

Slaying Trial

Other Suspects In Soledad Case

By Charles Howe

The state had at least four other "prime suspects" in connection with the murder of prison guard John Mills before the three so-called "Soledad Brothers" were charged with his death, testimony here disclosed yesterday.

Theodore E. Elzerman, formerly a state criminologist, testified he arrived at Soledad Prison hours after Mills was killed on Jan. 16, 1970, and conducted what eventually proved to be a fruitless investigation.

Ultimately, Fleeta Drumgao, John Clutchette and George Jackson were indicted for Mills' death after he was assertedly thrown from the third tier of Y Wing.

KILLED

Jackson was killed at San Quentin last August 21 during an apparent prison break.

During an entire day on the witness stand, Elzerman testified that prison officials furnished him with the blood types of three other prison inmates in an attempt to determine the origins of blood spots found near the site where Mills was pushed to his death.

Additionally, Elzerman said, he searched several cells other than those occupied by the "Soledad Brothers" after prison officials indicated their occupants were suspected of killing Mills.

QUESTION

But at the end of the day's frequently convoluted testimony, Elzerman was asked, point-blank, by Floyd Silliman, Clutchette's attorney:

"Would it be fair to say that the results of your day's hard work in this case were a big, fat zero?"

"I would say that it was," replied Elzerman, who is now employed as a criminalist in Illinois.

Elzerman said he found an old bloodstain on the wall of Jackson's cell; that he found a human bloodstain impossible to identify according to type on a sheet on Drumgao's bed.

"It could have been made by (someone knocking loose) a scab," Elzerman speculated.

A bloodstain was also found on the wall near Clutchette's third floor cell, Elzerman said. But later he said he found traces of blood in several other distant third floor locations.

Under cross-examination Elzerman said he found two moist towels "that showed the presence of blood" in the cell of an inmate identified as R. L. Lee, who was confined on the second floor of Y Wing.

He also said prison authorities furnished him with a sock containing a newspaper that guards took from the cell of "a Mr. Kaiser," on the third floor. No blood was found on these items.

At least two other inmates — "Morgan and Bryant" — were of enough interest to authorities that they supplied Elzerman with the respective blood types of these prisoners.

But for all his labors, Elzerman said, he was not able to find evidence "that incriminated or exonerated anyone."

The testimony of a State fingerprint expert who was given a number of partial latent fingerprints that Elzerman took from congealed blood near the scene of Mills' death is expected to begin when court reconvenes at 9:30 a.m. today.