‘Hey Chief, I hear you’re looking for black policemen’
The address could hardly be less imposing. The numerals over the narrow doorway on 34th Avenue read 1127. To the right of the doorway is a plate-glass window filled with posters of angry-looking men, and behind the window is a large foot room that contains three desks, a small stereo set and a mimeograph machine. During most of the day, the room is seldom inhabited by more than five people. The anonymity of these quarters is, however, misleading, for at night it serves as a meeting place for members of the local chapter of the Black Panther Party, a growing national organization which may soon take over the leadership of the increasingly violent Negro revolution.

The Seattle Black Panthers came into being last spring after three militant students were arrested for leading a sit-in at Franklin High School on March 29. Although more than 75 students had participated in the demonstration, indictments were made against only five, including Aaron Morissett, Carl Miller and Larry Gossett, all of whom were members of the Black Student Union at the U. of W. and of the Students
Black Youth Conference, which decided that SNCC would merge with the recently formed Black Panther Party. On the second day of the conference, the four Seattle blacks took a bus over to Oakland to attend the funeral of Bobby Hutton, a young Panther who had been shot by Oakland police, and that night they heard an address by Robert Seale, who, along with Huey Newton, had organized the Oakland Panthers some 18 months earlier. "Seale was very angry about the shooting of Hutton," recalls Dixon, "and his suggestion that we stop talking and start acting made quite an impression on everyone. After he had finished speaking, the four of us decided to start a Black Panther chapter in Seattle." 

Around the end of April, Seale himself flew up to Seattle to give his official blessing to the fledgling chapter. He appointed Aaron Dixon "captain" and, in addition, appointed representatives to recruit members from the U. of W. and from Garfield and Franklin High Schools. "Before he left," says Dixon, "he gave me a stack of things to read, such as Francisco Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, Mao Tse Tung's *Red Book*, and Che Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare*." For the next month, Dixon and his "brothers" drummed up support in the schools and on the street corners, and toward the end of May they held a public meeting in a warehouse at the corner of 28th and Madison. The meeting was attended by 52 young blacks—"a good many more," says Dixon, "than I had expected." Less than a month after this meeting, the Panthers moved into their present headquarters on 34th Avenue.

On the right-hand wall of these quarters is a cartoon which, as well as any other single document, describes the policies of the Black Panther Party—and which, in more general terms, reveals why this past summer's racial violence was so different from that of the previous year. The drawing shows a young black being apprehended by a pair of well-armed "pigs" (the Panther term for policemen, whose physiognomy, in Panther caricatures, always looks decidedly porcine). Meanwhile, just around the corner, a trio of heavily armed Panthers is coming to his rescue. "No more riots," reads the cryptic caption. "Two's and three's." 

This cartoon, like others posted in the headquarters, clipped from The Black Panther, a bi-weekly newspaper published at the party's headquarters in Oakland. (The paper has not appeared in recent months because most party leaders are in jail.) In addition to providing a running account of the Panther-versus-pig battle in the Oakland area, the publication serves as an organ of general revolutionary propaganda:

We start with the basic definition [reads a "Black Paper" by Eldridge Cleaver, the party's Minister of Information, a member of the staff of *Ramparts* Magazine and the author of *Soul on Ice—Seattle*, June 1968] that black people in America are a colonized people in every sense of the term and that white America is an organized imperialist force holding black people in colonial bond-

age. From this definition our task becomes clearer: what we need is a revolution in the white mother country and national liberation for the black colony.

The actual methods of this revolution are suggested in the paper's account of an incident in Pittsburgh, California, in which a half-dozen white policemen—who the Panthers regard simply as occupation troops—were wounded by sniper fire. "Their uprising," reads the account, "put six honkies [the militant Negro's derisive name for whites] out of commission; only one brother was injured; and no black people were killed. From now on, planned, organized rebellion is the only way we carry on our revolution." 

The goal of this revolution is theoretically spelled out in the party's Ten-Point Program—which demands such steps as "an immediate end to police brutality," as well as a "Unite-Eight-Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony... for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny"—but a more coherent description of the party's immediate aims is contained in a monthly Review sent out from Oakland last June:

It seems to us [says the Review] that black power, while perhaps lacking the emotional appeal of nationalism, can become an extremely important unifying force around which a program embracing both reform and revolution can be worked out. Such a program would have to include two interrelated aspects: First, a demand for complete black control over all the institutions which actually function in the ghetto—police, schools, businesses (the latter, including rental housing, should be taken over by cooperatives rather than by private businessmen). Second, a large WPA-type program to provide jobs at decent wages for all who need them.

One final question the Review concludes: if significant successes were achieved through a program of this kind, would the result not be to turn the whole black movement into reformist channels and purge it of its revolutionary character? The danger of course exists. But it should not be underestimated... United States blacks are in a very real sense part of the Third World which can survive and develop only by carrying through to the end the revolutionary people's war against United States imperialism.

Aaron Dixon, the 19-year-old captain of the Seattle Panthers, does not like to talk to reporters—or, for that matter, to anyone. Seated in a booth in Bob's Cafe, located at 12th and Madison, he sprawls his six-foot, cat-like frame down the length of the bench and occasionally picks up a copy of the Sunday paper, and turns absentmindedly through the pages.

It is not that Dixon is intentionally rude. According to Tom Gayton, a black law student at the U. of W. who, this past summer, managed the ACLU's new office in the Central Area, "Dixon is a very sensitive person who has become involved in the Panthers out of his deep concern for his people. He really feels that all blacks are his..."
brothers."

Like many revolutionaries, the Panther captain does not come from the bottom of the economic ladder. (Huey Newton, who completed a year of law school, has a similar background.) Born in Chicago, Dixon moved to Seattle at the age of nine, and today he lives with his family in a comfortable, if modest, white two-story house on 33rd Avenue, about two blocks away from the Panther headquarters. Dixon's father, a pleasant, soft-spoken man of 44, works as an illustrator at Boeing, and this fall Dixon begins his second year as an English major at the U. of W. He confirms that part of the money for his education is being supplied by a $200 poetry scholarship awarded him by a local Negro women's group, but he is loath to talk about his literary pursuits—or about his activities as a revolutionary. All information must be elicited by direct and pointed questions.

REPORTER: Does the Seattle Black Panther Party still keep in close touch with the parent group in Oakland?
DIXON: Oh sure.
REPORTER: How is this done?
DIXON: I fly down there every couple of weeks, or sometimes I go to New York.
REPORTER: To talk about party strategy?
DIXON: Yes.
REPORTER: Some people have said that during this past summer the Seattle Panthers tried to cool it. Is that true?
DIXON: No. That story was invented by the white press.
REPORTER: Well, what did you do?
DIXON: We merely tried to teach the people the proper method of revolution.

(The reporter recalls the following scene: It is early July and a Panther rally is being held on the steps of Garfield High School. One of the Panther leaders is speaking over a microphone in protest against the conviction of Dixon, Gossett and Miller in the Franklin sit-in trial; gathered around him is a group of about 150 young blacks and, on the edge of the crowd, a couple of ACLU lawyers. Suddenly, there is a terrific crash, and the crowd turns to see a group of teenagers at the Bulldog Drive-In across the street throwing rocks at a TV news wagon.

"Look at those stupid kids!" yells the Panther speaker, almost in tears. "They're just going to get shot by the pigs. If you're ready to fight, don't throw rocks in broad daylight; get yourself a gun and go out at night!"

REPORTER: Your organization was originally called the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. Is it still designed only for defense, or might you eventually take the offensive?
DIXON: As Huey has explained, the panther never attacks first, but when he is backed into a corner, he will strike back viciously.

REPORTER: Then I suppose it all depends on how you define 'backed into a corner.'
DIXON: Yes. You see, we've been backed into a corner for the last 400 years, so anything we do now is defensive.

REPORTER: Over at your headquarters yesterday, I heard someone mention side activities. What are they?
DIXON: Well, suppose this restaurant was up one night and nobody saw who did it. That would be a quiet-side activity. That's the way to fight a revolution.

Despite the inflammatory nature of their tactics against the white majority—or at least of their rhetoric, the Panthers are not racists. The Oakland center, for example, recently formed an organization with the predominantly white Peace and Freedom Party, enabling the latter to gain enough signatures to place its candidates on the California ballot. In return for this assistance, the Peace and Freedom endorsed a slate of Black Panther candidates headed by Eldridge Cleaver—now running for President of the United States.

SCENE: A conference of the Washington State Peace and Freedom Party was held last week at the University Memorial Temple. There were about 75 delegates in attendance, most of them old-line Washingtonians from places like Everett and Olympia. There was some animosity among SDS-types from the U. of W., who were supposed to speak at the beginning of the convention but who were absent because they never showed up.

The conference is not exactly lively. The most heated discussion so far has been whether the party's platform should refer to the two major political parties as "Democratic and Republican Parties" simply as the "Democratic-Republican Party," the argument for the latter being that the two groups are so similar as to be indistinguishable.

Finally, one of the delegates insists that the party's platform should refer to the chairman's consents. Amid loud applause, Dixon walks slowly to the microphone, looking quite menacing behind his pair of heavy dark glasses.

"The Black Panthers," says Dixon, ready right now to form an alliance with the
PANTHERS continued

first comes a moderate, middle-class movement, then a violent, radical "reign of terror," and finally, a conservative reaction and partial restoration of the status quo ante. Moreover, in all the revolutions that have occurred since 1917, the radical phase has been directed by the same type of organization—a small, well-trained body of hardened revolutionaries.

In this country, the moderate, non-violent phase of the Negro revolution was led nationally by The Reverend Martin Luther King and locally by The Reverend John Adams, a former classmate of King at Boston University. But now, Adams has moved to another city (Watts, no less), and King, of course, is dead. As a result, there exists, both nationally and locally, a power vacuum in the black revolution. Enter the Panthers.

SCENE: The East Madison YMCA, where Alfred Cowles, Executive Secretary of the State Board Against Discrimination, has called a Black Unity meeting to which all members of Seattle's Negro community have been invited. In response, a crowd of more than 200 people has turned out. Unfortunately they are anything but united. In fact, the meeting is in chaos. Black-shirted Panthers are shouting at white-shirted lawyers; housewives are shouting at Model Cities officials. Finally, someone proposes that the group set up a temporary steering committee, and after a stormy voting session, a committee chairman is duly elected. His name is Aaron Dixon.

"In effect," says one Negro who attended the meeting, "the Black Establishment handed the reins over to the Panthers, represented by a 19-year-old boy. It was a strange situation. The Panthers wanted only to have a voice in the proceedings, not to lead them, yet leadership was forced upon them by the crowd. The Establishment people, on the other hand, were motivated both by a recognition that the Panthers could no longer be ignored and by a desire to give them just enough rope to hang themselves."

As it turned out, the calculations of the Establishment members were more right than wrong. "No sooner had Aaron taken over the mike," continues this source, "than he started preaching all that party crap about revolution, and immediately half the audience tuned him out. The fact is that while Aaron may be a very romantic figure to the kids on the street, he does not yet have the maturity, the experience or the speaking ability to direct and organize large numbers of people. And, in contrast to Oakland," he adds, "this is true of Seattle's Panther leadership in general."

The lack of party organization is readily apparent to anyone visiting the Panther office, where, in all truth, very little seems to happen. (This statement should not be taken categorically, however, because whenever anything important is afoot, white visitors are always asked to leave.) Most of the time, the headquarters serve as a sort of
indoor street corner, where the Panthers hang around, drink Dr. Pepper, slap each other on the shoulder, and generally just enjoy being Panthers. Meanwhile, grandiloquent party schemes remain largely unfulfilled: the political campaign is lagging, a long-planned system for distributing party leaflets is still not in operation, and a fashion show which the female Panthers planned for September 1 somehow never quite materialized.

In a larger sense, however, the Panthers may be important not so much for what they do as for what they represent, and in this sense they have already accomplished quite a bit. “The Panthers,” explains Tom Gayton, the young Negro law student, “are the alter ego of every black man in Seattle, and as such have served to bring deep-seated racial frustrations to the surface.”

“The chief significance of the Panthers,” adds Mike Rosen, an ACLU attorney who is defending Carl Miller in the Franklin sit-in appeal, “is that they have made all black people aware of the racial bias of both the police department and the courts; this accomplishment, plus the Panthers’ extremely militant stand on these questions, has shifted the attitudes of the whole black community significantly toward the left.”

Thus, residents of the Central Area are beginning to regard the Panthers quite differently from the way most white people regard them. “All the white store owners around here are scared to death of those boys,” says Mrs. Ruby Robinson, who lives across the street from the Panther headquarters, “but that’s sure not the way I feel. In fact I sleep real sound now that the Panthers have moved in. I have the feeling that they’re always around and that if they ever saw anybody trying to break into my house, they’d run over and chase him off.”

Other black residents expressed similar feelings last month after a group of 15 Panthers—10 of them carrying unloaded rifles—marched into the office of the principal of Rainier Beach Junior-Senior High School to protest the beating of three black students by a large crowd of whites. (At the time of writing, the school was relatively quiet, but the atmosphere there was still so tense anything could happen.) “Frankly, Mrs. John Warren, the mother of one of the black students who was attacked, this happened I felt the Panthers had the issue of white racism all out of proportion, but now I feel that what the Panthers are doing is right. They are trying to make people see that the racial situation in Seattle is much worse than most people think it is.” “What’s more,” she goes on, “the Panthers have told my son they would protect him, and I really believe they will. I’m beginning to doubt that he will be protected by the police. After this incident I talked to the patrolman on duty there, and he admitted that just before the incident he had been crowded around his car and asked him what he would do if they started a fight. ‘A bunch of niggers,’ he said. He told me he would do that because it was against the law. When I asked him what he did he replied, ‘I drove around the block.’”

finished talking to the policeman I phoned the Panther office and told them how grateful I was for what they had done.

“The Black Panthers,” explains Tom Gayton, “have become sort of an unofficial protective agency. People come to us with all sorts of problems, ranging from eviction notices to kids in trouble with the police. There’s a feeling in the ghettos now that the Panthers are on the side of the underdog and as far as I’m concerned, this is all right.” Gayton’s view is endorsed by Superior Court Judge Charles Z. Smith, the Establishment Negro. “At least locally,” Judge Smith, “the Panthers have the potential of developing into a positive force in the community, both politically and socially.”

If the potential which Judge Smith sees in the Panthers is eventually realized, the reason will undoubtedly be the strong

The Panthers, shown here in a recent honor guard for a funeral, stand tall in the eyes of Central Area children.
tion the party holds for young people. The reasons for this attraction are not hard to discover. For one thing, the Black Panthers are today the only significant organization—with the exception of the campus Black Student Union—among Negro youngsters; for another, the Panthers' militancy reflects the increasingly militant stand taken by so many young people—white as well as black—against the established order. As a result, the Panthers have become the folk-heroes of the ghetto. Young kids hang around the head- quarters begging for Panther button, 16-year-old boys dress up in berets and black leather jackets, and teenage girls talk about the Panthers in tones of awe and reverence.

Joanne Ellis, a member of the party's female corps, is young, effervescent, pretty and bright, and as far as she is concerned, the Panthers are simply "very, very beautiful." Seated now in a booth in the Panakee House on Madison Street, she pours a spoonful of sugar into her cup of coffee and then reaches up to touch the Panther button pinned to the shoulder of her blue knit shirt.

Like most of the Panthers, Joanne comes from what is generally termed a "lower-middle-class background"—her father works as a laborer at Lockheed Shipyards—and, like most black youngsters, she regards the race question differently from the way her parents do. "Both of them came from the South," she says "and they've been brainwashed by the white man—just like every other black person over 40. My father is a follower of the teachings of Martin Luther King, especially his emphasis on non-violence and peace. What he doesn't understand is that in this country, peace can only come through war." She frowns. "That's a bummer, really, but that's the way it is in America.

"I remember last year in school," she continues, "there was only one page in the history book about black people, and all it talked about was how much the Nee-gro had improved himself since the Civil War and how much things like sports had done for the Nee-gro. What a bunch of junk. I used to get in arguments with my white teacher about this, and he would go into a long harangue and then I would say five words and make him look stupid and everybody would laugh at him and then he would get mad and make me stay after school.

"Every morning," Joanne goes on, "he used to make us pledge allegiance to the flag, but I have this one friend who's a commu- nist and he refused to stand up for the pledge and some of the rest of us stayed seated with him, and so the teacher decided that since we wouldn't pledge allegiance correctly, we wouldn't do it at all. The next morning, though, he showed us a film on patriotism. It showed the typical American family: a white mother and father and a nice white boy and girl who all went to a baseball game, and just before the game started, they all stood up and put their hands over their hearts and sang the Star Spangled Banner. How ridiculous can you get? White kids may feel patriotic towards their country, but I don't feel that I have a country."

continued
It was this feeling of alienation that prompted her to join the Panthers. "I first heard about the party," she recalls, "from my older sister Betty, who is 20 and works at Boeing—ugh. She showed me the Ten-Point Program and it seemed very nice, and then we went to one of the public meetings they held Tuesday nights at Madrona Presbyterian Church, and that evening we decided to join. For awhile, it wasn't very active, but then I started spreading the Program and attending the classes at the Panther office. Eventually I started going there nearly every day. The party became my life."

Surprisingly, though Joanne has two other brothers to whom she is very close, neither of them is a Panther. "I don't know why exactly," she says, "but both of them are very bright and very individualistic, and they only do things they really want to do. For example, who's a senior at Franklin, got back from a drive down to California and Clarence, who's 22, is sort of a hippie. He spends a lot of time in the District. I guess they feel the Panthers are sort of narrow in their thinking."

"But the party," she quickly adds, "is not a clique. I've always hated cliquey groups of girls who would get together and say, 'Okay, tomorrow we're all going to wear plaid, or green, or whatever.' If I thought the Panthers had become a clique, I'd be the first to leave." She hesitates. "Or would I?"

She looks down at her coffee cup, which is still full. "I don't know why I ordered coffee. I don't even like it. No, I want to leave. That wouldn't be very loyal. No, I want to stay and help bring the party back to where it is right now—a group which teaches understanding and love for all black people and which can win their freedom."

Eventually, says Joanne, this task will require that black people stage a revolution. "I don't know when it will come," she says. "Some people say it will come in two, some say five. I just hope I'm around when it does."

Will she herself fight? "I don't know," she answers. "I guess when the revolution comes, I'll want to have a gun. Right now, I don't own one because I could never keep it at home, but maybe if my sister gets her own apartment, I can keep one there. The thought of it scares me a little, since I've never shot a gun before—but I'll have to learn one eventually. How can you fight a revolution if you don't have a gun?"

And when the revolution is over, what will things be like then? "I'm not sure really," she says, "because I don't know what the party teachings on this. But I believe that when the revolution is over, we will finally have a country. I don't know just what it will be like, but we will have a country, you and I."

Not all the Panthers are as articulate as Joanne Ellis; in fact, most of them are not. Yet, in his own way, each party member exudes much the same revolutionary spirit that she does.
Membership in the party is open to any black person 16 years of age or older; the only additional stipulation is that each prospective member own at least one weapon. (Apparently this requirement was waived in the case of Joanne.) At present, claims Dixon, the party has roughly 100 members, but it is doubtful that more than half of these are active participants.

Once they have registered with the party secretary, all new members begin a six-week training program. Unlike other black nationalist groups, the Panthers give scant attention to the teaching of Negro civilization. "Culture is nice," says Dixon, "but it won't save your life"; instead, new recruits devote their time to such basic activities as weekly target practice, as well as to classes in "internal education."

SCENE: The Panther headquarters, where one such class is just beginning. E.J. Brisker, the party's lieutenant of education, is questioning a group of three girls and five boys on their attitudes toward the police.

"The trouble," says a young Garfield co-ed with a bristling, "natural" hair-do, "is that there are so few black people on the force, and the few that are are not in touch with the black people. It's gotten to the point where nobody wants to be a pig anymore."

"What we need," says one young male, "is for black people to police the ghetto. Maybe the city could even pay the Panthers to do this."

"Yeah," says Brisker, "that's a good idea. But this won't happen tomorrow. Do you think Mayor Braman is ready to put Panthers on his payroll?"

The youth laughs. "Naw man," he says, "not him."

"Right," says Brisker. "So what we have to do, first of all, is to educate the people, since a lot of them still don't realize how bad the pigs are. Why, if one of us were to zap [i.e., shoot] a pig tomorrow and then run into a black man's house, that man is just liable to turn us in. We've got to have it so that we can run into any house in the ghetto and they will hide us and feed us for as long as we need to stay there—just like the Viet Cong."

After this initial training period, the female members of the party, who operate under the command of a captain named Maude Allen, devote most of their time to office work and to organizing fund-raising dances. Meanwhile, their male counterparts, who by this time have begun wearing the Panther uniform of black beret and black leather jacket and using the closed-fist Panther salute, devote their time—in theory at least—to calisthenics and target practice.

Given the Panthers' obvious affection for guns—an affection which borders on fetishism—many black Seattelite have concluded that their organization is no more than a street gang, a sort of western version of Chicago's Blackstone Rangers. This is not the case. Nearly all the Panthers, of course,
are young—the ages vary between 16 and 24—but most either attend Garfield High or the U. of W. or hold a steady job. "The Panthers," says Mike Rosen, "are not dropouts, and they are certainly not hoodlums. They are a group with a purpose. They’re like the white students who marched off to Mississippi a few years ago. Like them, the Panthers have become fed up with the rhetoric of their parents because they see it hasn’t changed anything. They believe that change will be produced only by the threat of violence."

Tom Gayton, the young Negro law student, holds a similar view. "The Black Panthers," he says, "are not intellectually inclined; they are a purely activist organization. You will never hear people in the Panther headquarters discuss metaphysical theories of revolution."

This impression is borne out in conversations with individual party members. Invariably, the dialogue becomes a Panther monologue made up of the standard set of party phrases: "the racist dog pig... the white racist system... political power through the barrel of a gun... the Ten-Point Program... educating the masses... undying love for all black people... peace through war...," etc.

Yet, in a larger sense, to accuse the Panthers of being non-intellectual is to accuse them on grounds that are mostly irrelevant. In fact, the characteristics which make the Panthers less than fascinating as individuals—that is, their singlemindedness, their repetitiveness and their penchant for oversimplification—are exactly those which make them potentially so effective as revolutionaries.

SCENE: The Madrona playground, just down the street from the party’s headquarters, where a group of 25 Panthers is drilling. The following day they will form half the honor guard at the funeral of a Panther who was shot by another black man following a quarrel. As Jimmy Davis, an ex-serviceman, begins barking commands, a light rain starts to fall.

"Panthers!... Atten-hut!... A-bout face!... Left face!... Right face!... A-bout face!... A-bout face!... Forward March!... Hut, two, three, four, hut, two, three, four. Column left... March!... Hut, two, three, four,..."

For more than an hour the Panthers march up and down the playground, which eventually becomes an ocean of mud. Finally, Davis marches the squad onto a paved area and brings it to a halt. As he does so, there is a flash of lightning and a loud clap of thunder, and the light rain becomes a downpour.

"Panthers!... Pa-rade rest!"

As Davis walks back a few paces, Aaron Dixon steps forward to address the group. The rain is coming down in great sheets now, but nobody makes a move to break ranks.

"I see," shouts Dixon, leaning forward to make himself heard, "that some of the brothers who were supposed to be here today did not show up—they’re off somewhere jiving. The Black Panther Party," he continues, "cannot have people who go off..."
A harsh militarism that turns off black intellectuals

They're supposed to be drilling. Do you get to be disciplined. Right?"
"That's the reply.
"You are the soldiers of the Black Liberation army, and this is the only army you have. Is that right?"
"Huh?"
"Is that right?"
"What right?"

The practice of such harsh militarism—a right out of the Army's basic training program—is, of course, another expression for the party's lack of appeal to intellectuals. "I would imagine," says a party leader, "that this is why Carl Miller, former head of SNCC and now the president of the U. of W. Black Student Union and Larry Gossett, the Union's regional coordinator, are seldom seen at Panther meetings. They're not at all the sound of marching feet."

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to think that there is any sort of schism between the Black Panther Party and the Student Union; in fact, the reverse is true. Milo Brisker, the party's lieutenant of the U. of W. and Aaron Dixon and Elmer, as well as a number of other really staunch Union members, have a few weeks ago entered the University of Washington as well as the Black Student Union, this concept of a party-union alliance expanded with the establishment of chapters at Garfield and Franklin High Schools. The members of these chapters will be members of the Black Panther Party, the school administrations do not demand—say, for the teaching of theory and culture—then the Panthers will step in. Meanwhile, at the University of Washington, an organization of black students is being formed at the instigation of Tom Gayton, whose cousin, Philip Gayton, has recently assumed his duties as a Negro member of the U.'s football staff and as an assistant to the U.'s president for community relations. "Indeed," says Tom Gayton, "we will cooperate with the BSU, and we will be working closely with them. It could be a formidable power indeed. In effect, the University is a pool of intellectual leadership,
and the Panthers will provide a power in the ghetto—as well as more black for the U. of W. Avers one Panther revolutionary’s dream.”

It is unlikely, of course, that Americans will ever witness a full-scale black revolt. The growing Negro middle class is too concerned with their business, and revolt break out, white society is reasonably strong enough to crush it may well occur, however, if an out small-scale, urban guerrilla warfare against the black middle class might give pests active support, and against whom white society would find it difficult to defend itself—unless, of course, the police were prepared to employ tactics that would have turned a neighborhood into a war zone.

Most black people feel that the likelihood of such an outbreak depends almost on the actions of white people. If the majority accepts the idea that this is a war with a measure of understanding and purpose—just possible—that the Negro revolution can break the historical pattern of civil disorder and proceed in a peaceful way, then the black militi ity will not be frightened into the streets. If, however, white society deals harshly andCovertly, the inevitable result will be not “law and order” but a dazing of violence. Unfortunately, the whiteness of the present course of action—and especially, its reaction to the growth of the Panthers—seems almost designed to produce a racial configuration.

The most likely spot for a full-scale outbreak of violence is Oakland, where the police have been involved in a battle with police ever since their inception. At present, there are two célèbres among Oakland Panthers: one shooting of Bobby Hutton, the other recent conviction of Huey Newton for voluntary manslaughter.

The shooting of Hutton occurred in April 6 (two days after the assassi Martin Luther King) when Oakland police, after the wounding of two of their men by an as yet unidentified gunslinger, rounded up a group of nine Panthers in a house frame house. After police had fixed house with tear gas, the Panthers surrendered, and the 17-year-old Hutton shot him dead, only to discover later that he had been unarmed. Two of the oth others, including Eldridge Cleaver, were wounded, and all eight survivors are awaiting trial on charges of attempted murder.

The arrest of Newton took place October after police had stopped his car on an Oakland street. When Newton was arrested outside, a gun battle erupted and Newton was wounded and one pig was killed. At present, Newton’s case is being appealed, and the Oakland Panthers vow that if his appeal is denied, “the give the limit.”

The situation in Seattle is not ge
"On the way to the station," continues, "they called me 'bastard' and 'motherfucker,' and said they had just been waiting for something like this to happen a long time. Then one of them told me that wished I would say something smart and I could kill me." When they reached the station, Dixon was charged with "inciting a riot"—later changed to "loud and boisterous behavior"—but when the case came to trial, the judge suspended action provided Dixon stay out of trouble for the next months.

Dixon did not, of course, "stay out of trouble." Less than three months later, he was arrested in connection with the Panther sit-in, and on June 13, Dixon, along with Larry Gossett and Carl Miller, was found guilty of unlawful assembly. On July 1, Judge James Dore gave each of them the maximum sentence of six months in jail. This case is now being appealed (the hearing is set for the 22nd of this month), and if Dore's decision is upheld, Dixon will not only have to serve this sentence, but will have to court to stand trial for "loud and boisterous behavior."

Toward the end of July, Dixon was apprehended on a more serious charge. On the afternoon of Monday, July 24, policemen entered the Panther headquarters and arrested both Dixon and Harris, although Prosecutor Carroll, who had initiated the action, informed the press almost immediately that the pair was being arrested for possession of a stolen typewriter. The delayed filing charges in Superior Court the following day. The next morning that was released, and Dixon was charged with grand larceny. Judge Story Birdsong complied with Carroll's request that bail be $3,000.

The typewriter in question is one that supposedly disappeared from the OEO services center around the middle of July. In any case, it is unclear just how the police knew they would find it at Panther headquarters; some officers claim they were tipped off by an anonymous informant, and the Panthers themselves assert that just prior to Dixon's arrest, the police broke into the headquarters, stole more than 100 membership cards and took down the serial numbers of all the typewriters. Then, they say, the police simply checked these numbers against those on the department's list of goods. Dixon, for his part, does not deny that the typewriter might have been stolen; he merely points out that the typewriter, like all the other articles in the Panther office, was donated by residents of the Central Area and that he had no way of knowing about its origins.

An hour or so after the arrest of Dixon and Harris, word went out from the Panther office that unless both were released "the sky is the limit." Upon hearing the threat, Dixon immediately dictated a message to his lawyer, William L. Dwyer, that night the message was read at a meeting of which the Panthers held on the stage...
Garfield High. "To say that the sky is the
limit," went the message, "is a beautiful
thing—if we can back it up. But as it is, we
will only jeopardize the lives of masses of
black people. Remember that it took the
Oakland Panther nine months of organizing
before they were able to make this threat.
Many of us here in Seattle will have to go to
jail before we are ready." Dixon's admo-
nition undoubtedly helped to cool the ghetto,
but even so, nine people—including seven
policemen—were injured by rocks and gun-
fire before the night was over.

"Seattle's law enforcement officials,"
says Tom Gayton, "are familiar with a few
Panther leaders, and they think that if they
can break these people, they will have bro-
ken the Panthers and the whole militant
movement. But what they don't realize is
that without the moderating influence of
these few leaders—and especially of Aaron
Dixon—things would be a lot worse. The
younger kids, especially, are willing to go to
any lengths—including the adoption of a
'kill or be killed' policy—and they are very
impatient."

Given the explosive potential of the
present situation, then, the obvious question
is what can be done. First of all, it is
imperative that judges who are trying cases
involving black militants take a more bal-
anced view of their task; clearly, imposing a
six-month jail sentence for staging a minor
sit-in is excessive. (An even more basic cause
of racial injustice in the courts—the conduct
of the Prosecuting Attorney—was covered in
last month's Seattle Magazine.)

Also criticized by the Panthers—and in no
uncertain terms—is Police Chief Frank
Ramon. The Panthers are not alone in
bitterly attacking him. This August, during a
closed meeting between Mayor Braman and
30 of the older, "establishment" Negroes
(no militants were invited, explained Bra-
man, because he was already familiar with
their views), Dr. James E. Moore, a Negro
dentist, demanded Ramon's removal, and he
was immediately supported by Walter
Hundley, head of the local Model Cities
program, and by Donald Phelps, principal of
Bellevue Junior High School. Not a word
was spoken in Ramon's defense; in fact, the
Negroes urged that the police department be
revamped from top to bottom. According to
Aaron Dixon, however, it is doubtful that
even such sweeping changes as these—
assuming that they are made at all—will
come in time to avert more violence.

It is late afternoon now in Bob's Cafe,
and Dixon, obviously tired of the interview,
is lying almost prone in the booth.
REPORTER: Just one more question,
Aaron. Huey Newton was quoted in the New
York Times Magazine last year as saying he
was certain that before long he would be
killed. Do you have the same premonition?
DIXON: (raising up on his elbow just enough
to peer over the tabletop): All revolution-
aries know they will be killed, so one day
soon, I will die, too.
REPORTER: Are you afraid?
DIXON: No.