

George Jackson's Puzzling 'Will'

By Ed Montgomery

Mystery and controversy surround a document purporting to be the last will and testament of black militant George Lester Jackson, dated the very day of his death one year ago today at San Quentin Prison.

Authorities are not wholly satisfied the signature is that of the Soledad Brother who was shot and killed by a guard during the abortive prison break which also took the lives of three guards and two other inmates.

Black militants within and outside the Black Panther organization, however, deem the "will" authentic although it bears no witnessing signatures.

If legitimate, the document:

- Was typed outside pris-

on walls and taken in and out of San Quentin by Stephen Bingham, the 30 year old leftist attorney sought under an indictment charging he smuggled a hand gun to Jackson moments before the attempted prison break.

- Establishes that Jackson, known to have been planning a break for months, realized the attempt, whenever staged, could prove fatal.

- Lends credence to the allegation by certain black militants that Jackson was "murdered" — that is, was "set up" by traitorous allies for a mission certain to fail.

- Has led to widespread dissension within the ranks of black and white militants.

In substance the one page, double-spaced, typewritten "will" provides that, "any of the things that men value that I may in capitalistic terms seem to possess ... shall go to the Black Panther Party."

Included were "all proceeds" from Jackson's latest book, bequeathed to the Berkeley branch of the Black Panther Party with a

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well-known black militant named to serve as "advisor."

This individual, long a top Panther functionary, has split with the party and gone underground, using false identification possibly to guard against physical attack. He recently told police he has reason to believe a high ranking Panther has issued a "contract" on his life.

Claiming terms of the "will" are being ignored, this militant says the Jackson manuscript has been "lifted" and "doctored" to exclude passages which he said were critical of Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, co-founders of the Panthers.

He further claims a provision calling for the establishment of a trust fund for "my sister Penny Jackson and her son Theotis McKenzie" has been circumvented.

Escape Plans

Warden Louis S. Nelson said Jackson did not have access to a typewriter one year ago today, adding:

"If the so-called 'will' is legitimate, and I'm not prepared to say that it is, it was brought in for signing and taken out by Bingham, who was Jackson's only visitor the day of his death. No copy of the 'will' was found among Jackson's personal effects."

The fact Jackson was long planning an escape attempt was evidenced by the interception of an exchange of messages between Jackson and James Edward Carr, a one-time Jackson cellmate.

These messages, first disclosed by The Examiner, were taken in and out of San Quentin by a left wing attorney. They detailed extensive plans for the acquisition of explosives and guns and the placement of outside help at the time of the proposed break.

Carr, who, according to

one published report, was suspected of misappropriating monies from the Soledad Brothers' defense fund subsequently, was assassinated in San Jose during the Angela Davis trail.

Lending further credence that a break was being planned and that Jackson already was becoming suspicious of certain of those on the outside with whom he was communicating is the existence, heretofore undisclosed, of a note in Jackson's handwriting which reads:

"Give me the piece, but keep the bullets."

One investigator contends

George Lester Jackson

Signature George Lester Jackson

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ARE BOTH THESE SIGNATURES BY THE SAME HAND?

Top: Jackson's name on controversial will; below, his acknowledged signature
—Examiner Photo

Jackson at this point had obtained necessary ammunition, presumably smuggled in by trusted friends and relatives, and wanted only the gun because he suspected he would be furnished "dud" ammunition.

'Keep the Bullets'

In addition to the black militant named in the "will," those who contend Jackson was "set up" include Vanita Anderson, former Berkeley Panther who was believed to have passed to attorney Bingham a tape recorder allegedly containing the hand gun used by Jackson in the abortive break.

"Jackson was murdered," Miss Anderson told The Examiner in a recent exclusive interview in Texas where she had taken up residence since breaking with the Panthers and black militants in general.

Miss Anderson, denying any knowledge of the weapon although admitting her presence at the prison along with Bingham, implied she "had been used."

"If there was a gun in that tape recorder I didn't know it," she said.

A similar accusation that Jackson had been "set up"

came from Anthony "Tony" Bottom, Black Liberation Army soldier who broke with the Newton-Seale faction of the Panthers.

Bottom, imprisoned for attempting to shoot a San Francisco police sergeant and for a savings and loan robbery, is awaiting trial in New York for allegedly killing two police officers there.

In an exclusive jail cell interview, Bottom said, "They wanted Jackson out of the way — he was set up."

He declined to say who "they" were, but did name three black militants who, he said, "will be found dead in the gutter sooner or later."

One of the three — Carr — has since been assassinated.

Attorney Bingham's father, Alfred M. Bingham of Salem, Conn., spent the past week in The City conferring with attorneys and private investigator Harold Lipset in his continuing quest for some word of his missing son.

The father has received conflicting reports as to young Bingham's whereabouts and welfare.

Casual conversation along the "leftist" cocktail circuit

in recent months would imply the young attorney is being hidden out and that a number of Bay Area leftists know of his whereabouts.

Conversely, the black militant named in the Jackson "will" has told authorities it is a "waste of time" to seek Bingham — implying he has been done away with.

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