Davis Trial Witness Tells Of Prompting

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SAN JOSE, Calif., March 30—The first witness in the Angela Davis trial testified today that she may have been influenced by the prosecution to say that she heard Jonathan Jackson refer to "freeing the Soledad brothers."

But later, on re-direct examination by prosecutor Albert Harris, she changed her story and said she had only been told to "tell the truth to the best of my ability" about the Aug. 7, 1970, shootout.

On cross-examination by the defense, Maria Graham said a report prepared by two investigators, who interviewed her while she was recuperating from her injuries in a San Francisco hospital four days after the shootout, incorrectly stated that she heard Jackson and the San Quentin inmates refer to the "Soledad trio." Mrs. Graham was one of the jurors taken hostage and wounded during the 1970 Marian County courthouse incident.

Miss Davis, 28-year-old black activist, is charged with murder-kidnap-conspiracy for allegedly masterminding the escape-ransom scheme and supplying the guns and ammunition used by Jackson and three San Quentin prison inmates who participated in the abortive escape.

Mrs. Graham, of Terra Linda, testified that after Jackson rose in the courtroom he pointed what looked like a machine gun and said "This is it, everybody freeze."

Moments later, she said, James McClain, one of the San Quentin inmates on trial for assaulting a prison guard, told the presiding judge, Harold Haley, to call the sheriff and tell him to keep the police back so they could escape. McClain took the telephone from the judge, she testified, and said —"they wanted the soledad brothers freed or they would kill the judge."

After she, two other women jurors, Assistant District Attorney Gary Thomas and Judge Haley were marched out of the courtroom and into the hallway, she said she heard Jonathan Jackson say several times, "We want our Soledad brothers freed. We are the New liberation.'"

Under cross-examination by co-defense counsel Howard Moore, Mrs. Graham testified that she had not used the phrase "Soledad brother" when investigators for the prosecution interviewed her and said that she had not mentioned the statement she heard McClain make after he took the telephone away from Judge Haley.

Asked why she had not related either incident to the investigators, she said, "I wanted so hard to forget the whole thing that it is difficult to remember," she said.

Asked if she had been coached by prosecutor Harris to relate the incidents, she said, "No one told me what to say."

Again, under cross-examination by Moore, she said, "So, do you want me to admit I was influenced by Mr. Harris?"

Moore said, "That is correct, isn't it?" She said, "Yes."