

Racial Angle Seen in San Quentin Break

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SAN QUENTIN, Calif., Aug. 24 — There were racial aspects to the attempted prison break here last Saturday, officials said today.

Of the four white prisoners locked in the first-floor tier of the Adjustment Center, two were killed by the other convicts and two saved their lives by keeping their cell doors closed, officials said.

"It's obvious the two white inmates thought they would be killed if they didn't stay in their cells," Philip D. Guthrie, information officer for the state prison system, said.

There were 17 Negro prisoners, five Chicanos and a Puerto Rican on the tier, a prison spokesman said.

In addition to the two white prisoners, three guards were slain by convicts. George Jackson, the black revolutionary who touched off the break by producing a pistol, was shot to death by tower guards as he ran across the prison yard.

Prison administrators also said today that Jackson had pulled a 9-mm. automatic pistol

which was about 5 inches long, out of a wig that he snatched off his head when a guard reached to examine it.

Hat To Be Smuggled In

The prison authorities had known since Sunday that a guard believed Jackson had worn a wig, but did not say this until today when they found a commercially made wig in the cellblock plumbing. It would have had to be smuggled in from outside.

"We got to do it now," a prison spokesman said Jackson shouted, and, partly on the implication of this, the administrators believe that a more elaborate escape attempt had been planned.

They also said that the uniforms had been stripped from the dead guards. This suggested to the officials that there was a plan to use the uniforms so the prisoners could walk out to the nearby visitors center, perhaps collect hostages and break out.

However, this scheme, if it was intended, was ruined when a sergeant of the guard, Jere Graham, came into the corridor

and another officer, who opened the door for him, was fired at. Then Jackson and Larry Spain, another Negro prisoner, ran across the yard Jackson was shot.

Pipe and Cartridges Found

A shakedown of the tier where the break attempt started turned up the makings of a zip gun, a piece of pipe, rubber bands and cartridges hidden inside a bar of soap.

The first tier of the Adjustment Center is one of the most heavily guarded rows of cells in the 12 prisons operated for 21,500 inmates by the State of California.

In that tier with Jackson were Fleeta Drumgo and John Cluchette, his codefendants on the charge of murdering a guard at Soledad Prison. The three were the so-called Soledad Brothers.

Drumgo and Cluchette came into court in San Francisco today for a preliminary hearing. The two black prisoners handed their attorneys a petition written by Ruchell Magee, accused of murdering a judge in a Marin County courthouse shootout last year. The petition was signed by prisoners in the Adjustment Center.

The petition charged that guards murdered Jackson and had mistreated prisoners in the Adjustment Center. Drumgo and Cluchette showed bruises and abrasions as they walked into court.

The lawyers urged Judge Carl Allen to order an investigation of the shooting.