

# Jackson Shot in Back, Coroner Finds

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SAN RAFAEL, Calif., Sept. 21—The Marin County Coroner said today that George L. Jackson was shot in the back, not through the top of the head as had been reported earlier.

The new report from Dr. Donovan O. Cooke, the coroner, stirred anew the debate about the circumstances of Jackson's death at San Quentin Prison on Aug. 21.

The 29-year-old convict and author of the book "Soledad Brother" was killed in what prison officials said was an escape attempt.

Jackson, officials said then, was shot from a 20-foot-high tower by guards as he ran across the prison yard toward a wall.

Five other persons, including three guards, were also killed. Their deaths have been laid to convicts who were confined with Jackson in the Adjustment Center at San Quentin.

### Earlier Report Recalled

In the preliminary autopsy report, issued just two days after the shooting, Dr. Cooke said that Jackson was shot in the head and that the bullet exited from the lower region of his back.

But today, in his official report, Dr. Cooke said that those earlier findings were in error. He then went on to describe the path of the fatal bullet as being exactly the opposite as that stated in the preliminary report.

The new report raised the question of how the bullet could enter the lower back and travel up through the body and exit through the skull.

Law enforcement officers theorized that Jackson could have been struck first by a bullet to the ankle, and could have been falling with his head lower than his torso when the second bullet struck.

### Version Disputed

In his preliminary report Dr. Cooke said that Jackson had two bullet wounds, and that the bullets that made them passed through his body. He said that one struck him in the top of the head, shattered his skull, passed down in front of his spine, shattered two ribs and went out the lower back. It was this shot that killed Jackson instantly. The other struck him in the left ankle.

In the official explanation of

the shooting, the San Quentin warden, L. S. Nelson, said that an escape attempt had developed in the Adjustment Center. He said that the guards were killed inside the Adjustment Center and that when the uprising was detected, and the alarm sounded, Jackson made a break toward the north wall.

The warden said that Jackson was shot by a guard from a gunwalk south—to the rear—of the Adjustment Center.

At that time, reporters argued that the warden's version of the shooting did not match up with the wounds found on Jackson's body.

It was contended that, from a 20-foot tower, it would have been impossible for a guard to have shot Jackson in the top of the head at such an angle that the bullet would have traveled down through his body, exiting through his lower back.

When asked at that time to resolve this apparent conflict, the prison authorities said they would have no further comment on events surrounding the shooting of Jackson.

One hypothesis offered then was that shots from the balcony gunwalk ricocheted against Jackson's ankle, knocking him down, and that as he was struggling to his feet, facing toward the south, the shot from

the gunwalk to the south struck him in the top of the head and penetrated as Dr. Cooke first reported.

### Pathologist's Findings

E. C. Fontaine, an assistant to Dr. Cooke, said today that the direction became a question because the entrance and exit wounds were so similar. "Exit wounds are usually larger," he said, "but in this case they were not."

"They only thing at issue or odd at all," he said, "was the direction the bullet traveled."

Mr. Fontaine said that Dr. Cooke's official report today was based on the finding of Dr. John Manwaring, a pathologist, who examined Jackson's body.

Since the shooting there have been a number of changes in the official version of what took place, prompting many supporters of Jackson to charge that he was murdered.

Officials at San Quentin could not be reached for comment this afternoon after Dr. Cooke's official report was released.

Prison officials have said that Stephen Bingham, a young lawyer who had been visiting Jackson, passed him a revolver.

Mr. Bingham is being sought on a murder charge.