

## Ex-Black Panther convicted of murder

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**[ATLANTA, Georgia](#) (CNN) -- An Atlanta jury found former Black Panther member Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin guilty of murder Saturday in a March 2000 shooting that killed one Fulton County sheriff's deputy and wounded another.**

Wearing a white robe and cap, Al-Amin -- formerly known as H. Rap Brown -- showed no emotion as Superior Court Judge Stephanie Manis read the verdict.

Jurors found him guilty on all 13 counts he faced, including murder, felony murder, aggravated assault on a police officer, obstructing a law enforcement officer and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

The jury returned the verdict about 5:30 p.m. after deliberating throughout the day.

Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty against Al-Amin and will begin presenting evidence in the trial's penalty phase Monday.

Al-Amin ran a small grocery store in Atlanta until March 16, 2000. That day, two Fulton County deputies attempted to serve a warrant for Al-Amin's failure to appear in court on charges of receiving stolen property and impersonating an officer.

The deputies exchanged gunfire with a man standing near a black Mercedes-Benz, and a spokesman that day said the deputies might have wounded the man who shot at them.

Deputy Ricky Kinchen died the day after being shot. The surviving officer, Aldranon English, identified Al-Amin as the shooter in court.

Al-Amin's lawyers argued their client was innocent and that another man, known only as "Mustafa," did the shooting.

They told jurors that Al-Amin's fingerprints were not found on the murder weapon; he was not wounded in the shooting, as one of the deputies said the shooter was; and that the government has been out to get him for several decades.

Al-Amin was arrested in Lowndes County, Alabama, about 175 miles southwest of Atlanta, four days after the shooting.

His arrest followed a manhunt that started with a blood trail at the scene. After police entered a vacant house where they thought they had cornered the shooter, they found more signs that the assailant may have been wounded. But Al-Amin was unhurt when arrested.

Prosecutors noted in their closing arguments that Al-Amin's attorneys' failed to provide an alibi for their client. They also reminded jurors that ballistics had matched the bullets in the victim to the guns recovered from where Al-Amin was arrested.

Police also found a rifle and handgun near his arrest location, and tests indicated they were the weapons that wounded Kinchen, a local newspaper reported. Ten days later, they also found a black Mercedes with bullet holes in it.

Three months later, an Atlanta fugitive captured in Nevada confessed to killing Kinchen. He later recanted that statement.

## **Converted to Islam in prison**

Born Hubert Gerold Brown in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Al-Amin went by the name H. Rap Brown during the 1960s and served as chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

In 1967, he was charged with inciting a riot in Cambridge, Maryland, where he declared to hundreds of African-Americans: "It's time for Cambridge to explode, baby. Black folks built America, and if America don't come around, we're going to burn America down."

The next morning, a school and two city blocks burned.

He later joined the Black Panther Party, which sought to empower African-Americans and confront and conquer social injustices. At one point he was minister of justice for the Panthers and exhorted African-Americans to arm themselves.

"I say violence is necessary," he once famously said. "It is as American as cherry pie."

The Black Panther Party collapsed in the late 1970s, brought down by deaths, defections and infighting. Al-Amin converted to Islam while in prison serving five years for his role in a robbery that ended in a shootout with New York police.

Al-Amin later moved to Atlanta, opened a grocery in Atlanta's West End and was the spiritual leader of a mosque in the neighborhood. Neighbors credited Al-Amin, whom friends described as a humble and respectful man, for working to clean up drugs and prostitution in the low-income West End.

## **Conspiracy accusations**

Al-Amin and his followers argued the state's case was bogus and represented the federal government's latest attempt to destroy the Muslim cleric. Ed Brown, Al-Amin's brother, said the charges against Al-Amin were "part of a pattern that has gone on for 35 years."

"It started with his civil rights efforts, and now it's Islam," Brown said. "Anything that shines a light on the corruption of this government or does not contribute to its process of corruption, they are opposed to."

The government has cooked up a case against his brother, destroying evidence, Brown said.

"Both officers said they wounded the perpetrator. It was reported there was a blood trail. They got a search warrant and mobilized the SWAT team based on the blood trail," he said.

"But then when they arrested him and he wasn't wounded, they stopped talking about it."

Al-Amin's dealings with authorities did not end when he converted to Islam, records show. In 1995, he was accused of aggravated assault, but the victim later recanted and said authorities pressured him to blame Al-Amin.

From 1992 to 1997, the FBI staked out Al-Amin, suspecting him of gun-running. The agency generated 44,000 documents, records indicate, but failed to produce an arrest or indictment.

"What explanation do they have for watching him?" Ed Brown asked. "They were so obsessed."