

George Jackson Haunts the Court

By Harold V. Streeter

The ghost of George Jackson still haunts a heavily guarded courtroom more than 40 days after a bullet ripped through his skull at San Quentin, ending 30 years of a troubled life for the rebellious black.

Yesterday during daylong proceedings in a tightly secured third floor courtroom at the Hall of Justice, Jackson's name far overshadowed those of the two surviving "Soledad Brothers," charged with murdering a white prison guard.

Next Wednesday, Superior Judge S. Lee Vavuris will rule on a defense motion either that the charge against Jackson be dismissed with a flat statement he is innocent or that he remain, in death, a trial defendant, with his lawyer present.

Dismissed

The defense challenged a prior ruling of another judge dismissing the case against Jackson because he was among six persons killed Aug. 21 at San Quentin.

In vain yesterday, the Monterey County prosecutors — trying the case here on a change of venue — sought to have Jackson's attorney, John Thorne of San Jose, excluded from the defense table.

Among the small group of spectators, admitted to seats behind a bullet-proof glass barrier after being intimately searched and photographed, was Jackson's mother, Mrs. Georgia Jackson.

Wants Name Cleared

She slumped in her third row seat, her forehead supported by one hand, while

Thorne argued that her wish to have her son's name cleared should not be thwarted by a killing in San Quentin which has had contradictory explanations.

Thorne was stopped short while noting she also had lost another son by violent death. Jonathan Jackson, 17, was killed Aug. 7, 1970 during the Marin Civic Center shootout. Marin authorities charge he smuggled guns into a courtroom in a plot to free the "Soledad Brothers."

Lawyer's Fees

Judge Vavuris also promised to rule next Wednesday on a motion by Floyd Silliman, attorney for John Clutchette, and Richard Silver, attorney for Fleeta Drumgo, to be appointed as counsel — thereby requiring Monterey County and the state to foot the legal bills.

Silliman said the defense was in a desperate situation financially, has only a little over \$300 left, and if the judge will not appoint them then they will make a motion to withdraw from the case.

During yesterday's proceedings, an officer with sub-machinegun could be seen in a back corridor. So minute was the police search in the front corridor that ballpoint pens were unscrewed and each half's interior examined. A limping newsman was required to leave his cane out in the corridor.

Just as the court recessed at noon, rumors of a bomb down the third floor corridor in a toilet brought the bomb squad on the double. It turned out to be a package of cottage cheese.