meet Planned Panther Shift

By RAYMOND PERRY
AND HUGH MERRILL

Atlanta's black community has reacted to the announcement of the Black Panther party to the city with guarded comments and a sense of welcoming.

Panther leader Huey Newton announced Wednesday that his organization would move its headquarters from Oakland to Atlanta sometime within the next six months.

Perhaps the most serious comment, however, was made by a black leader who asked that he not be identified "because the Panthers have big guns!"

"THIS IS the last gasp of a dying organization," he said. Black Panther party membership is estimated to be less than 1,000 nationwide.

"I say welcome... right," Abernathy said, asking that he be pleased to see a group dedicated to lifting the plight of black people coming to Atlanta.

Lynwood Wade, executive director of the Atlanta Urban League, withheld comment because, he said, "I know the Panthers can be very effective in their efforts to eliminate police brutality."

Local NAACP President Lonnie King called the Panthers the "shock troopers in the civil rights movement" and said that the influx of Panthers into Atlanta might make those who have held back the progress of blacks more willing to deal with his organization, the SCLC, and the Urban League.
Panther Shooting Case Continued

By KEELER McCARTNEY

A 19-year-old member of the Black Panthers, whose arrest Wednesday night sparked the shooting and wounding of an Atlanta policeman, Thursday was granted a continuance of two weeks to answer charges in Municipal Court.

Meanwhile, police said they had developed no concrete clues to the identity of the mystery sniper who shot Patrolman Daniel Smith, 29, while Smith was investigating an auto crash at English Avenue and Pemberton Street NW.

Smith, wounded in the hip, could not attend the scheduled hearing Thursday of Larry Johnson, alias Phillip Lester.

Police said that at the time of the arrest, Lester gave his name as Johnson. They added, however, he was identified later as Phillip Lester, a member of the Black Panthers.

Smith was shot and wounded within a stone's throw of a Black Panther office on English Avenue, officials said.

Officers said Smith arrived to investigate an auto wreck and found a crowd gathered there. They said Lester informed Sgt. W. J. Taylor, who had arrived to help Smith, that he wanted to make a complaint.

Taylor said he told Lester he would talk with him as soon as possible, but Lester insisted he wanted to talk then. Taylor said he heard someone say, "Let's go get guns."

While Lester was being placed in a police car, a shotgun was fired and Smith was wounded.

Lester was charged with creating a turnstile, simple battery and interfering with an officer, police said.
The Georgia Black Panther Party, that had its only headquarters in the state of Atlanta, has closed its doors, at least temporarily. Black Panther Party leader Ron Carter said they are closing their doors for a year because the few remaining members must go to Oakland, California, for training. Carter said that "periodically every chapter in Black Panther Party has to send a percentage of its members to Oakland for political training."

This training consists of studying the Panther programs in Oakland, attending classes dealing with the international political situation, studying the third world countries and socialist nations, attending classes in sociology and psychiatry, and classes in union organizing.

Carter said the training is designed to "give us the deepest type of background that we can have so that when we get back to our particular chapters, we can have a greater depth of information that we can draw on so we can make the right decisions and the right type of moves."

Just a year ago the Panthers had two dozen active members and many supporters in the community. For over one year they had a free lunch, dinner and breakfast program for the poor children in four locations in the black community. The free clothing program and political education classes and liberation classes "to raise the political consciousness of the people, said Carter.

But because of police harassment an internal troubles the Panthers had dwindled to a skeleton organization. From its inception in 1971 the Panthers have been continuously harassed by police. Carter said local Panthers were busted probably two dozen times "because we were a revolutionary party as a threat to Atlanta's ruling class." But only two charges have ever stuck against the Panthers. Former Panther leader Charles Lundy has been sentenced to 7 years in jail for stealing a typewriter. His conviction is being appealed. Another Panther Paul Martin is serving time for robbery. Panthers have been busted for possession of guns, explosives, and drugs as well as several robbery charges, but according to Carter, "They were all trumped up and political so they never stuck."

When Panthers talk about the extent of the harassment and surveillance they were subject to, they point to the printing in Signal 36, the newsletter of the "Atlanta Police Department, of a list of nine subversive individuals. In September of 1972, 2 of the 9 were Panthers. Two others were members of the Black Federation Alliance at Georgia State University. The newsletter told police that when approaching the individuals or their residences, they should use extreme caution. Just two months later police department men under the direction of Lt. W.W. Holley of the Intelligence Division busted into a Panthers headquarters and arrested eight of them for possessing stolen goods and explosives. Because of the lack of evidence only one of them was bound over on the charge. It was later dropped. Then in early December six more Panthers were busted for the possession of marijuana. These charges didn't stick. At that time the Panthers issued a statement saying, "We are getting attacked because we threaten the existence of our exploiters and oppressors of black people, poor people, working people--that is the big white businessmen and their allies."

In March of this year internal troubles came that split up the party. Carter said that members of the national Party came down and "checked out each party member to see whether the individual met up with the criteria of the Party. We had to rid ourselves of a lot of individuals. And we had to close down a number of offices." With the closing of these offices went most of the programs.

Several members split from the organization and together with other individuals in the community formed the People's Liberation Party. Kwanza Oliver, a member of the Party and a former Panther, said, "We are a political party. We believe in the power of the masses of people wherever they are."

And Carter said, "We are a political party. We are for the people."

The Panthers are now in favor of the armed struggle. Carter said he is not talking about "violent acts. "We are a party. We exist to liberate people in any means necessary."

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