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Black Panthers Fight Anti-Gun Bill



Associated Press 1967. Members of the Black Panther Party argue with a California state policeman at the Capitol in Sacramento after he disarmed them. The armed Panthers entered the Capitol protesting a bill before the Legislature that would restrict carrying arms in public. Men in berets at center are Panther leaders Eldridge Cleaver, left in sunglasses, and Bobby Seale. The policeman holds a weapon taken from the Panthers.

Politicians at the state's Capitol were caught by surprise, when yesterday afternoon, the assembly floor was invaded by armed Black Panther members.

The scene was tense as 30 members of the black power political party entered the Capitol and demanded the return of their weapons. They were described as 'Quiet, menacing, with revolvers' by a Californian State Police officer.

Their actions were in direct protest to Mulford's bill, a new state bill, prohibiting the open carry of loaded firearms and authored by Oakland Re-

publican, Don Mulford. The invasion followed a march to the Capitol, where members were seen dressed in black leather jackets, shades, and berets, handing out pamphlets. These pamphlets contained lists of charges regarding racism and police brutality.

One of the party leaders, Bobby Seale, read a statement on the steps, before entering the building. 'The Black Panther party calls upon people of America in general, black people in particular to take full note of the racist California legislature which is aimed at keeping the black people

disarmed and powerless.' Governor Ronald Reagan was present at the time and was hustled inside. He was later quoted as saying 'There is no reason why civilians should be carrying a loaded weapon.' Officers removed the Black Panther members from the floor of the assembly and took them to the state police headquarters, where they have been booked under section 9051 of the government code. 'The district attorney in Sacramento states that they violated the law by entering the chambers while the assembly was in session.'