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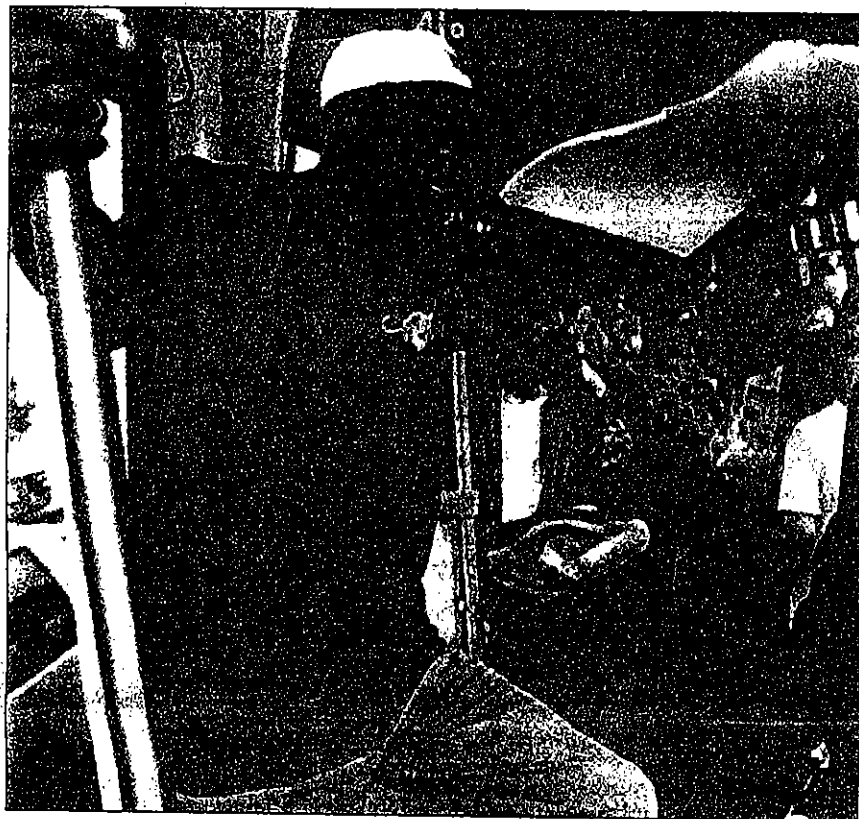
ARTICLES AND ANIMADVERSIONS ON POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND OTHER FOLLIES



THE LAST PANTHER

So now Jerry Brown wants to be Mayor Moonbeam! Actually, the ex-California Governor and one time Presidential hopeful was always more adept at playing political hardball than he let on, and his recently declared candidacy for the top job in Oakland is based on a perception that this black majority town is in transition, with a conspicuous power vacuum at the top. Brown has lined up the city's few established power blocks (the Ron Dellums machine and the Alameda Central Labor Council) behind him. And to seal the realpolitik Brown always practiced beneath the façade of New Age flakiness, he has brought in another retread from a bygone era, David Hilliard, to help him. The *San Francisco Chronicle*, in fact, reported that Hilliard was Brown's Chief of Staff. But perhaps because the title so eerily echoed Hilliard's old title when he was the ramrod of the Black Panther Party during the days when that organization was at war with the cops and with Oakland itself, he got the paper to retract the next day.

In the '60s, Hilliard was behind Huey and Eldridge and Bobby Seale in the Panther pecking order. But that was then and this is now. Newton is dead and Bobby Seale is on the East Coast teaching and selling barbeque. Cleaver, the renegade Panther who once marketed his own design for cod-



piece pants, has been a one man lesson in revisionism, going from born-again Christian to Moonie fellow-traveler to registered Republican. He has been arrested for his thriving poaching enterprise in which he hired the homeless to steal curbside recyclables from Berkeley's homeowners which he sold to the recycling buy-back center. Like Huey Newton he had a crack addiction; but unlike Newton, Cleaver's arrest and hospitalization led to recovery. David Hilliard, who always seemed to lack the charisma of the other Panther notables, is the last Panther standing, and the man who has been in charge of merchandising the organization during its afterlife.

The Panther revival has simmered for more than half a decade, fueled early on by Elaine Brown's 1992 autobiography (*A Taste of Power*), the 1995 Hollywood film *Panther* directed by Mario Van Peebles, and various public television documentaries attempting to tell the saga of Sixties politics and the black experience in this century. In all of these efforts, the Panthers' true history as a criminal organization doing drugs and rackets in Oakland is virtually unexplored, but the group's myth as ghetto freedom fighters remains. It is Hilliard who has acted on director John Ford's famous advice when he said when confronted with the truth and the myth, sell the myth.

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THE LONG NATIONAL NIGHTMARE, PART DEUX THE DARK SIDE OF DOGPATCH

by Peter Collier

What does the President think about when he thinks about love? It is a symptom of the current national crisis that we are encouraged to wonder. But there is a companion question that is more interesting and more relevant. What does the President think about when he thinks about Bill Clinton?

Part of the answer can be inferred from those well practiced gestures—the sympathetically sucked in lip and earnestly wrinkled forehead; the shades and sax while rocking out on the Arsenio show: *I'm so damned cool!*

More specifically, the President has mentioned that climactic moment in his young manhood when he finally stepped between his drunken stepfather and his battered mother and said *enough!* This is an epiphany for his feminist cadres. In front of mainly male audiences, Clinton has talked with roguish nostalgia about the good old days when he was so bad that he lined the

bed of his battered pickup with astroturf to make it easier to do you-know-what with the girls. But he gets a particular gleam in his eye when he recounts what has become his most magic (and mythomaniacal) moment, that time at the national conference of Boys' Nation in 1963 when he, part of the best and brightest of student government, got a chance to shake the hand of JFK.

Unlike Hillary's weird attempts to arrange a séance with Eleanor Roosevelt, this was real contact. It was the moment the flesh was made word; when one New Democrat met another in a harmonic convergence and the torch was passed. It was the prophetic encounter that placed the sword into the stone so that it could be withdrawn 30 years later.

When the President thinks about Bill Clinton, in other words, he thinks about the second coming, so to speak, of John Kennedy.

Two Presidents with youth and vigor and good looks; the one who brought modern imagery to Presidential politics and the other who made the image

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When everyone else seemed willing to let the Panther experience fade into the ambivalence of history, David Hilliard recognized the value of Pantherism as a nostalgic artifact and sought to package and sell it. Staging celebrations and exhibitions of photos and establishing the Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation, Hilliard has been busy during the '90s closing deals on everything from Panther films to archive collection sales. He's the man to see, having positioned himself at the center of the all things commercial having to do with the Black Panther Party. He's been known to jump on stage for a little bow and spiel even where the pickings are slim, as he did in a 1995 one man show interpreting Huey Newton or at the recent opening of Panther artist Emory Douglas' drawings at a local Berkeley club. He is the official Panther archivist, historian, and entrepreneur all in one. He is so sensitive to the fluctuations of the market that when an event like the recent release of L.A. Panther Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt occurs, Hilliard is ready to take profits in the rise of Panther stock.

Hilliard has managed this after rehabilitating himself from a long period of booze and crack abuse (Hilliard candidly admits he was the one who first turned Huey Newton onto the crack cocaine which ultimately finished him off, as years of sniffing coke and drinking had not previously done. Newton, hopelessly addicted, was gunned down by a young drug dealer in 1989 in front of a known crack house in West Oakland). In the '70s Hilliard worked for Tom Hayden's Campaign for Economic Democracy. Then Hayden became a political candidate and Hilliard came back to the Bay Area and worked for the Longshoremen's Union and then the SEIU (Service Employees' International Union), although much of the time in both jobs on disability leave. By the 90s he'd lost his union job and had little else to do than to take over as full time keeper of the flame of the Panthers. He gained legitimacy in that role by successfully wooing Newton's widow Fredrika, who appeared to confer status on him as Newton's successor. (Hilliard shared her home in Berkeley until recently, and still appears at her side at many official Panther memorial functions.)

This union of leftover Panthers quickly took on business as well as emotional implications. According to the California State Registry of Charitable Trusts, the Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation was formed by the two of them in 1993, with Fredrika as President, and Hilliard variously as Treasurer in some years, Executive Director in others. The Foundation, judging from state records, was created primarily to handle commercial deals Hilliard and Fredrika were trying to put together. By doing Panther business under the charitable trust aegis, money received by them was tax deductible. What "programs" there have been, and they appear to be paltry few indeed, seem to have as their goal, aside from moneymaking (\$413,000 in total so far), the continued feeding of the old Panther myths.

This past October, Hilliard, with Fredrika, also inaugurated the so-called Panther Legacy Tours of Oakland. In interviews with the *New York Times* and other papers, Hilliard stressed that the tours were educational, highlighting an important time in Oakland's history, the Panther time of the '60s and '70s. In reality the itinerary is shallow and propagandistic, short on historical fact and long on nostalgia.

The bus trip around town costs 20 bucks a pop. Hilliard has been the tour "guide" on

each of the three tours that have been given so far (another is scheduled for late February) with Fredrika waiting back at the tour's start or occasionally serving refreshments. The inaugural run scored big in the press with three busloads of reporters and notables, top heavy with local political candidates, all clamoring to get on board and be retroactively endorsed by the Panther mystique. Jerry Brown got on the bus, and with him, outgoing Mayor Elihu Harris, Brown's rival, Alameda County Supervisor Mary King, and State Senator Barbara Lee heir apparent to retiring Ron Dellums' Congressional seat (who was also a teenaged volunteer driver for Newton back in the good old days.)



FORMER CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR JERRY BROWN, REINCARNATED AS A MAYORAL CANDIDATE

Hilliard focused the tour on landmarks from the innocent time, even before the Party was actually formed—the boyhood homes of Seale, Newton, and Hilliard; the site at Merritt College where Seale and Newton debated the new black politics of Malcolm X and Afrocentrism and Cuban freedom fighters.

Mayoral hopeful Mary King recalled going to the Fox Lounge, one of Newton's favorite hangouts (not on the Legacy Tour) during a transit strike: "The joy was to go there and have a cocktail with Huey." No doubt she was ignorant of the tense moment there in the summer of 1974 when Newton, irritated at the sight of an Oakland vice cop, George Whitfield, yelled to his six foot seven, 400-pound muscle, Robert Heard, "shoot him, shoot the pig-ass mother fucker." Cops later arrested a handful of Panthers in the bar with enough firepower on them to start a small war. In fact none of Newton's infamous bar and after-hour hangouts were included on the tour despite the fact he spent far more time at those spots than the official Panther offices the tour covered as if traveling through the holy land.

Especially glaring in the tour's omissions was the Lamp Post, the bar and restaurant Newton "bought," taking it over from a distant cousin, and staffing it with his Panther loyalists. His "living room" was how he referred to it, a play pen that turned ugly frequently enough as when, in the summer of 1974 he and Heard beat up two young black women who had "sassed" them. (Later, the Lamp Post was believed to be the destination of the Panthers' white bookkeeper, Betty Van Patter, who had made the mistake of being openly critical of financial

improprieties she was supposed to overlook as part of her job doing the bar's books. She was murdered, most likely on orders from Newton in Cuba while Elaine Brown was heading the Party; her body was found floating in the Bay, her head bludgeoned.) The Lamp Post was a major Panther operation and even Bobby Seale in an interview several years ago confirmed there were some Panther women turned out as prostitutes working out of the Lamp Post to feed the Party coffers.

Jerry Brown didn't ask about any of this, but he did make a few PC remarks about Oakland's heritage, pointedly drawing an analogy between Oakland's indigenous Ohlone tribe, pushed out of the area by early white settlers, and the besieged and equally threatened Black Panthers, a stretch of inspired political jawing echoed in Hilliard's comparison of the shooting death of Panther Bobby Hutton by an Oakland cop to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. as part of his tour spiel.

Stopping the bus at the West Oakland site of the shootout in 1968, Hilliard told a bus load of children on another tour that the Bobby Hutton shooting, just a few days after the King killing, "showed they were out to get black leaders." But even in his vaguely worded insinuations, Hilliard was lying and he knew it. The shootout was part of a deliberately laid plan hatched by Eldridge Cleaver to ambush Oakland cops—a plan Cleaver admitted in an interview with this reporter as part of a 1980 *California* magazine article. Hilliard himself echoed that confession when he quoted Cleaver in his 1993 autobiography, *This Side of Glory*. "This is the plan. We'll transport a cache of guns from my house [in San Francisco] to West Oakland, catch a policeman on the way, and gun him down."

In his book, Hillard claims to have been fiercely opposed to the ambush: "I don't feel like sacrificing my life for something I don't believe in. This is . . . absolutely crazy . . . insane." But he just couldn't, or

wouldn't, say no and in fact he joined the three car caravan of armed Panthers who ambushed the lone patrol car (two cops were shot, one seriously, with 49 bullet holes later found puncturing the patrol car). Hilliard was caught, charged, and convicted for his role in the ambush and served four years in prison.

The quaint early homes of the Panther heroes and the storefront offices of the halcyon days offers an easy mythology of the past: poor boys bravely fighting the system. Why should Hilliard disturb that vision by stopping the bus at Huey's well appointed penthouse overlooking Lake Merritt (the site where he pistol whipped a middle-aged black tailor, among other things) or the posh house in the Oakland hills purchased for him by his good friend film producer Bert Schneider (*Easy Rider*) when Newton returned from his illegal flight to Cuba (to avoid arrest for the shooting death of a 17-year-old Oakland street hooker.) Nor does the tour stop at one of several Panther barracks—ghetto houses crammed to the roofs with Panther rank and file members who did the drudge work, often toiling 16 to 18 hours a day collecting money or working later in Panther service programs for no money while Newton, Elaine Brown, and other chosen elite lived like pashas—no, those dorms, like the 29th Street address where a weapons cache was uncovered along with a "mud hole" in back, a deep pit filled with cold water where errant Party members were forced to stand for hours, were off limits to the Legacy Tour.

Hilliard's pitch on the bus for city monies to underwrite the Legacy Tours was predictable. He's been seeking grants and institu-

tional money for Panther "educational projects" for years, but so far neither the tour goers or other officials have coughed up. Hilliard had to settle for getting the job with Jerry Brown, while keeping up a steady stream of grant proposals.

It was not a difficult sell. Jerry Brown had ties with the Panthers, and especially with Elaine Brown, back into the early days of his governorship. In the mid 1970s, when she was acting head of the Panthers during Newton's "exile," she gained the Governor's ear to hear her arguments for overriding his freeway building moratorium to complete the Grove Shafter Freeway which brought bedroom suburbia to downtown Oakland. The *quid pro quo* was job quotas for local black workers, which the Panthers could use in their drive to take over Oakland politics.

Governor Brown was wowed by the beautiful Elaine. He appointed her to be part of his delegation as favorite son in the 1976 Democratic convention in L.A. She showed her loyalty by refusing to make the vote unanimous behind Jimmy Carter, holding out for Jerry by herself in the final count. And Jerry Brown squired her to social evenings back home in Oakland around this time, including a romantic ferry boat party cruise hosted by director Francis Ford Coppola.

When Jerry Brown returned from his foreign adventures in meditation in 1993 and settled in Oakland, buying a warehouse for his "We The People" and parceling out offices in his warren to like minded activists, it was no surprise that Panther Brown and Governor Brown caught up with each other, although around this time, Hilliard began escorting Elaine around town, often leaving Fredrika at home. And when Elaine vacated her new Pacific Park Plaza condo in Emeryville (bought with her \$400,000 book advance), Hilliard "house sat" while she globe-trotted.

Yet Jerry Brown's activities under his We The People umbrella have been the kind of white "visionary" enterprises—like the just folded so-called "School of Sustainability"—that have little to do with the lives of blacks in Oakland. Brown recognized that while he had name recognition, he hardly had a real base either in Oakland's black churches or in its major industries or cultural institutions. (Oakland's city school system, for example, is the third largest employer in the city.) So hooking up with a familiar part of Oakland's past of black heroes, however dubious that past might actually be, is good politics.

Elaine Brown, in turn, has showed up in the Bay Area recently as Jerry's campaign becomes more visible. (She lived outside Paris for awhile with her white industrialist lover but appears to have moved out once her book career took off. She has subsequently led a somewhat peripatetic life, flitting between New York and the Bay Area and showing up at Emory University where Kathleen Cleaver teaches on the law faculty.) The two Browns were visible mourners at the late Mayor Lionel Wilson's funeral, whose election in the mid-70s as Oakland's first black mayor was achieved with Panther support). If Jerry Brown is elected, it is presumed that Elaine Brown, Hilliard, and others from the Panther glory days could cash in for city jobs.

But Hilliard et al. haven't been sitting on their thumbs waiting for this to happen. Since late 1993, he and Fredrika have been trying to peddle the Huey Newton Papers—photos, audio tapes and printed materials—Panther documents, some "official minutes," Cointelpro files maintained by the government, some letters, financial transactions—above board ones anyhow, and even Newton's copies of his pro-

fessor's lectures from the University of California at Santa Cruz where he was awarded a doctorate. In all there was some 50 boxes of this material, over 100 linear feet.

Ultimately the collection was sold to Stanford University, which had recently purchased Allen Ginsberg's voluminous papers—over one thousand linear feet, say sources—and which also has an impressive Martin Luther King collection. Stanford was approached by Hilliard after UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library passed on the deal. The Bancroft already had Eldridge Cleaver's papers. He'd donated them after they'd been rescued from a Berkeley storage facility where owners were threatening to dump his locker for being \$900 in arrears. Cleaver offered to donate them to the Bancroft

just for the Foundation to function. From no expenses in 1993, telephone expenses leap to \$12,000. Other big ticket items that year were nearly \$14,000 in consultants, \$47,000 for something called "education/training," \$26,000 under "suspense," and a modest \$12,499 for photography/video, the latter, presumably the real cost of microfilming the collection as planned. Not surprisingly, a mere \$2,978 was left at the end of the year.

Records for 1996 show the Foundation receiving \$216,174, which alone or with the previous year's hundred thousand plus, would seem to represent the final payment of Stanford for the Newton papers. As in the previous year, all this money was dispersed immediately. The expenditures in the year of the big pay off go up accordingly for still unnamed and undescribed "programs." This time Hilliard draws \$12,500 in direct payments under his own name. "Consultants" amounts to \$134,535.

And while Hilliard as tour leader paints a picture of the Panther party as one of service, extolling the breakfast program for poor kids, the Panther school and health clinic, services that ran haphazardly but which had a small measure of altruistic community service, especially for the workers who made these programs go, the Newton Foundation under Hilliard and Huey's widow has shown no similar effort. How much is allocated for "Student Grants Educational/Training"? \$50. So much for using the Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation to train today's black youth. It is true, however, that in 1996 Hilliard and Fredrika appeared in East Oakland at the behest of a literacy program, the Family Learning Center, preaching Panther history and reading from Huey's speeches. The pair promised then to have Panther "teaching guides" disseminated in three Oakland elementary schools by 1997. Oakland school officials claim that the material doesn't exist.

It would appear that the main activity of the Foundation is fund raising. Fredrika's half brother, Mickey Phillips, apparently undertook to write grant proposals, retaining a small percentage of monies raised. The heiress to the Rubber Maid fortune, through her foundation, has made two \$15,000 donations. But Phillips and the two Foundation officers were sorely disappointed to receive only \$500 from the Barbra Streisand Foundation.

Hilliard, say sources among the film community, Panther veterans, one-time Panther attorneys, and community activists has become the self appointed gate keeper of any and all Panther commerce, acting as the licensing agent who demands a piece of everything. Bobby Seale and his brother John complained several years ago that that Hilliard contracted to option everyone's rights for nearly half a million from left leaning Hollywood producer Mark Rosenberg, who was trying to sew up rights to Panther stories for a proposed movie rumored then to be directed by "Boys in the Hood" director John Singleton. According to Bobby Seale, Hilliard brokered the deal for Cleaver—"Cleaver was offered \$20,000. David said 'sign it!,' Freddy [Fredrika Newton] gets a hundred fifty thousand. I made sure John [Seale] got sixty-five thousand and Leslie [Seale's second wife] got fifty five thousand. Emery [Douglas, the artist for the Panther paper] got sixty five and Melvyn [Huey's brother, a Party advisor] was to get \$100,000. He held out a long time."

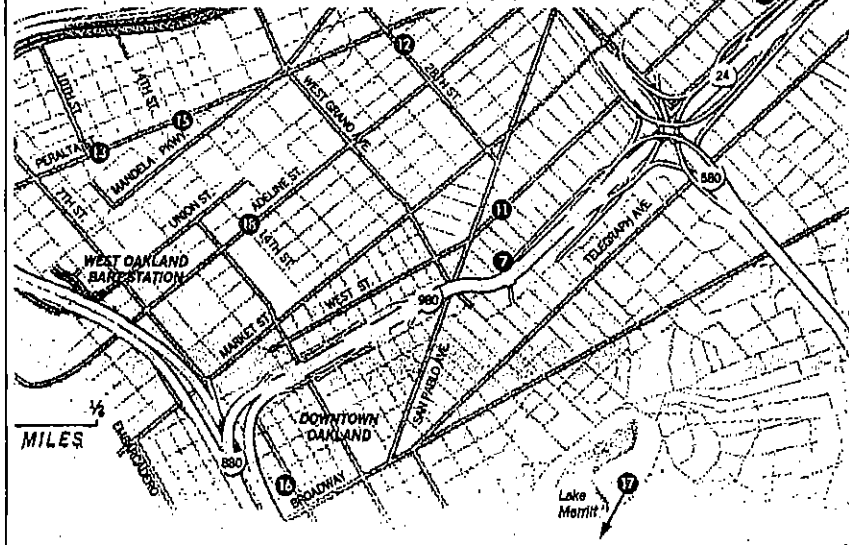
Mark Rosenberg was tragically stricken with a brain tumor. When he died, the Panther movie project died with him; his widow, Paula Weinstein couldn't carry on and the deal evaporated. But still both John and Bobby Seale spoke resentfully of Hilliard's heavy-handed role as broker. Said John Seale, "He wanted all the power!"

BLACK PANTHER TOUR

- 1 Panther Party's Ten Point Program was adopted at the Office of Economic Development Corp. at 5500 Market St. Oct. 15, 1966, calling for adequate housing, jobs, education and an end to police brutality.
- 2 Party members stopped motorists and escorted children across the intersection of Market and 55th streets in 1967 after several students from nearby Santa Fe Elementary School had been killed by cars at the spot. Panther pressure helped lead to installation of stoplights in August 1967.
- 3 898 56th St. was the home of Bobby Hutton, who was a Panther member killed in a quarrel with police April 6, 1968.
- 4 809 57th St. was the 1960s home of party co-founder Bobby Seale.
- 5 Party co-founder Huey Newton attended classes here at the Old Menard Junior College campus on Martin Luther King Jr. Way and became active with black student groups starting in 1958.

- 6 5624 Martin Luther King Jr. Way is the site of the Panthers' first office in 1967.
- 7 5350 Martin Luther King Jr. Way at 25th Street was one of the liquor stores and taverns once owned by Bill Boyette, former president of Cal-Pan business association. Panthers boycotted the businesses in a dispute with Boyette over contributions to the party.
- 8 4722 West St. is the former home of David Hilliard, the party's first chief of staff.
- 9 881 47th St. was the Newton family's home after arriving from Monroe, La. in 1945.
- 10 The Panthers' second office at 4419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way.
- 11 Formerly St. Agostino's Episcopal Church, 2624 West St. is now St. Andrew's Baptist Church. Home of Panthers' free breakfast program for children, which started in 1969, and subsequent community survival programs.
- 12 1218 28th St. was the site of the 1968 shootout with police that left Hutton dead and Eldridge Cleaver in custody.

- 13 1048 Pinella St. was the Panthers' fourth office. The party returned to West Oakland from Berkeley in Fall 1968.
- 14 Dunbar erupted Oct. 28, 1967 at Seventh and Willow streets, after police made a traffic stop of Newton. The Panther leader was wounded and officer John Fry was killed. Newton was convicted of voluntary manslaughter. The conviction was overturned.
- 15 1456 Center St. is where Newton was shot dead by a drug dealer Aug. 22, 1969.
- 16 Alameda County courthouse, 17th and Oak streets, was the site of Newton trial and numerous "Free Huey" demonstrations.
- 17 On an map Newton lived in a penthouse at 1200 Lake Shore Dr. in the 1970s where the party said it provided security against police.
- 18 De Fremery Park, Adeline and 14th streets was the site of several Panther community programs and rallies.



and library curators happily scooped up the collection and began much needed restoration (apparently they papers were damp, mildewed and in great disarray). The Bancroft curators apparently did not bite on the Newton papers because of the inflated price. (According to one source the ridiculous figure of \$1-2 million was kicked around at one point in negotiations.) A source familiar with the Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation's origins asserts, "The Foundation was set up by Hilliard to prevent anyone else from laying claim to the stuff [such as Huey Newton's own family] in Freddy's basement. It was a scam to get money."

The Oakland Museum offered a temporary sanctuary and an environmentally safe surrounding for the Newton collection which was mouldering in Fredrika Newton's cellar. Phillip Mumma, Associate Director of Public Programs of the Museum, hoped to mount an exhibition which could then travel to other institutions. Another official at the museum said negotiations went back and forth a long time during 1995, but they didn't pan out. "The reason it didn't," the source said, "was that conditions for them—Fredrika and Hilliard—meant their controlling the message. They felt it wasn't an art show."

Mumma says the Oakland museum had no designs on the collection but had an urgent sense of history to preserve the papers. "We felt, hey, this stuff needs to survive. We said we'll house it temporarily and we helped them raise money so it could be microfilmed, but it had to be done out of house. It was a grant." He recalled some \$10,000 being raised for preservation efforts.

The 1995 state income tax forms for the Newton Foundation show the first substantial monies coming in that year to the tune of \$152,374 under "direct public support." Suddenly there's a flurry of outgoing expenses

But the market for Panther films was high in the early '90s and Hilliard was always there. Documentary film makers exploring a film on the life of Jean Seberg, the film actress who had an affair with Panther Raymond ("Masai") Hewitt and openly supported the Panthers, complained to this writer of Hilliard's demands to be hired as a "consultant" if they wanted cooperation or information of any kind. To the independent filmmakers, it felt like extortion.

To be sure, Hilliard's blessing could mean valuable access. Roger Guenveur Smith's brilliant performance as Huey Newton in the accurate, even haunting, one-man show "A Huey P. Newton Story," he generously credited to the access granted by Hilliard and Fredrika to Newton's papers and recordings, and to candid interviews with Hilliard covering Newton's disintegration from crack addiction, a precipitous fall he depicts chillingly on stage. At the performance I witnessed, Hilliard jumped on stage right after, accepting the actor's thanks and by his presence putting a spin on the tale which allows the truth of Newton's addiction as a personal failing, but an affliction with class and racial resonance. By focusing on the addict's sorry end, Hilliard makes sure that the political myths of earlier Panther history—his bread and butter—remain secure.

To Hilliard, no Panther-related transaction, reference, or cultural invocation is to be beyond his control. Oakland conceptual artist Mildred Howard thought her installation in a recent group show celebrating ethnic diversity was a tribute to the Black Panthers in its depiction of the Panthers' free breakfast program she and her kids partook of when she was a struggling single mother. She artfully arranged place-settings, tables, and food—along with Black Panther berets and black jackets. It was personal art, but community sharing as well.

"Then David Hilliard showed up," she recounted recently, "and he hits me up for money—like I'm supposed to pay him for showing the Panthers. I couldn't believe it. He really leaned on me, said he was going to get money from the Museum as well. I was furious. Outraged. What arrogance. Bobby would never have done such a thing."

Moreover, Howard is not the only one who's experienced the Hilliard tithing touch. In a conversation with me last year, a veteran Berkeley peace activist recounted how Hilliard roughed up a hapless vendor at the weekly Berkeley flea market. The vendor's offense? Selling old Panther papers, posters, and other memorabilia. It was the sight of a maverick cashing in that apparently infuriated Hilliard. (A source claims that Hilliard's own son himself sells new Panther logo caps and t-shirts, part of a family monopoly *pere* Hilliard seems intent on protecting.) Reportedly flea market private security escorted Hilliard off the grounds. The same story was repeated at a Channukah party this winter, told with chortles of disbelief by one of Newton's former attorneys to yet another. Both shook their heads and clucked with henish rectitude and wonder: "He's still doing that," said one.

Hilliard has been remarkable, finally, in his ability to gain control of Panther history, with or without a menacing intimidation. He has shown a media savvy in interviews where he pushes his version of events to the exclusion of any other, even including his own published biography which often tells a different story than his current simple story of Panther virtue. His strategies to market Panthermania have paid off—for him and other loyalists who've signed on.

He has, in the process of all these hustles, deals, negotiations, and corralling of separate wills to his purpose, acquired prodigious interactive skills which were not present in his surly early days in the organization, when he was noted for outbursts such as the time at author Jessica Mitford's when he broke up a party by smashing a wine bottle over Tom Hayden's head. Running the Panthers when the

top leaders were in jail or on the lam taught him a thing or two, but the art of the deal came later, primarily under the tutelage of a New York commodities broker, Marty Kenner, who for years was a trusted advisor to Huey Newton on financial matters. After the Party disintegrated and Newton crumbled, Kenner was known for laying out the welcome mat to selected Panther veterans like Hilliard, putting them up in his posh New York digs, offering friendship, advice, and good wine.

It was Kenner who escorted Hilliard to the home of my editor at Times Books with the sole purpose of dissuading the house from signing a contract with this writer for a Newton biography. The editor/publisher, Steve Wasserman, a Berkeley native and political "progressive" (and presently editor of the *Los Angeles Times* Book Review) received Kenner and Hilliard at his Upper West Side apartment. Wasserman listened, but when he was unmoved by the pair's arguments, saying that he intended to go ahead with the book, Hilliard turned brutish and menacing. In Wasserman's telling, the muscular Panther suddenly uncoiled from his chair, exploding in anger, spewing epithets and veiled threats. Even after Kenner tried to calm him down, the Panther still seethed, and then, summoning Kenner, stormed out. Wasserman confessed he'd been terrified—for himself and his sequestered family, a fear that didn't go away with Hilliard's abrupt departure. "They know where I live," he shuddered.

The David Hilliard of eight years ago is smoother today. A matronly Oakland City Council woman elected last year beamed at his name: "Hilliard supported me." An Oakland neighborhood activist, also white, called him "charming."

But Hilliard has another side, a shadeless mercurial than his old friend, Huey Newton, less intellectually nimble or engaging; even less two-faced, but alike in their explosive and violence prone anger. Hilliard has a history of violence. (He admits beating his wife in his autobiography.) It used to be fuelled by alcohol. The booze is gone, but the patina of remade sophistication cannot eliminate his need to manipulate and control; nor has it tamed his sudden rages that instantly transform him from reasoned veteran statesman to brute.

It wasn't money, a missed deal, or interloper on Panther intellectual or cultural domain, but rather a flip retort from an arrogant white man, for instance, that set Hilliard off in a Berkeley photocopy shop a couple of years ago. The tall white guy inadvertently provoking the Panther chief was not some innocuous Berkeley nobody, but a supporting historical actor in a drama no less famous than the long-playing one starring the Panthers. It was Jack Scott, the mysterious figure who in 1975 drove Patty Hearst and SLA fugitive Patty Yoshimura across country to escape local dragnets, and who also gained attention as an offbeat physical therapist and sports guru to world class athletes like Bill Walton and runner Mary Decker Slaney. (Back in the '60s Scott famously counseled the sports world, "It's time for all athletes to melt down their trophies and make them into bullets.")

It was when Scott was at the Berkeley office service store—P.P. Pac—using the copier that the incident with Hilliard took place. He was xeroxing a sheaf of insurance forms when Hilliard approached. According to Scott, he asked, "Are you going to be a while?" Scott said yes and Hilliard moved away: "Then he came back. I was aware of him standing there, just looking at me. I took him for a middle class back man well dressed, nice leather jacket, crisp pants, about my age. Nevertheless, I felt he was trying to intimidate me. Finally he asked, 'Are you done yet?' I answered—my stuff was all over the place—'Does it look like I'm done?'"

Perhaps it was Scott's tone of sarcasm that set Hilliard off. Scott remembers, "There was an exchange of words, you know, he was saying, 'I'll kick your ass,' and I was saying, 'Well, I'm not running, am I?'" Scott was pre-

pared to duke it out, but the hard words ceased and Scott thought that was the end of it.


Apparently so did the store clerk who watched the whole thing and saw Hilliard retreat to the counter in the back of the store. But several minutes later, when Scott was finished and making for the exit, he suddenly heard a snapping sound behind him. He spun around and saw Hilliard with a knife. The store clerk saw the ex-Panther "stalk" Scott, who yelled, "He's got a knife! He's got a knife!" The two men danced up and down the aisle with a book shelf between them—cards, displays, etc. falling to the floor before Scott beat it out of the door (he was a onetime world ranked Stanford quarter miler) and ran up the street. Hilliard then ran to the waiting car in the front with Fredrika inside and left too. Someone—not Scott, who didn't know at the time who his near-assailant was—had called the cops. (Hilliard denies the incident but Berkeley police records show he was arrested for "brandishing a weapon.")

Scott says that having a knife pulled on him was infuriating, but at the same time, he says he hesitated to press charges once he found out that it was Hilliard with whom he'd had a confrontation: "Ironically, I'd just read his autobiography. My concern was whether he was a danger to the community or if this was atypical behavior. Nor did I want to see the story all over the *Chronicle*."

In true Berkeley fashion, Scott says he "reached out to the community"—among them, Mickey Phillips, Fredrika's half brother; to Gus Newport, Berkeley's ex-lefty black mayor; and to Barbara Lubin, the Jewish executive founder of the Middle East Children's Alliance, which does benefits for Palestinian children. "Keep it in the family," one of them reportedly told him while volunteering to mediate. All who became involved, according to Scott, assured him that Hilliard was "an admirable person who stood up to injustice and was having a bad day." So a pow-wow to negotiate apologies and forgiveness was held with all the involved parties and their respective significant others.

"We had a party," says Scott with enthusiasm, "and we all went out to dinner." He paid, and reportedly patched things up so well that he offered to take Hilliard to the Atlanta Olympics as his guest. (In Hilliard's recollection, however, there was no knife. "That's a lie!" he says. He says that Scott "took a racial attitude" because of a cap he was wearing. "I am not a thug!" Hilliard proclaims passionately.)

Yet while many friends claim that Hilliard is "reformed," others wonder. They note that Fredrika has suffered at his hands. Berkeley police records from a 1995 incident show an arrest for spousal partner abuse resulting from an incident in which violence followed an argument over money. Fredrika told friends that he tried to choke her. She fled Berkeley for a coastal retreat and when she returned put Hilliard's belongings outside her house and changed the locks. As one friend says, "She was troubled by the pattern in her life of being with abusive males—first Huey and then David. I thought she was really trying to do something about it, but in the end, Hilliard wormed his way back in."

At 55 years old, David Hilliard is now an impresario of Panther Party sales and presentations. It's an old, somewhat tawdry product in a bright new shiny box. The same may be said of Hilliard himself, although his star and the Panther image is sure to rise if his new boss Jerry Brown gets elected and launches a comeback from the same streets of Oakland where the drama of the Black Panther Party played out 30 years ago, streets from which Hilliard now tries to find new bottles to sell the old wine which was so intoxicating and so deadly. 

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