

MURDER SUSPECT LEAVES NO TRACE

Bingham May Be Dead, Aide
in Prison Inquiry Says

NYTimes

SAN RAFAEL, Calif., Jan. 5 (AP)—Stephen M. Bingham, the lawyer who is charged with murder in a bloody outbreak at San Quentin Prison last August, has vanished so completely that the District Attorney here says, "There's a good possibility he's dead."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Marin County authorities say they have followed up dozens of leads across the nation, from a New York airport to a Yosemite Park campground.

The results have been "zero," said District Attorney Bruce Bales in an interview yesterday. He added, "There hasn't been a single shred of physical evidence that he is even alive or dead. Nothing. It's weird."

Mr. Bingham, 29 years old, a Yale-educated grandson of a former Connecticut governor and son of a well-to-do Salem, Conn., family, disappeared just after 6 P.M. last Aug. 21.

About 2 P.M. that day, the state contends, he smuggled a .9-mm. automatic gun to a convict, George Jackson, on a visit at San Quentin.

6 Dead in Incident

Less than 40 minutes after Mr. Bingham left the prison, Jackson and five other men were dead.

Guards shot Jackson, one of three convicts known as the "Soledad Brothers," saying he had been trying to escape over a wall. In and near Jackson's cell were found the bodies of three guards and two inmates. Six convicts face murder charges in these deaths.

Mr. Bingham is accused as an accomplice and is charged with five counts of murder.

When the young lawyer's picture was prominently displayed by newspapers across the nation, Mr. Bales said, dozens of people telephoned with possible leads.

"With all this publicity, if he were around, there was a good likelihood of finding him then," Mr. Bales said. "The longer he stays away without word to his friends or family, the more this Bingham's death is a possibility."

A man who said he knew Bingham reported seeing him in Wisconsin just after the killings.

"We really checked this one, but it didn't pan out," Mr. Bales said. He added that no one was "physically out looking for Bingham now," but investigators are sent to check every lead.