

# Cross-Charges of Lying At the Soledad Trial

By Charles Howe

A witness in the murder trial of the so-called "Soledad Brothers" and lawyers for the defense each said in court here yesterday that the other was lying.

Thomas A. Yorke, a sometimes-mercurial former inmate who said he witnessed the murder of guard John V. Mills at Soledad Prison insisted he never disliked the late George Jackson.

When defense attorney Floyd Silliman suggested Yorke "hated" and "envied" Jackson, Yorke replied:

"That is a blatant lie . . . a flagrant lie by you!"

## 'LOVE'

Yorke stoutly maintained he had "always had an attitude of love" for Jackson. But he testified he waited but a few days before he told authorities he saw Jackson kill Mills on the night of Jan. 16, 1970.

As Yorke concluded his fourth day of testifying against defendants John Clutchette and Fleeta Drumgo, Silliman sought to prove Yorke a liar.

With the jury excused but with court still in session, Silliman unsuccessfully asked Superior Court Judge S. Lee Vavuris to allow him to pursue a line of questioning that would indicate Yorke:

"... has been coached . . . what I am trying to show basically is that the witness is lying about everything . . ."

## MOVEMENTS

Silliman claimed that Yorke had failed to account for all of his movements on the night of the murder and if everything Yorke did that night was taken into consideration, he could not have witnessed the killing until at least 8 p.m.

Mills body was found about 6:30 p.m.

Defense lawyer Richard Silver lost in an attempt to prove that Yorke, a black man, is biased against the defendants, who are also black.

Silver said he had evidence that Yorke did not associate with blacks and as a result of this attitude, he told Judge Vavuris, in his thinking at least, Yorke "is as white as you or I."