

Panther cleared by jury

By **BILL COULTER**
Post Reporter

Charles Freeman, the Black Panther on trial for possession of marijuana, was acquitted Friday to the sounds of glee from a courtroom packed with black spectators.

Defense attorneys Raymon Jordan and Bobby Caldwell called the verdict "fair and proper" from the all-white jury in Dist. Judge Fred M. Hooey's court.

But Freeman, 19, said he was not so sure of the jury system and that another jury might have reached another verdict.

FREEMAN, WHO said he was Minister of Culture for Peoples' Party II before that organization received a charter from the Black Panthers about two weeks ago, was arrested Feb. 9 and later charged with possession of a matchbox of marijuana.

The acquittal came after the jury deliberated most of the day. The jury was polled several times and found to be hung 10 to 2 before it announced its verdict.

A jury member said one hurdle the jury had to overcome was the question of whether Freeman's arrest was legal.

FREEMAN AND three other men were arrested as they worked on a car parked on a street in front of party headquarters at 2727 Dowling.

Arresting officers said Freeman and the others were doing mechanical work under the hood at the front of the car.

This is in violation of a city ordinance which forbids washing or greasing of a car on a street, or mechanical repairs except in emergencies.

The key question which arose was whether the small, foreign car had the motor in the front or the back.

THE DEFENSE maintained that the car's motor was in the rear and that Freeman and the others had been merely changing a tire.

They said Freeman was standing at the front of the car, returning a tire tool to the trunk when he was arrested.

Later, Freeman said, the marijuana was planted on

Assessment

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