

Escape Effort Said Part of Massive Plan

SAN QUENTIN, Calif. (AP) — The abortive San Quentin Prison escape try which took six lives may have been part of a large-scale breakout plan using uniforms of slain guards, the head of California's state prison says.

"It was more than just George Jackson and John Larry Spain trying to escape," prisons chief Raymond K. Procunier said at a news conference yesterday. "It's my suspicion there were many more who were supposed to go with them."

Only Jackson, 29, who was shot fatally by a tower guard, and Spain, 22, who was captured in a prison courtyard, ran from the San Quentin adjustment center, where three guards and two white honor inmates had been killed, prison officials reported.

"IT MAY HAVE come off prematurely," Procunier said. "We don't know if it was a plot throughout the system."

He said rumors of a massive prison escape attempt by "revolutionary types" had been circulating for months in California prisons and had caused him to meet a week ago with top state prison officials to discuss security measures to prevent violence.

Procunier said the discovery of a 9mm foreign-made automatic in the Afro-style hairdo of Jackson, one of the so-called Soledad Brothers, may have started the break prematurely Saturday.

JACKSON HAD just returned to the maximum security adjustment center after talking with attorney Stephen M. Bingham, when the gun was found during a routine "skin search," Procunier said.

After Jackson grabbed the pistol and "got the drop on the guard," he ordered several officers to the floor and made one guard release 25 other prisoners in the first floor cells, prison officials said.

They included John Clutchette, 28, and Fleeta Drumgo, 26, the two other Soledad Brothers awaiting trial with Jackson on charges of slaying a Soledad Prison guard.

There was also Ruchell Magee, 32, indicted along with black militant Angela Davis on charges of murder, kidnap and conspiracy in an Aug. 7, 1970 Marin County Civic Center shootout in which a judge, two convicts and Jackson's brother, Jonathan, 17, were slain.

PROCUNIER SAID he believes at least several prisoners may have planned to masquerade with clothes from slain guards, because two of the dead guards had been found stripped to their underwear. He said bullets in soap possessed by convicts and a partially completed gun fashioned from a water pipe were discovered later in a search of the 3,000-man prison on San Francisco Bay.

"I don't see any master conspiracy," Procunier added. "I think we hit the apex here at San Quentin."

Meanwhile, authorities were searching Oakland and Berkeley for Bingham, 29, who worked with the Berkeley Neighborhood Legal Service and more recently the Berkeley law firm of Franck, Hill, Stender, Ziegler & Hendon. The firm said it had not heard from Bingham since Friday. Bingham is a nephew of Rep. Jonathan B. Bingham, D-N.Y.

"WHEN HE surfaces, we want to talk to him," said Marin County Dist. Atty. Bruce Bales, who added that neither an arrest warrant nor an all-point bulletin has been issued for Bingham.

"The case has not been turned over to me yet," he said late yesterday. "We are looking for him to question him because I have been told he was the last and only person to visit George Jackson on Saturday. Obviously, he is a key witness."

Associate Warden James Park said guards searched Bingham, opened his briefcase but failed to check a small tape recorder. Park told reporters he believed "the gun was brought in a tape recorder."