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Clutchette's Testimony On Jackson

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By Keith Power

John Clutchette, one of the so-called Soledad Brothers, testified under cross-examination yesterday that the late George Jackson was a Soledad Prison friend but not his leader at the time of the murder of a guard two years ago.

Prosecution witnesses have said that Jackson, the black revolutionary killed in an escape attempt at San Quentin Prison last August, was chiefly responsible for the death of Officer John Mills.

Both Clutchette, 28, and his co-defendant, Fleeta Drumgo, 26, who have been implicated in the murder by prosecution testimony, have taken the stand to deny any part in the fatal attack.

KARATE

Under cross-examination by prosecutor William Curtis, Clutchette said he was a

friend of Jackson's and had practiced karate with him a few times. But he flatly denied he regarded Jackson as a leader.

"I take pride in being my own man," he told the jury yesterday in the 11th week of the Soledad slaying trial in the Hall of Justice here. There was a murmur of approval from the largely partisan spectators.

Clutchette denied testimony from prosecution witnesses who said he stepped over the guard's body to retrieve a flashlight used in the attack and took it back into his cell.

INDICTMENT

The first he knew of the flashlight was when he read a grand jury indictment against him, Clutchette said.

He said the first he knew of the killing was when he returned to Y wing from the television room with other inmates and saw the guard's body on the floor. The prosecution says the beaten guard was thrown from the third-floor tier by Jackson.

The trial resumes tomorrow morning amid indications the defense is close to resting its case.