

Inmates Say Jackson Died Squing Others

By Min S. Wee
Special to The Washington Post

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 28—Fellow prisoners of George Jackson, the black convict slain in an escape attempt at San Quentin Prison a week ago, claim that Jackson actually sacrificed his life to save his fellow inmates.

The inmates' scenario of last Saturday's events, pieced together from interviews with more than a dozen attorneys who visited their clients in the last two days, differs markedly from the official prison version.

Asked to comment on the inmates' account, W. D. Achuff, San Quentin information officer, said, "This does not measure up to the facts at all. All of the known facts indicate this could not be true."

Nearly all of the inmates' lawyers interviewed maintain that Jackson's death resulted from a calculated plan by guards to murder the so-called Soledad Brothers—Jackson, John Wesley Clutchette and Fleeta Drumgo—as well as Ruchell Magee.

The Soledad Brothers were awaiting trial on charges of killing a white guard at Soledad Prison more than 19 months ago.

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Magee was awaiting trial on murder charges in connection with the Marin County courthouse shooting incident of a year ago in which a white judge, two other black inmates and Jackson's younger brother, Jonathan, were slain.

"This is a plot if I ever heard one," said San Rafael attorney G. Douglas Vaughn. Vaughn represents Luis Navarette Talamantez, one of the prison's Chicano leaders, and charges that his client was also one of the intended victims. He says that Talamantez was transferred to the adjustment center, the scene of the killings, on Friday, just 24 hours before the bloody event.

"There was a plot and a plan to assassinate the Soledad Brothers and Ruchell Magee," San Francisco attorney Philip Ryan declared. Ryan, a 1969 graduate of Howard University Law School, represents Magee on civil matters.

According to the inmates, Jackson and Clutchette were the last two inmates to leave the San Quentin visiting room. Jackson was meeting with an Oakland attorney, Stephen M. Bingham—who dropped out of sight after the weekend's events. The inmates said Jackson and Bingham were discussing legal matters involving other black prisoners and legal suits which a group of prisoners were planning to file against the prison.

Clutchette was in the visiting room talking with his mother, Doris Maxwell. Jackson had to walk past the two to enter the corridor before being returned to the adjustment center.

According to Mrs. Maxwell, Jackson leaned over, said, "I love you," and blew her a kiss. "If that big eight-inch gun was on his head, why didn't it fall out?" she asked, referring to the official version of what ensued.

Mrs. Maxwell said she was the last person to leave the visiting room.

The inmates' version of what happened after Jackson and Clutchette returned to the adjustment center differs markedly from the given by prison authorities and guards. In an account pieced together by Jack V. Fox of United Press International from official sources, mainly Associate Warden James Park and State Director of Corrections Raymond K. Procunier, Jackson was escorted by guard Frank de Leon back to the adjustment center.

According to this account, Jackson was ordered to strip for a search. He had a bushy Afro hairdo with a watch cap worn on the back and one of the guards is said to have spotted what he first thought was a pencil in Jackson's hair and reached to remove it.

At that moment, there were five guards in the corridor of the first tier of the cell block. According to Procunier, Jackson grabbed a pistol from his hair and shouted, "This is it." Holding the guards at bay, he is said to have pushed a lever which opened the doors of all the cells in the tier and 25 other inmates ran out.

Two are said to have remained in their cells. They are John Lynn, 26, and Ronald L. Kane, 23, both white "tier tenders" who had some degree of freedom.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, quoting an unidentified guard, Lynn and Kane were dragged from their cells and asked whether they would join the break. When they refused, by this account, their throats were cut with a razor blade taped to a tooth brush.

Just when the killing of three of the guards took place has not been explained.

According to the inmate's version of the same events, however, a guard pulled a gun on Jackson when he returned to the adjustment center. They say that it was not Jackson who ordered the cell doors opened, but the guards.

"When they open, you come out," one prisoner is quoted by his attorney as saying. "Otherwise, they come and drag you out."

The inmates told their attorneys that they came out and were directed to one side of the wing. Then, they said, they heard shots and ran towards the rear of the wing to get out of the line of fire in case shots came down the corridor.

One source said Jackson was able to wrest the gun from the guard after Jackson had yelled at an inmate to "get down, get down." When the guard glanced momentarily in that direction, Jackson is said to have taken the gun away.

The inmates say that it was the guards who killed the two white inmates because the two tier tenders refused to "go along" with plans to kill Jackson.

One inmate quoted Jackson as saying, "Well, they want me," and he dashed into the yard, where he was shot and killed. Another inmate said Jackson was first shot in the

yard, that he was left to bleed to death and that after more than an hour a guard shot Jackson in the head.

The surviving inmates thought the "carefully planned escape attempt," alleged by Associate Warden Park, a coverup. They said that each of the prisoners was aware that three gun towers could shoot at any prisoner exiting from the adjustment center door. They ask where Jackson could have gone after all emergency alarms had been sounded on a Saturday afternoon.

"Getting outside the adjustment center was the only way to save the lives of the others inside," Ryan, Magee's attorney, said. "They (the guards) could not justify going in and machine-gunning down the men inside with Jackson dead in the courtyard."

Ryan also charged that most guards carry unauthorized weapons. He referred to a case at Soledad Prison a year ago when the captain of the guards, Charles Moody, was reprimanded for carrying a concealed weapon into that prison.

For obvious legal reasons, the prisoners' attorneys declined any comment on the killings of the guards.

Several suggested that the guards' deaths were in retribution for Jackson's.

Autopsy reports, however, show bullet holes in the back of the heads of two guards. Prison officials point out that the gun was found near Jackson in the courtyard.

Adherents to the inmate version point out that the gun could have been later placed in the courtyard after the event.

The inmates say that it was the guards and not prisoners who placed the bodies of four victims inside Jackson's cell. Three of those victims—two guards and a white inmate—died, while the fourth, a guard, has lived.

Attorneys also wondered why prison officials first described the smuggled gun as a .38-caliber revolver, then changed that version a day later to a 9-mm foreign-made automatic. On Friday, prison officials said the gun was a Spanish-made Astra M-800. The weapon is 8½ inches long and 1¼ inches wide. It weighs 2½ pounds.

In a pistol and wig experiment, the San Francisco Chronicle tried to re-enact the key gun-smuggling sequence in the bloody events of a week ago, and found the prison version unconvincing.

Prison officials have declined comment on this experiment. On Friday they announced that serial numbers on the weapon traced it to Landon Robert Williams, a field marshal of the Black Panther Party, who was arrested in Denver in June, 1969, and extradited to New Haven, Conn., where he faces murder charges.

Attorneys for the prisoners also have questioned the prison's official version of how Jackson died.

Associate Warden Park told reporters in press conferences last Saturday and Sunday that Jackson had bolted from the adjustment center and had progressed about one-third of the way across the yard when he was shot. Reporters were then told that Jackson kept running toward a 20-foot-high brick wall, but stumbled and fell near the corner of the prison chapel after crossing the yard.

Inmates' attorneys, displaying several photographs taken by an Oakland Tribune photographer, pointed to a large circle of blood about 15 yards into the courtyard from the adjustment center door. The attorneys said that Jackson was shot there and left to bleed to death.

"If you're shot and keep running," said Floyd Silliman, Clutchette's attorney, "you don't leave that much blood behind in a big circle." Silliman also said that persons who are shot and instantly killed do not bleed so profusely.

"That blood," Silliman said, "is on the hands of San Quentin guards."

Jackson Eulogized As Martyr of Left

OAKLAND, Calif., Aug. 28 (UPI) — In an Episcopal Church hung with a Black Panther banner, George Jackson was eulogized in violent words as martyr of the revolutionary left today, a week after he was killed in a bloody aborted escape at San Quentin Prison.

Funeral services for the 30-year-old black revolutionary were held at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in Oakland's black ghetto, behind an honor guard of 40 Black Panthers and with a blue-and-black Panther flag waving from the top of the door.

An estimated 1,200 persons attended, spilling out of the church and across the intersection of two streets outside.

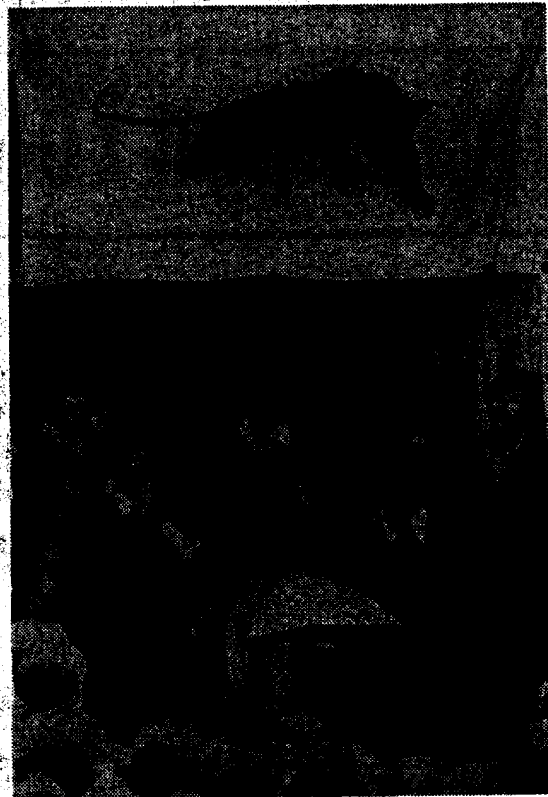
The presiding minister, a black Episcopal priest, called Jackson "a fire ever burning" for black freedom, and Black Panther co-founder Huey Newton said "the oppressor will get fired some day" and "the people will tear his kneecaps off . . . we'll slit every throat of the people who oppress us."

Justice in America, said the Rev. Earl Neil, pastor of St. Augustine's, is a monstrous system enslaving blacks through all-white juries and "white henchmen known as racists."

Newton said the last statement he ever heard from Jackson was "the unjust will be criticized by the weapon. The oppressor will get tired."

"Then George Jackson and the people will tear his kneecaps off," Newton said. "With love as our guide, we'll slit every throat of the people who oppress us. We'll change their minds, or else in the people's name we'll have to wipe them out — thoroughly, completely and absolutely."

Jackson was shot to death at San Quentin Aug. 21 after he allegedly pulled a smuggled gun in the prison Adjustment Center and touched off a bloody rampage in which the center's prisoners were released, and three white guards and two white convicts were slashed, beaten, garrotted and shot to death.



Associated Press

George Jackson's coffin is carried from Oakland church.

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 28 (AP)—Two State Department of Corrections offices in San Francisco and Sacramento were heavily damaged by bombs today in what an underground group said was "one outraged response to the assassination of George Jackson."

A third bomb explosion wrecked the State Department of Rehabilitation office in San Mateo. Investigators said the San Mateo blast did not appear related to the seemingly coordinated attacks on the two prison system offices.

No one was injured.

Soledad Brother George Jackson was killed with five other men in a San Quentin Prison break attempt a week ago.

The bombings came on the day of Jackson's funeral in the same wooden church in Oakland where rites were conducted a year ago for his younger brother, Jonathan.

Jonathan was killed in the August, 1970, Marin County Courthouse shootout in which a judge and three abductors died.

A letter signed "Weather Underground" and delivered to The San Francisco Examiner claimed responsibility for the San Francisco and Sacramento explosions.

Anonymous phone calls warned of the Sacramento and San Francisco blasts minutes before they rocked the 17-story state office tower in the capital and the historic waterfront Ferry Building in San Francisco. There was no warning call in San Mateo.

The woman caller in Sacramento said she was a Weatherman member. Weatherman, a radical youth group, has claimed credit for various bombings during the past two years.

The letter, delivered as had been promised by the San Francisco warning caller, said in part:

"On Saturday, Aug. 21, George Jackson, Black Warrior, revolutionary leader, political prisoner, was shot dead by racist forces at San Quentin . . .

"Tonight, the offices of the California prison system in San Francisco and Sacramento were attacked. One outraged response to the assassination of George Jackson."

Police estimated damage at

\$50,000 in the Ferry Building. The bomb exploded in the second floor offices of the psychiatric clinic for prison parolees.

No damage estimate was available in Sacramento for the blast in the sixth floor Department of Corrections headquarters office. The site was about 50 feet from the office of Raymond K. Procnier, state director of corrections.

The bomb there was set off in a women's rest room. It ruptured several water mains and water poured down the building's elevator shafts.

The explosion blew out one rest room wall and knocked in one elevator door 10 feet away.

Damage in the San Mateo building was estimated at between \$30,000 and \$50,000. The main door was blown off and most interior walls of the one-story structure were flattened. EXPLODE—N

The State Department of Rehabilitation provides vocational training for the handicapped, and is not related to the prison system.

The first explosion was in San Mateo at 12:07 a.m. The Sacramento blast followed at 2:02 a.m. and the San Francisco explosion at 2:11 a.m.

Death of Jackson Cited in Bombing Of Calif. Offices