

# Spectators Battle Police At Soledad Case Hearing

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Violence erupted in a crowded courtroom here today during a hearing on pretrial motions for the two surviving Soledad Brothers.

Spectators and riot policemen battled in the courtroom shortly after Fleeta Drumgo and John Clutchette were brought in behind the bullet-proof glass barrier that is being used to separate them from those attending the trial.

Drumgo and Clutchette are being tried for murder in the death last year of a guard at Soledad State Prison who was hurled from a third-floor balcony. Their co-defendant, George Jackson, was shot to death last Saturday at San Quentin Prison. Five other persons—three white guards and two white prisoners, were also slain Saturday. Prison officials said the deaths occurred during an escape attempt by Jackson.

The authorities say that the Soledad guard was killed in revenge for the earlier deaths of three black prisoners by guards at Soledad.

## A Rise in Tension

As a result of the attention focused on the case, Drumgo, Clutchette and Jackson, all blacks, have become widely known as the Soledad Brothers and their cause has become celebrated in many liberal and radical circles, especially among blacks. The death of Jackson added to the tensions surrounding the trial of the two survivors.

Feelings rose even higher when Drumgo and Clutchette charged at an earlier hearing Tuesday that they had been tortured and beaten and that their lives had been threatened by prison authorities. Prison officials have denied the charge.

The melee in the courtroom here today began after Superior Court Judge Carl Allen refused a defense offer to show proof that Clutchette and Drumgo were beaten in San Quentin on Saturday.

Mrs. Doris Maxwell, Clutch-

ette's mother, began screaming at the judge through the glass barrier:

"I checked out [of San Quentin] at 2:55. They say it happened before that." \*

Mrs. Maxwell was one of the last persons to leave the prison visiting area before the slayings. Officials have said the prison incident began almost immediately after Jackson was taken from the visitors' center at about 2:35 P.M. \*

After Mrs. Maxwell began shouting, a bailiff moved toward her to remove her from

\*Mrs. Maxwell said in radio int'v that she saw Jackson just before she left visiting room, when Jackson was going past it and guard permitted him to stop and speak to her son.

the courtroom and a male spectator rose and interceded.

Fights then broke out between spectators, bailiffs and members of the police riot squad, who had been standing by because of a milder disturbance in the courtroom Tuesday.

About a dozen male and female spectators fought with the dozen officers, who used clubs and fists to clear the courtroom. Two black brothers, Earl M. Price and Philip Price, both of Oakland, were arrested on assault charges and were treated for head injuries at San Francisco General Hospital. Three sheriff's deputies were also reported to have been treated at the hospital.

After order was restored, the hearing continued on a number of defense motions, including one that the glass barrier be removed.

## Lawyers Are Searched

Meanwhile, at San Quentin, attorneys for several of the 26 other prisoners who were confined on the first tier of the adjustment center, a maximum security cellblock, were allowed to see their clients today for the first time since Saturday. Jackson had been held in the cell block.

Seven lawyers took advantage of today's opportunity to visit. The opportunity was bitterly opposed by Arnold Thompson, president of the San Quentin chapter of the Correctional Officers Association. He asked that the prison remain shut until "strick procedures are written to insure the safety of all employes."

No other visitors are being

Clutchette and Drumgo were beaten in San Quentin on Saturday.



Associated Press

**MELEE IN COAST COURTROOM: Spectators at San Francisco hearing for Fleeta Drumgo and John Clutchette clashing with policemen after Clutchette's mother screamed at the judge. When a bailiff tried to eject her, a scuffle broke out.**

allowed at the prison and the lawyers who entered today said they had been subjected to searches and to much tighter security precautions than they had been on other visits.

An attorney, Stephen M. Bingham, was the last person to visit Jackson before, prison officials say, the prisoner produced a gun during a skin search after being returned to his cellblock and attempted to escape.

Last night, the young lawyer's father, Alfred M. Bingham, a lawyer and former Connecticut State Senator, said in a news conference in Berkeley that his son might have been an unwilling dupe in smuggling the gun to Jackson. He said his son had left the room dur-

ing his visit with Jackson and that the gun might have been planted by someone else in a briefcase or tape recorder he had with him.

Mr. Bingham also expressed fear that his son, who apparently disappeared Saturday after a visit with an uncle, might have met with foul play.

Some of the attorneys who saw their clients at the prison today reiterated the charges that the prisoners had been beaten and threatened since the Saturday break.

George Douglas Vaughn of San Rafael, who represents Louis Talamantez on a charge of aggravated assault on an-



United Press International

**RESTORING ORDER: Policeman struggles with a woman. Two spectators were treated for head injuries and three sheriff's deputies were reportedly treated at a hospital.**

other San Quentin prisoner, said his client was "bruised badly, but he's not complaining."

"He was beaten only in moving from one cell to another, with a nightstick," Mr. Vaughn said.