

Former Black Radical of 60's Is Held in an Atlanta Shooting

By RONALD SMOTHERS

ATLANTA, Aug. 8 — For the last 20 years, Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin has been a soft-spoken minister and leader of the Community Mosque in this city's West End neighborhood. But in the 1960's, Mr. Al-Amin was known as H. Rap Brown, the leader of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, or S.N.C.C., and an official of the Black Panther Party, who once said, "Violence is as American as apple pie."

Today Mr. Al-Amin was arraigned on weapons possession and assault charges stemming from a mysterious shooting incident in July near a city park. The case has angered members of his mosque, who say the charges were possibly a set-up by drug dealers because of his anti-drug work in the city.

"He is not only a cleaner of communities here in Atlanta but throughout America," said Imam W. Abdur-Rahim, another of Atlanta's Muslim leaders, as he stood outside the Atlanta Municipal Court today. "We think there is a record of consistency and service on his part that should outweigh anything he may have done in the 70's or 60's. It is possible that his activities in ridding communities of drugs have made him a target and that could be the reason for this."

Mr. Al-Amin, 51, who served five years in a New York prison in the 1970's on an attempted-robbery conviction, was arrested early on Monday by the Atlanta police, accompanied by agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The warrant charged that Mr.

For H. Rap Brown, who is now a Muslim leader, a new brush with controversy.

Al-Amin shot and wounded William Miles, 22, on July 26. The officers approached him at about noon as he was getting into his 1978 Mercedes and searching him, discovered a .45-caliber automatic revolver for which he had no license.

City Judge Harvey R. Moskowitz, noting that Mr. Al-Amin had lived "almost 20 years in Atlanta without a blemish on his record," and that he was not a risk to flee prosecution, set bond at \$27,000. Mr. Al-Amin pleaded not guilty. The case will now go to a grand jury, which will hear evidence and decide whether to indict him.

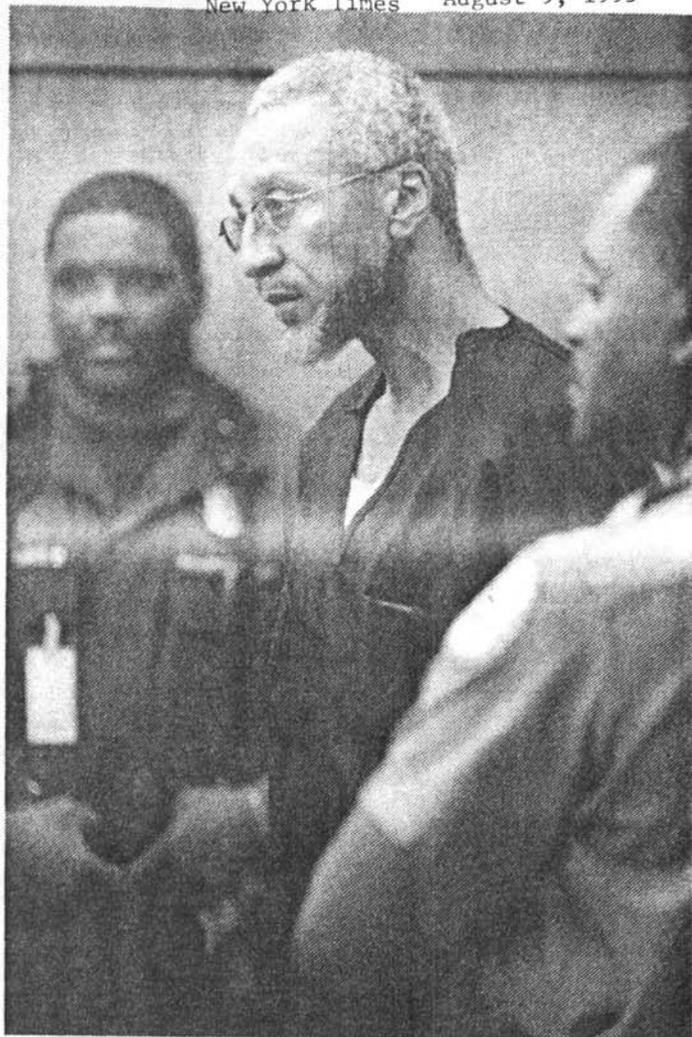
As today's hearing ended, Mr. Al-Amin's lawyer, Michael R. Hauptman said the case was the result of a "25-year-old vendetta" against his client by a host of police agencies. He pointed out that despite the fact that the charges were brought by the state, a group of Federal agents had assisted in the arrest.

In the 1960's, Mr. Al-Amin, was the very embodiment of the new, aggressive black activism and nationalism in his signature black leather jacket, black beret, dark glasses and full-blown Afro hairdo. Other black leaders who embodied the rebellious spirit of that time included Huey Newton, the Black Panther co-founder who succumbed to drug addiction and in 1989 was shot to death on a street in Oakland. Another former leader of the group, Eldridge Cleaver, now 59, was arrested for cocaine possession in 1992, but those charges were later dropped. Today Mr. Cleaver is a registered Republican, owner of a recycling company in Oakland and a lecturer.

Mr. Al-Amin went underground in April 1970 after failing to show up in Maryland for trial on inciting-to-riot charges. In October 1971, when he was on the F.B.I.'s most-wanted list, he was involved in an attempted robbery of a Manhattan bar and a shootout, in which he and two city police officers were wounded. He was subsequently convicted on the robbery charge and served five years.

During his time in prison, he converted to Islam. Upon his release in 1976, he moved to Atlanta and opened a small grocery. Later he founded the Community Mosque.

Over time Mr. Al-Amin forged a reputation among some Muslims here as a spiritual leader who eschewed political activity. He was re-



Associated Press

Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, who, as H. Rap Brown in the 1960's once exhorted blacks to arm themselves, waited during his arraignment yesterday on assault charges after a mysterious shooting in Atlanta.

cently elected by leaders of a number of area mosques as "convener," or spokesman, Mr. Abdur-Rahim said, and had traveled around the country talking to other Muslim congregations about ridding black communities of drugs.

Nearly a year ago two members of Mr. Al-Amin's mosque were among 11 people arrested and convicted on Federal gun-running charges in connection with a ring that helped arm New York City Muslim groups. Mr. Al-Amin was not charged in that case, but said at the time that he was sure that Federal law-enforcement officials had him under constant surveillance.

When asked about Federal agents' involvement in the arrest of Mr. Al-Amin, Bobby Browning, a spokesman for the Atlanta office of the firearms bureau, said they had been asked by the local police to help because of the "firearms aspect of it," and because under Federal law, it is a violation for a convicted felon to possess a gun. He said that the gun-running case involving Mr. Al-Amin's followers was long since

closed, adding that the agency did not "put people under surveillance just for the sake of surveilling them."

Atlanta City Solicitor Ed Downs said today that Mr. Al-Amin was charged with shooting Mr. Miles as the young man walked in the West End park near Mr. Al-Amin's grocery. Mr. Miles, who was wounded in his right leg, later identified Mr. Al-Amin to the police as the shooter, Mr. Downs said. In addition, Mr. Downs said Mr. Miles had told the police that the day after the shooting, Mr. Al-Amin had come to his house to apologize but also to say that he had not done it.

"He told him that if it had been him, he, Mr. Miles, would have been dead," the prosecutor said.

Mr. Hauptman called the story "ludicrous" and said no such conversation had taken place. He declined to discuss how his client knew Mr. Miles. The police said they were still investigating that part of the case.

By late this afternoon, Mr. Al-Amin had not made bail and remained in Atlanta city jail.