

Quentin Gun Mystery--- Oakland Lawyer Sought

Jackson Searched Before Visit

By Jim Brewer

An Oakland attorney, scion of a politically prominent Connecticut family, was being sought for questioning late last night as the investigation into Saturday's bloody breakout try at San Quentin Prison continued.

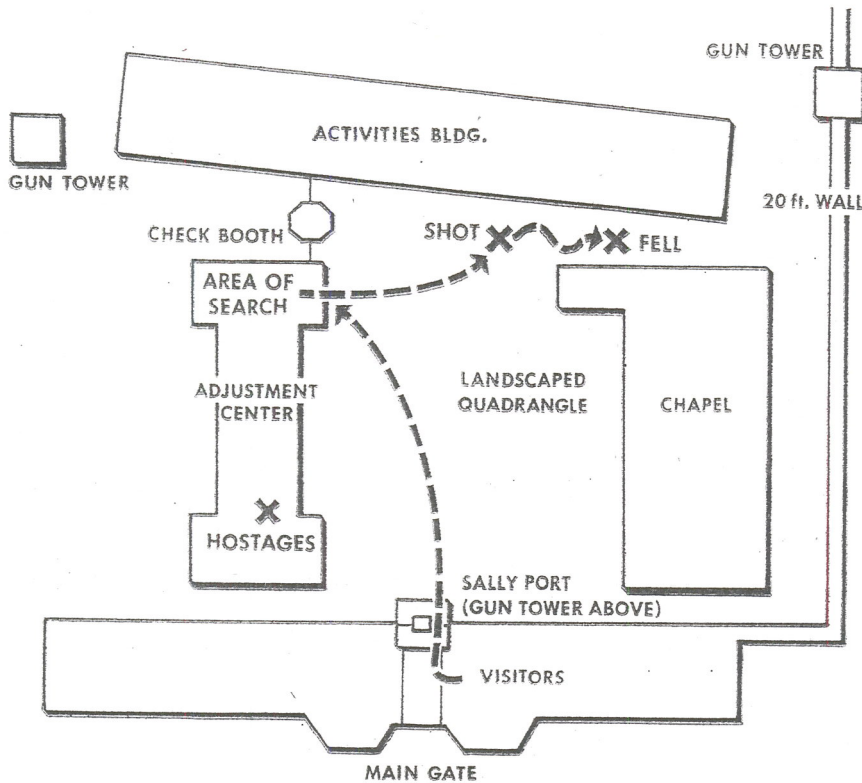
Prison administration sources identified him as Stephen Mitchell Bingham, 29, and said he was the lawyer who visited convict George Jackson on Saturday afternoon.

Minutes after leaving Bingham in the visiting room, the sources told The Chronicle. Jackson took his guards by surprise when he produced a 9-mm. pistol, shouted out "This is it," and launched the aborted escape attempt in which he, three prison officers and two other inmates died.

"We know he (Jackson) was clean when he entered the visiting room — he underwent a 'skin search' — and that on leaving he was not out of the sight of his guards.

"And he (Jackson) was hot — he had the gun — when the guards were about to search him again," the prison sources said.

Marin county District Attorney Bruce Bales confirmed Bingham is the subject of a search, but declined



The Escape Try

George Jackson followed this route in Saturday's escape attempt from San Quentin Prison, according to prison officials.

Brought out under guard from the visiting area, Jackson was led through the sally port in the main gate and out to a landscaped mall bordered at one side by the prison chapels, and at the other by the adjustment center.

Once inside the adjustment center, Jackson was to be skin searched. Instead he is reported to

have pulled a gun and shouted, "This is it." Twenty-seven inmates were let out of their cells on the first tier while Jackson allegedly held correctional officers at bay. In a period of about half an hour three officers and two inmates — both trusted tier tenders — were killed in the adjustment center.

As prison reinforcements arrived at the adjustment center, Jackson and inmate Larry Spain burst out of the same door Jackson had

entered, sprinting toward an alleyway between the chapel and the activities building. They had about 75 yards to go to reach the 20-foot-high prison wall at the end of the alleyway.

Midway across the mall, Jackson, firing his own gun, was shot by an officer in one of the three gun towers shown. He staggered a few steps and rolled, dead, in the alleyway. Spain, uninjured, leaped into some bushes in the mall and was later apprehended.

to say precisely why, other than "we have some questions we wish to ask of him concerning the incident at San Quentin."

MARRIED

The young white attorney, grandson of the late Hiram Bingham — who before his death in 1956 served as both governor and U.S. senator from Connecticut — was graduated from Boalt Hall, the University of California's law school at Berkeley, several years ago.

He was briefly married to a member of the socially prominent Spreckels family of Seattle and San Francisco. That marriage ended in di-

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LPI photos

GUARDS JERE GRAHAM, FRANK DeLEON AND PAUL KRASENES
The three who were slain in the prison outburst

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voice, friends said last night.

Until about a year ago, friends said, Bingham worked with a neighborhood legal assistance group in Berkeley. He has been in private practice as a member of an East Bay law firm since then.

SMUGGLED

At an afternoon press conference, Warden Louis Nelson repeated the official theory that the gun the black convict pulled had been smuggled into the prison.

He said that, during the visit, Jackson and the attorney faced each other across the table. These were no barriers to prevent the two from touching and although guards could look into the room, they did not have the pair under constant surveillance.

Nelson was unable to explain how the weapon escaped detection by a device at the gate which signals if a metal object is going through. The metal detector is used to screen anyone entering the prison, including employees, visitors—and attorneys.

Nelson said Jackson was back in the prison's adjustment center when he suddenly displayed the pistol and took command of the room.

Three officers were on duty on the first floor of the center, where there were 27 prisoners, including some Nelson described as "the worst of our incorrigibles."

Among them were Fleeta Drumgo and John W. Cluchette, the other two "Soledad Brothers," and Ruchell Ma-

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gee, co-defendant with Angela Davis in murder-kidnap-conspiracy charges stemming from the shootout at the Marin Civic Center August 7, 1970.

SERGEANT

Three other officers, including a sergeant, were also in the cell corridor when Jackson drew the pistol, the

warden said.

It was then that the master electric locking device was tripped, presumably by Jackson, and the 27 inmates on the first floor were released into the corridor.

"If he knew how to do it, he could have unlocked them all," Nelson said, referring to the prisoners in the other three tiers of the adjustment center.

Then, according to Nelson, this is what happened:

Jackson first forced his captives into the maximum security wing of the prison. At one point during this phase of the escape attempt,

Jackson fired two shots. No one was hit, however, and the slugs have since been recovered. ✱

Sometime in the ensuing half hour, Jackson and other inmates he had freed with a guard's keys began slashing three guards' throats.

Wielding a crudely fashioned weapon — a half-razor blade embedded in a toothbrush handle — the inmates killed the three guards — and also two white inmates — in sequence.

SHARP

The blade was not sharp, one official said, and the killings were accomplished slowly as the killers repeatedly sawed back and forth across the victims' necks.

As alarms reverberated around them, the desperate cons huddled in the rear of the cellblock, holding two guards hostage while continuing to saw away at the throats of the others.

Guards responding to the area fired dozens of shots into the cellblock, enabling the two hostages, correctional officers Kenneth McCray and Urbano Rubiaco, to wrestle free of their captors and escape.

Suddenly, Jackson and Larry John Spain, 22, of Los Angeles, who is serving a life sentence for murder, bolted out of the cellblock into the prison's main floral courtyard and sprinted toward a 20-foot-high brick wall about 75 yards away.

TOWER

Sharpshooter guards in two gun towers flanking the escape route opened fire at the two convicts streaking across the pavement.

Jackson was hit about one-third of the way to the wall. He stumbled almost to the rest of distance, then collapsed in an alleyway near the corner of the prison chapel.

Spain, meanwhile, dove

into a row of bushes in the middle of the courtyard, where, unharmed, he was captured by guards.

The inmates who remained in the cellblock were then ordered by loudspeaker to take off their clothes and walk into the courtyard with their arms raised. All complied.

The automatic was recovered near Jackson's body. Two bullets had been fired from the inserted clip. Another fully-loaded clip was found underneath Jackson's body. No prison keys were found in the yard.

The dead prison officers were Sergeant Jere Graham, 39; Frank P. DeLeon, 44, and Paul Krasenes, 52, a guard for 22 years. The slain prisoners were John Lynn, 29, of Ventura, and Ronald L. Kane, 28, of Fresno.

The bodies of the prisoners, both white, and two of the guards were found in Jackson's cell. The third guard was found dying in an alleyway outside the cells.

FORCE

Lynn was serving a second degree murder sentence in the death of a deputy sheriff; Kane had used force in an escape attempt.

Sergeant McCray, 39, and Rubiaco, 24, suffered minor slash wounds in the neck. A third guard, Charles Breckenridge, 21, remains in critical condition with cuts about the throat.

Attorney Bingham, according to sources in Salem, Conn., his home town, had been an active champion of the cause of blacks since his undergraduate days at Yale University.

In the fall of 1963 he was twice arrested on misdemeanor charges in Mississippi while working in behalf of Aaron Henry, a black defeated in a bid for governor in the Dixie state. One charge was that he had distributed pamphlets in Indianola,

Miss. — without a license, the other that he had loitered on a public street. In each instance he was freed after posting \$50 in bail.

ACTION

Interviewed at the time, Bingham strongly criticized the actions of Mississippi police who, he said, interfered with "the concept of a free election" by "systematic harassment and intimidation of Negroes and others supporting Aaron Henry."

In March 1964, the late Dr. Martin Luther King named Bingham his Connecticut and Massachusetts coordinator for the Mississippi Summer Project in which Freedom Schools, to educate and register black voters, were established throughout the southern state.

During the summer of 1963, while working in Washington, D.C., with 100 other Yale students, Bingham, a political science major, indicated he planned to follow in the family tradition, but as a Democrat.

His father, Alfred M. Bingham, served as a state legislator in Connecticut.

His grandfather, Hiram, a prominent and powerful Republican — was that state's governor and U.S. senator in a political career that spanned three decades.

At his Oakland home last last night, callers were informed that Bingham's whereabouts were not known.

Soviet Air Service

Moscow

The Soviet airline Aeroflot plans to start regular flights to Australia, New Zealand and South American and African countries at present not included in its regular service, according to a top Soviet aviation official.

Reuters

✱ See SFCh 24 Aug, "Murdered Men's Ghastly Deaths."