

Mysteries of the Escape Attempt

Even with new revelations that a smuggled-in gun touched off Saturday's bloody incident at San Quentin, the question of motive remained in doubt.

Authorities at the prison have speculated from the curious discovery of random bullets and small amounts of explosives in several adjustment center cells at the prison, that some sort of major break had been carefully planned, but was far from ready.

But, the authorities believe, something went wrong, and George Jackson was forced to make a desperate attempt at implementing the plan prematurely.

If that was the case, however, observers close to Jackson and the prison have questioned what specifically might have changed his plan.

Jackson has spent seven of his 11 prison years in San Quentin's adjustment center. He knew better than most inmates that a weapon, and particularly a gun, would be nearly impossible to conceal from the constant skin searches he went through.

The 29-year-old inmate author was considered among other radical and militant convicts as well as many sympathizers outside the walls to have a brilliant mind often given to elaborate, almost military details.

Even prison sources concede that if he made a mistake of some sort in planning the breakout, it would not likely be in assuming he would not be thoroughly searched.

Assuming Jackson had the gun and thought he could get through the search, then his second unexplainable act is questioned.

When alarms went off in the prison, Jackson and in-

mate John Larry Spain ran out of the adjustment center and headed for a wall that, even had they reached it, would be nearly impossible to scale. In any case they would still have been in the prison compound if they had made it over the wall.

Jackson knew both facts. His dash under two gun towers was virtually suicidal.

There was also speculation that the original intent of the escape plan had been for all the adjustment center inmates to rush out of the adjustment center, seize a gun tower as quickly as possible and go out the main gate — possibly to help waiting outside.

But there was no evidence of outside help for Jackson on Saturday. And in that last desperate instant, according to officials, only one inmate followed Jackson's rush for the wall.

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