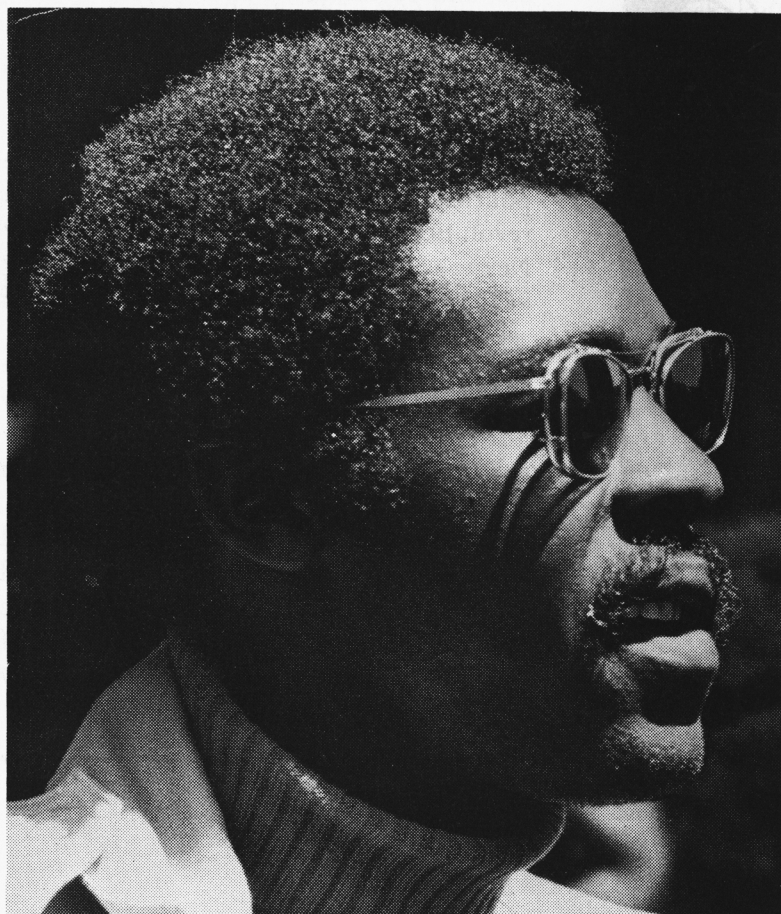




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VII

“SERVE THE PEOPLE”— WHAT THE PANTHERS DO

Every morning at 6:00 a.m., members of the Black Panther Party in every chapter in the country get up and prepare a free breakfast for thousands of school children. No forms to fill out, no waiting; the only requirement is an empty stomach.

“A lot of people don’t know how serious the thing is,” assassinated Panther leader Fred Hampton once said in a speech. “They think the children we feed ain’t really hungry. I don’t know five year old kids that can act well, but I know that if they’re not hungry then we sure got some actors. We got five year old actors that could take the Academy Award. Last week they had a whole week dedicated to the hungry in Chicago. Talking about the starvation rate here that went up fifteen per cent. Over here where everybody should be eating. Why? Because of capitalism.”

A reporter from *The Movement* newspaper talked to some of the children at one of the breakfast programs in New Haven, Connecticut.

Movement: What do you know about the Panthers?

Boy: I know they are trying to free Huey P. Newton, the leader is Bobby Seale, and they’re revolutionary.

Movement: How do your parents like your going here?

Johnny: Yes, she likes it. I live with my grandmother. She likes the Panthers.

Movement: How do you like it here?

Girls: Fine.

Movement: Where did you go before the Breakfast Program started?

Boy: We didn’t have no breakfast.

Movement (to one of the girls): What’s your name?

Vanessa: Vanessa Harris.

Movement: Do you like the Panthers?

Vanessa: Yes.

Movement: How old are you?

Vanessa: 8.

Movement: I want to show you something. What is this picture about?

Vanessa: About how poor people live and . . . like . . . I’m poor. I’m not rich and I’m not in the middle but I’m poor, right? They are not giving nothing to the poor. They give it to the rich people and the pigs because they’re trying to get rich. If somebody is a pig and he drops like a little crumb to me like that to make me jealous, I’ll be begging him on my knees for more, right?

Movement: Are your parents in the Black Panther Party?

Vanessa: Not my father. He would be a Panther but he doesn’t agree with what they’re saying. The Panthers are saying white and black together. Cause you see the pigs are making it a black and white’s fight.

* * *

People sometimes get upset when the word "pig" is used because they don't know who it's aimed at: All policemen? All whites?

"When we use the word 'pig,'" says Bobby Seale, "we are referring to people who systematically violate peoples' constitutional rights—whether they be monopoly capitalists or police. When the pigs supported strike-breakers like they did at Union Oil in Richmond, where one hundred local police came in and cracked strikers' heads, even workers began to call them by their true name."

"The way you judge that a person is not a pig," Seale said, "is by their actions. Like the Afro-American Patrolmans League in Chicago investigated the racist murder of Fred Hampton that was committed by other members of that same police force. By serving the people, the actions of the League members defines them as not being pigs."

* * *

COMMUNITY CONTROL OF POLICE

If you don't think that the US Government believes its city policemen to be a part of the military machine, check out the San Francisco cop who was awarded the Military Order of the Purple Heart. He was leading a raid on an apartment that was supposed to contain marijuana. When he broke down the door, someone inside shot him. The city awarded him the Purple Heart: Wounded In Action in the war against Americans who smoke dope.

The government claims that police are hired to serve and protect the people. If this were true, police would live in the same communities they police. They would have no fear of the common people.

There would be no need to arm cops with M-16 rifles, machine guns, Stoner Rifles (that shoot through walls), tanks,



tear gas and dynamite at the cost of millions of dollars a year. These are weapons of war. They don't protect shopowners from robbery, common people from burglary, women from rapists or children from bullies.

We do need someone to protect us from rising taxes, rents, and the draft. We need someone to protect us from life in the factories, con artists pretending to be loan companies, robbers disguised as owners of department stores, and mass murderers in Army officers' uniforms. The police forces we have now leave us defenseless against these enemies.

Community control of the police, as the Panthers are working for, would take control out of the hands of J. Edgar Hoover and the businessmen who run our cities and our government, and place it in our hands—the people.

"If we ever implement the community control of police program," says Bobby Seale, "would we call our policemen 'pigs,' who would be protecting our constitutional rights? No."

* * *

The Black Panther chapters are also organizing Liberation Schools and Free Medical Clinics. Their schools teach the true history of the black race. Through education they give children the understanding they need to survive in a country

that threatens their existence. They give each child a sense of his or her place in society, pointing out what is wrong with that society, why it is wrong, and what to do about it.

American medical care—a multi-million dollar industry for the doctors and pill-makers and hospital administrators—is bad enough for whites. For blacks it is a desperate need. To take one example, the entire black community of Watts did not have a single hospital in their area until after the riot of 1965.

What do the Panthers actually do? They teach, they give free medical care, they organize to place control of the police in the hands of the people, they feed school children. That's what they do. Another way of saying it is: they are putting socialism into practice. And they are prepared to lose their lives if necessary that their people may survive and be free.

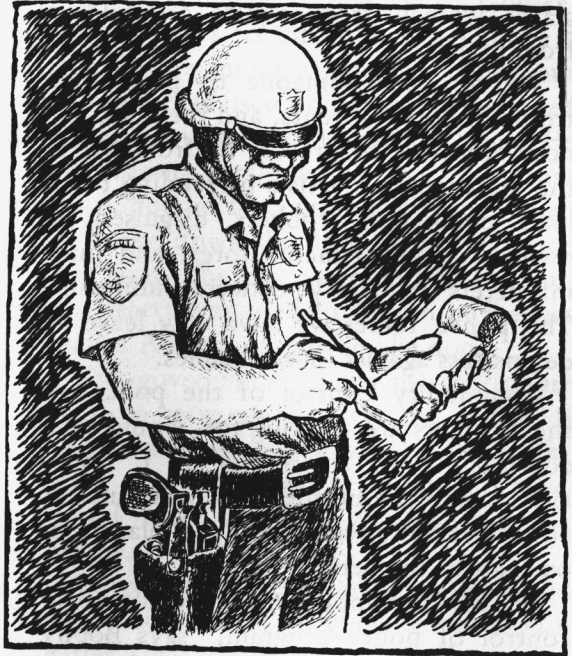
For this, J. Edgar Hoover has called them "The number one threat to our nation's internal security." San Francisco mayor Alioto describes them as "hoodlums." What Nixon thinks about them probably can't be printed. But the rulers of America have done more than badmouth this threat to their wealth and power.

They are trying to exterminate the Black Panther Party.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?



A policeman waving a banker across the street



An officer writing a speeding ticket



A cop approaching a picket line



A pig patrolling the black community
(drawing by Panther artist Emory)

VIII

MURDERS AND FRAMEUPS

In 1966, the year of black rebellions, Fred Hampton was graduating from high school in Maywood, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. His parents worked at a nearby refinery; his father as a painter, his mother an assembly line worker.

He joined the NAACP that summer because he believed in its peaceful methods of trying to improve the lives of black people. During the summer of 1967 he campaigned for a swimming pool for the community. The NAACP's nonviolent demonstrations were viciously broken up by the troopers of the Cook County Sheriff's Department. Hampton was arrested and beaten.

"He tried to get across peacefully," said his brother, "but it didn't work." Hampton began to see that power yields only to power. Like Huey Newton, he looked up at capitalism from the bottom and saw the way it comes down on the simplest demands for change, like a swimming pool for black people.

In November of the next year, Fred Hampton and ten others founded the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party. Under his leadership they set up a free breakfast program and were feeding one thousand children a day.

He urged his people to arm themselves to defend against police attack, but not to use their guns offensively. "The time isn't right," he said.

At 4:44 a.m. on the morning of December 4, 1969, Fred Hampton was murdered, by two bullets in his skull. He was lying in bed asleep.

The bullets came from a raiding party

of Chicago police acting under the orders of Illinois States' Attorney, Edward Hanrahan. Fourteen cops, one firing a machinegun, attacked Hampton's apartment, while others cordoned off the entire area outside.

Hampton was shot from above. The apartment was riddled with machinegun fire. Mark Clark, a Panther leader from Peoria, Illinois was killed by a shot through the front door. Several other Panther members who were staying at the house were wounded and arrested.

Hanrahan and his buddies on the daily newspapers, claimed that it was a "shoot-out," but they have never been able to find a single bullet hole going *out* of the apartment. He sent photos to the newspapers that showed "outgoing" bullet holes: the holes turned out to be the heads of nails.

He praised the "bravery, restraint, and discipline" of his private army. The white mayor of Maywood demanded murder indictments against Hanrahan's agents.

In the weeks after the murders, thousands of Chicagoans, black and white, walked through the bullet-riddled, blood-stained house in silence and sympathy. The association of black Chicago policemen called it "a political assassination." The black community united behind Fred Hampton; no one raised a word against him.

Fred Hampton wrote his own epitaph months before in a speech. "You can kill a revolutionary," he told the people, "but you can't kill the revolution."

* * *

That is what governments always do when threatened by revolutionary forces among the people—try to kill the revolution by killing those who speak for it. Like a wounded elephant, the bureaucracies of nation, state and city thrash about, arresting, jailing and killing those people they can grab.

For the Panthers, the nightmare of official repression began with the attempted killing of Huey Newton. After that the government thrashed further, trying to silence Cleaver and Seale, and failing because it had to make the repression at least look legal.

Six months after Huey was arrested, the Oakland police dropped all respectable cover-up and went in for the kill.

The Panthers were planning a barbeque picnic for April 7, 1968 in Oakland to raise money for Huey's defense. So the night before they were busy collecting food to be served the next day.

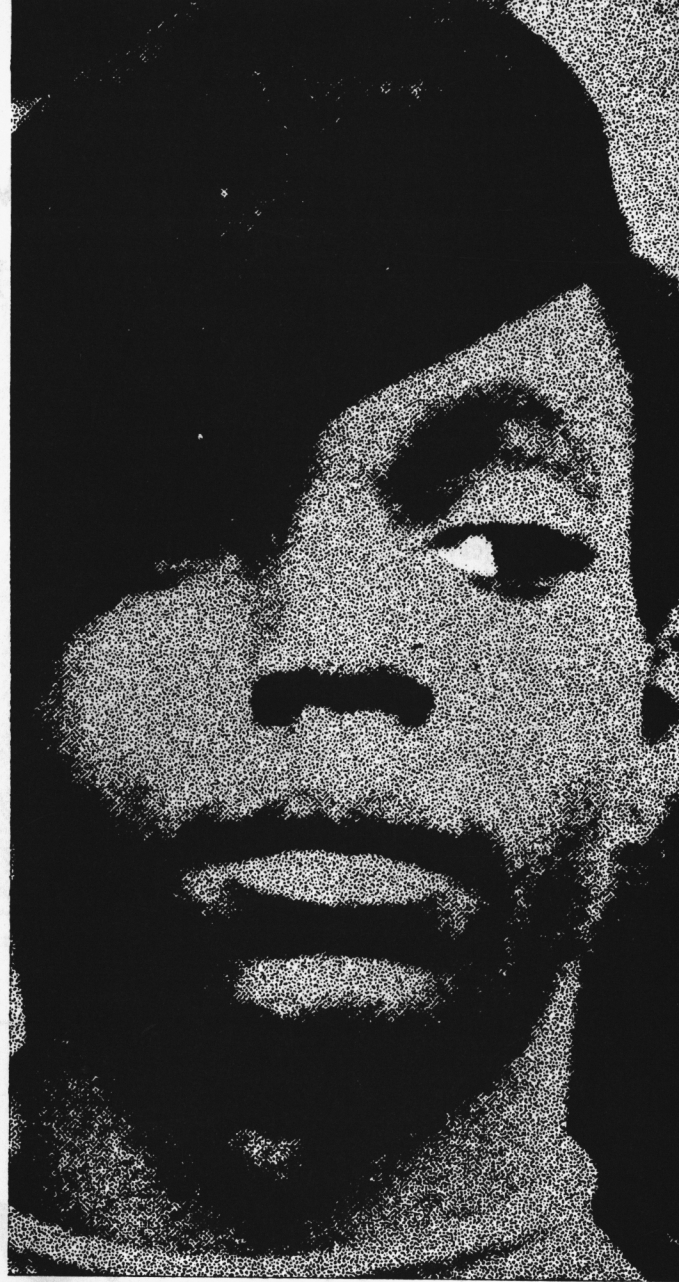
That was the night Bobby Hutton was murdered.

The cars collecting food were parked on the side of an Oakland street. Suddenly a police car pulled alongside and the cops yelled at Eldridge Cleaver, who was in one of the cars, to come into the street with his hands up. Cleaver later described what happened as he cleared the front of his car:

"The cop on the passenger side of his car started shouting and firing his gun, and then the other cop started shooting. The explosions from their guns sounded right in my face."

The Panthers scattered under a crossfire from several police cars. Eldridge and Bobby Hutton found themselves boxed in:

"We could not budge from that little nook because the street was filled with cops and they were pumping shots at us as



LITTLE BOBBY HUTTON

though shooting was about to go out of style. In the dark I could not see that Little Bobby had a rifle, until it started to bark, producing a miraculous effect: the cops, cowardly pigs from their flat feet to their thick heads, all ran for cover. The few seconds that this gave us allowed us to find a door into the basement of the



THE BUILDING WHERE HE WAS MURDERED

house to our right, and we dove inside.

“We lay down flat against the floor while the bullets ripped through the walls. This unrelenting fire went on for about half an hour, and then it stopped and the pigs started lobbing in tear gas.

“The pigs started shooting again and we had to hit the deck. The material we had

stacked against the wall was blown away by what sounded like machinegun fire. We decided to stay there and choke to death if necessary rather than walk out into a hail of bullets.

“One of the shots found my leg and my foot. . . . In my mind I was actually saying goodbye to the world. I said goodbye to my wife, and an image of her dancing for me, as I had watched her do many times before, floated past my mind’s eye, and I reached out to touch her, to kiss her goodbye with my fingers.

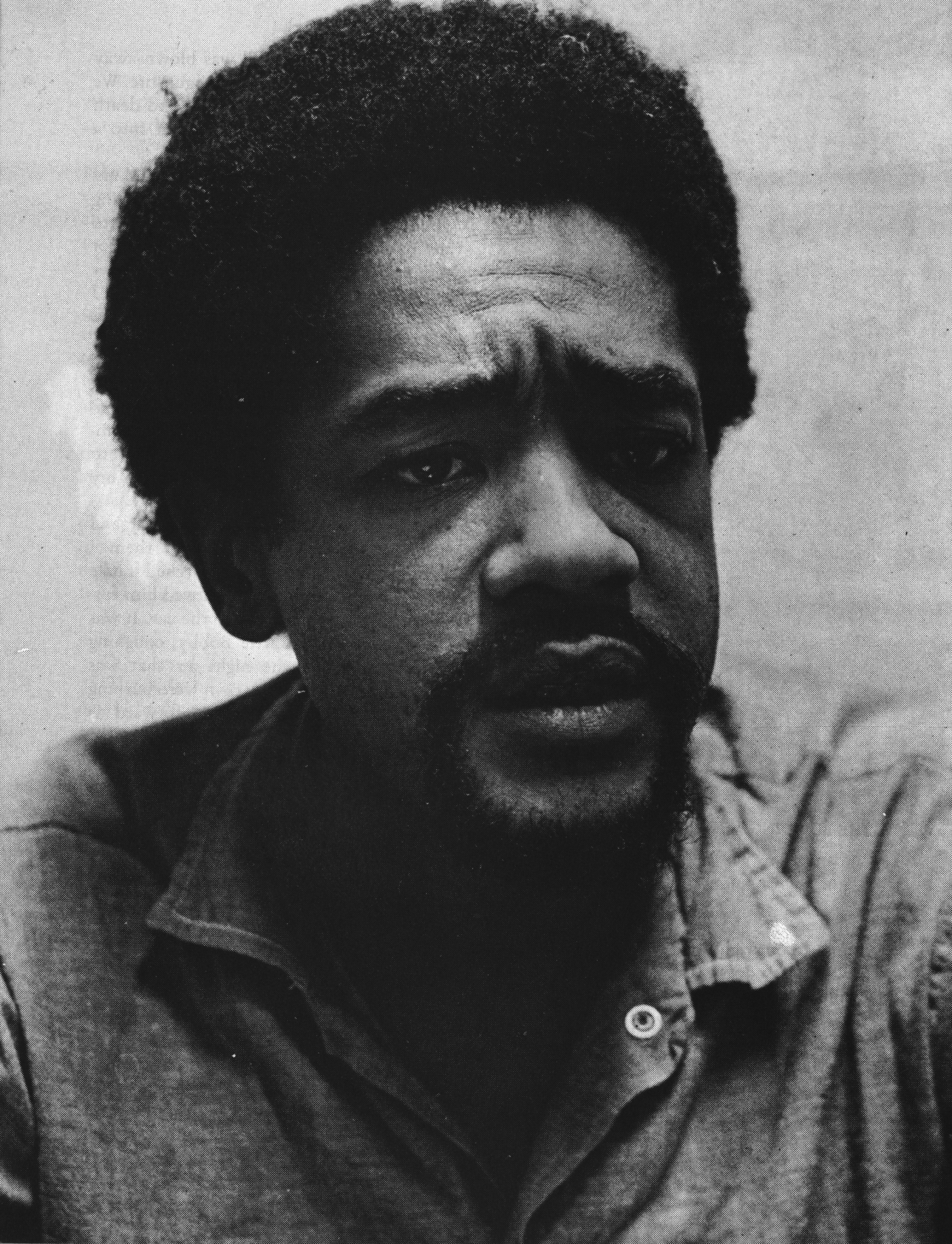
“The rest of the story is madness, pain and humiliation at the hands of the pigs. They shot firebombs into the celler, turning it into a raging inferno. . . . We tumbled through the door. The pigs told us to stand up. Little Bobby helped me to my feet.

“The pigs pointed to a squad car and told us to run for it. I told them I couldn’t run. Then they snatched Little Bobby away from me and shoved him forward, telling him to run to the car. It was a sickening sight. Little Bobby, coughing and choking on the night air that was burning his lungs as my own were burning from the tear gas, stumbled forward as best he could, and after he had traveled about ten yards the pigs cut loose on him with their guns. . . .”

* * *

Black Panther Party Chairman Bobby Seale was invited by the organizers of the anti-war demonstrations at the 1968 Democratic Convention to come to Chicago and speak. He did, flying in from Oakland that morning, giving a short speech, and then returning to the West Coast the next day.

Half a year later Seale was indicted along with seven others for conspiring to cross state lines with intent to incite a riot. No one had rioted after Seale spoke and there was little evidence that he tried



to incite one. That's irrelevant anyway. He's in jail now, not for inciting to riot, but for demanding that he be allowed to defend himself in court.

The press played up Seale's "outbursts" in front of Judge Hoffman. They never quoted any. One of his "outbursts," for which he was bound and gagged went as follows—taken from the court transcript:

The Court: Is there any redirect examination?

Mr. Seale: I would like to request again—demand, that I be able to cross-examine the witness. My lawyer is not here. I think I have a right to defend myself in this courtroom.

The Court: Take the jury out.

Mr. Seale: You have George Washington and Benjamin Franklin sitting in a picture behind you, and they were slave owners. You are acting in the same manner, denying me my constitutional rights being able to cross-examine this witness.

The Court: Mr. Seale, I have admonished you previously. . . .

Mr. Seale: I have a right to cross-examine the witness.

The Court: . . . of what might happen to you if you keep on talking.

Mr. Seale: I still have the right to cross-examine the witness. Why don't you recognize my constitutional rights?

The Court: Mr. Kunstler (is) on record as your attorney.

Mr. Seale: He is not. He is not my lawyer, and you know it.

The Court: He is. I don't know—

Mr. Seale: You know that. You have made your choice of who you think should represent me. I make the choice of Charles R. Garry to represent me.

The Court: We are going to recess now, young man. If you keep this up—

Mr. Seale: Look, old man, if you keep up denying me my constitutional rights,

you are being exposed to the public and the world that you do not care about people's constitutional rights to defend themselves.

The Court: I will tell you that what I indicated yesterday might happen to you—

Mr. Seale: Happen to me? What can happen to me more than what Benjamin Franklin and George Washington did to black people in slavery? What can happen to me more than that?

Judge Hoffman ordered Seale bound and gagged. When the clanking of his chains against the metal chair disturbed the jurors, Hoffman ordered a wooden chair. Finally, the sight of a black man bound, gagged and chained in an American courtroom got to be too embarrassing. Hoffman separated him from the trial and sentenced him to four years in jail for contempt of court.

But before the Conspiracy trial ever began, the government was trying to legally murder Bobby Seale. In May, 1969, fourteen members of the Black Panther Party chapter in New Haven, Connecticut were arrested for "conspiring to murder" Alex Rackley, a Panther member in good standing who was shot by police-agent George Sams.

Three months later twelve carloads of armed Feds pulled up to the national headquarters of the Panthers and arrested Bobby Seale on the same charge. According to the pigs, Seale had flown to New Haven to give a speech at Yale University, after which he dropped over to the local Panther office, found the Party members torturing Rackley as a suspected fink, and casually ordered his murder.

Seale's bail for this frame-up was set at a quarter of a million dollars. He is now in jail in New Haven, awaiting a trial that may send him to the electric chair.