

Panther-Slaying Suspect Freed

**Jury Acquits Wyche In
Torture, Murder Of
Party Sympathizer
In July, 1969**

By GEORGE J. HILTNER

A Criminal Court jury deliberated two hours last night and then acquitted Charles Wyche, 30, of kidnaping and murdering a 20-year-old Black Panther party sympathizer who was sus-

pected of being a police informer.

Mr. Wyche was accused of being the gunman in the fatal shooting of Eugene Leroy Anderson, 20, who was taken on a so-called "death ride" to Leakin Park in July, 1969, and felled with a shotgun blast. His skeleton was found in the park three months later.

The verdict at the end of the five-day trial was greeted with loud screams from about 20 young males and females who

had attended most of the court sessions.

The presiding judge, Anselm Sodaro, cautioned against further outbursts, but several of the young men slapped each other on the chest in their exuberance and a number of the spectators embraced and kissed Larry Gibson, the defense lawyer, after court recessed.

Hilary Caplan, the prosecutor, asked that the jurors be polled to determine whether all agreed with the verdicts, as announced by their foreman. All said they did.

Mr. Caplan then dropped another indictment against Mr. Wyche accusing him of conspiring to murder Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Wyche is the second of 12 accused persons to be tried on charges of alleged participation in the torturing and slaying of Mr. Anderson.

Not Present

In testimony that Mr. Wyche did not dispute, the jurors were told by two former Black Panther party members that Mr. Anderson first was tortured at party headquarters on North Eden street before he was taken on the "death ride" and slain.

Mr. Wyche's defense was that he was not present during the alleged acts of violence or during the death ride, and presented evidence to show that he was at the home of his fiancee arranging for her birthday party during that time.

The defendant did not take the witness stand in his own defense, but offered the testimony of several alibi witnesses.

The first trial growing out of Mr. Anderson's death resulted in the first-degree murder conviction of Irving Young, a Morgan State College senior. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Identified As Driver

Mr. Young was identified as the driver of the auto that took Mr. Anderson to Leakin Park. There, according to testimony, Mr. Anderson was escorted into the woods by three men, a shotgun blast was heard and the three returned to the car.

Arnold Loney, 22, the key state's witness and an occupant of the car that went on the "death ride," testified that Mr. Wyche carried the shotgun into the woods, returned with it and later in the car stated, "I shot him."

A loaded, sawed-off shotgun found later by police at Mr. Wyche's residence in the 1800 block of North Castle street was identified by Mr. Loney as the murder weapon.

Mr. Wyche's lawyer rebutted
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state's evidence that Mr. Wyche was at the party headquarters in the 1200 block of North Eden street on the day of the torturing by producing testimony that the accused was at his job with Self-Help Housing, Inc.

Hanging Curtains, Blinds

To establish that Mr. Wyche later that day and throughout the night was at home or shopping with his fiancee and others, the defense offered witnesses who told of hanging curtains and blinds and generally preparing for the birthday party.

From the outset of the trial, the defense did not contest the fact that Mr. Anderson was tortured and beaten with bed slats, a hot knife dipped in boiling sugar water, lighted cigarettes and fists, and later shot in the park.

The jury that acquitted Mr. Wyche included seven Negroes and five whites. Seven of the jurors were women.