

Angela's 'Terrible' Love for Jackson

By Carolyn Anspacher

So "terrible" was the love of Angela Davis for George Jackson that, on July 8, 1971, she wrote to him at San Quentin prison from her own cell in the Marin county jail:

"... I see myself tearing down this steel door, fighting my way to you, ripping down your cell door and letting you go free. I feel as you do, so terrible is this love."

This was one fragment of the bitterly - contested 18 - page "San Quentin document" that crept yesterday into the record of Miss Davis' murder - kidnap - conspiracy trial in San Jose.

No portion of the communication so far has reached the jury hearing the trial, which entered its ninth week yesterday, because Superior Court Judge Richard E. Arnason has yet to rule on its admissibility.

But with the jury under stern admonition not to read, hear or see any news reports on the trial, Judge Arnason unsealed the tran-

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script of two lengthy chamber conferences, one last Tuesday and one on Thursday, in which admissibility of the letter was debated by opposing counsel.

Assistant Attorney General Albert Harris Jr. argued that the document, found in Jackson's San Quentin cell last August after he had been fatally shot in an escape attempt, is "what the case is all about."

In fact, he said, if the state is not allowed to prove that Miss Davis "conspired with other people ... to bring about the freedom of George Jackson through vio-

lent means then we might as well pack up and go home."

The prosecution contends that for love of Jackson, Miss Davis plotted and armed the ill-fated Marin Civic Center escape attempt of August 7, 1970, hoping to exchanged five hostages for her imprisoned beloved, who was accused with two other convicts of the murder of a Soledad Prison guard.

Instead, four men were killed, among them Superior Court Judge Harold Haley, Jackson's 17-year-old brother, Jonathan, and two San Quentin inmates.

The first segment of the document, edited down now to seven pages, was written, Harris claims, only a few hours after the 28-year-old black militant and Jackson had their first intimate meeting in a Marin county jail holding cell and "directly related to an act that had taken place — a physical act."

She wrote then, the record shows: "A scene frozen in my mind. I am standing in that little cubicle downstairs, standing waiting, loving desiring, and then hot-cold rage when the chains begin to rattle as you slowly descend the stairs surrounded by that small army of mindless but armed automations.

"I, your wife, your comrade, who is supposed to love you, fight for you, fight with you. I'm supposed to rip off the chains. I'm supposed to fight your enemies with my body, but I am helpless, powerless, I contain the rage inside, I do nothing.

"I stand there, watching, forced to assume the posture of a disinterested spectator, the whole scene perceived through glass, laboratory-like, mad at them for thrusting this thing upon me, mad at myself for doing nothing.

"Mad at myself, too, because I could not fail to see how much counterforce you were exerting upon yourself, each step, long, hard, unwilling to be restrained by chains and pigs, your entire body with each foot move-

ment, in a hard sway and the muscles of your face tensing with each sway. As I re-experience this now, my pulse beats faster, I begin to breath harder. . . .

And then: "I see myself tearing down this steel door, fighting my way to you, ripped down your cell door and letting you go free . . ."

This to Harris was the nub of his case, that Miss Davis "conspired with other people to bring about the freedom of George Jackson through violent means."

He said the document may convince the jury that Miss Davis "had a state of mind by which she would undertake a conspiracy and she would undertake violent means to bring about the freedom of George Jackson."

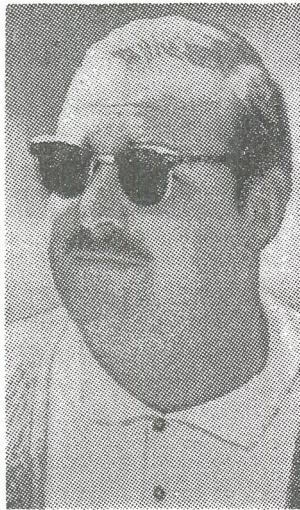
In the heat of the chamber discussion, defense attorney Howard Moore accused Harris of having performed "literary lobotomy" on the letter, called his point of view "disgusting" and charged him with being a "distorted bigotist."

But Harris went on, reading another paragraph from the letter: "George, I love you, everything about you. There are so many things I planned to tell you for which there wasn't enough time.

"It's inconceivable that any black man or woman who is halfway sane can avoid after the slightest contact, falling madly in love with you.

"Sometimes I wonder how I would react if you told me you loved another woman as you loved me. It would, of course, be painful, but I would not love you less, and would not be spiteful. Only if you stopped loving me would I be hopelessly crushed."

Permeating the document are such expressions as "Love you, love you — with



AP Wirephoto

ROBERT WEST
Prosecution witness

love ever more unbounded, ever more unconquerable. Your life-long wife." And: "Good night, George, your wife sends infinite love."

Harris claimed the importance of the letter, written nearly a year after the Marin shootings is three-fold:

- "It is a totally private and sincere document meant for nobody's eyes but George Jackson's.

- "It changed the prosecution theory of the case and made them believe the (Marin) escape attempt was a personal enterprise on her part rather than part of a political movement

- "And there isn't one word in here in which she even suggests that she is innocent, that there is a frame up or that she is being railroad."

During the trial itself, Harris called only three witnesses, Richard C. Miller, a United Air Lines passenger service supervisor who testi-

fied Miss Davis bought a ticket from Los Angeles to San Francisco on Aug. 3, 1970, four days before the Marin shootings, and two San Quentin officers, Lieutenant Robert A. West and Correction Officer Robert L. Ayers.

West — eager and earnest — testified that on August 4 and 5 of 1970 Jonathan Jackson signed in to see his brother, George. With him was a "fair-skinned black lady" who signed the register as "Diane Robinson."

And the "fair-skinned black lady," he said, was Miss Davis, now sitting in court.

West said he didn't learn "Diane Robinson's" true identity until August 14 when he saw a picture of Miss Davis on television. He said he immediately phoned his superiors at the prison. This was ten days after the Marin shootings and Miss Davis had been declared a fugitive.

West underwent a blistering cross examination to shake the officer's identification of Miss Davis. Moore elicited from West that until three weeks ago he had been a registered member of the American Independence party and then switched to the Democratic party. He said the issue of Communism didn't interest him much. (Miss Davis is a Communist.) He said he was concerned primarily with the "issue of the working poor."

West's testimony about the two Jackson-Davis visits to San Quentin was corroborated by Correctional Officer, Ayers, who was in charge of the waiting room on August 4 and 5. He identified Miss Davis as the woman with young Jackson on both days.