

Inside San Quentin

By CONVICT "X"

SAN QUENTIN PRISON—Chaos descended on San Quentin Prison July 20 in the wake of the murder of correctional officer L. G. Davis. He was killed while guarding an inmate on the second floor of Neumiller Hospital, and died at 12:20 P.M.

Davis was the first officer to die at the hands of an inmate in this institution in six years. The murder occurred when four black inmates entered the hospital and attempted to get to a convict named Johnson, also black, and kill him in retaliation for his testifying against the so-called Soledad Brothers, or Seven, who had

been charged with the murder of a correction officer at Soledad prison earlier in the year.

Johnson, who was the victim of an assault on Saturday, July 17, was not injured in the attack that cost Davis his life. He is confined in protective custody in Neumiller Hospital under heavy guard.

In the wake of Davis' death, the "Goon Squad," or Security Squad of San Quentin, along with on- and off-duty officers, descended on the north and east blocks in a massive search for weapons.

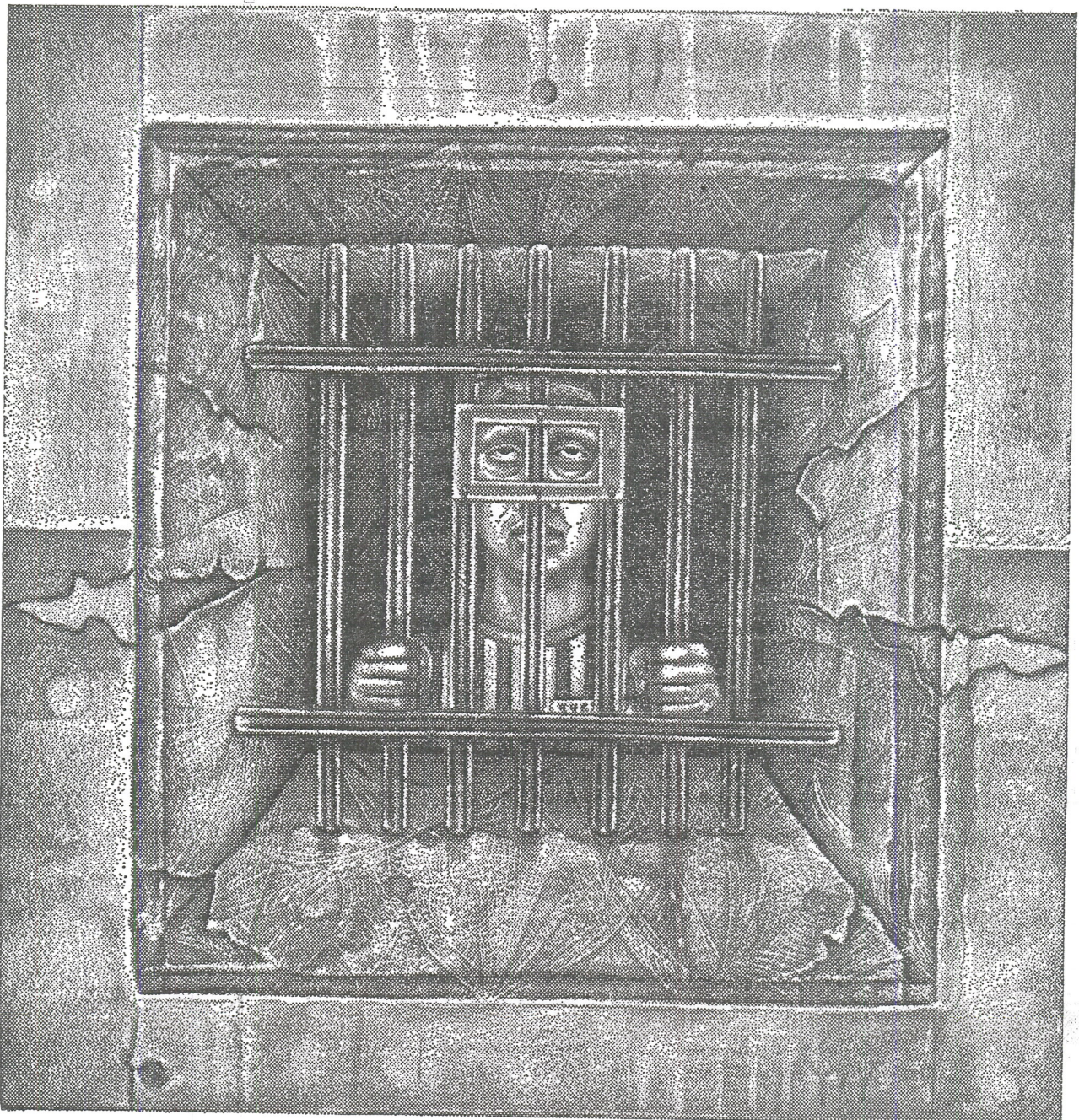
Cells were entered in both units, and an indiscriminate search conducted

while the inmates were either confined to the big upper yard or in the work areas.

The officers not only searched the cells of the units, but destroyed hobby work, personal mail, photo albums, photos, typewriters, and other articles of personal gear.

During the search two kittens belonging to inmates were found. One was flushed down a toilet in the east block, the other thrown from the fourth tier of the north block, resulting in its legs being broken.

The rampage was an apparent effort to retaliate for the death of Davis, although four black inmates were al-



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ready in custody suspected of his murder.

The men in the upper yard were threatened with gassing, but this threat was not carried out due to cooler heads. In fact, many older inmates and officers tried without success to contact J. W. L. Park, associate warden in charge of classification and treatment, and A. R. Jacobs, associate warden of custody, to keep the gas from being fired as they felt it would cause a full-scale riot. The men in the yard could plainly hear the destruction within the blocks. The screams of the cat had all in an ugly frame of mind.

At 1:37 P.M. a fight erupted between factions of the Muslims and the Black Panthers in the basement of the education building. Four black inmates were taken to "B" section of the south block, which is the segregation section of San Quentin.

Although the populations at both Soledad and San Quentin have been reduced over the last few months, the men sent to other institutions from San Quentin are medium and minimum prisoners.

The California Officers Association is now filing suit against Warden L. S. Nelson as the officers feel they are not being permitted to conduct their jobs in a safe and fair manner.

"It's Sacramento's fault," said one officer. "They dump all the scum from the other institutions in here, and then tie our hands. Most of the men just want to do their time, but the kids from CTF Central just don't give a damn."

The death of Davis was a blow to responsible inmates, black and white alike. Many inmates felt the death of Officer Davis more acutely than the officers. Inmates feel they must now pay for the actions of the troublemakers.

The destruction of property by the officers of San Quentin, plus the senseless killing of the animals in the north and east blocks, has caused feelings to run high.

Even old timers who have walked the yards of San Quentin for years feel that they are now forced to pay for a death that they not only deplore, but would have prevented if it had been possible.

They feel that if either they are not permitted to police themselves, or if the influx of hard-core troublemakers into this institution continues, more violence may well be expected in the future.

"Convict X" is the nom de plume of a San Quentin inmate who smuggled this account of prison tensions out a short time before the fatal outbreak which took the life of George Jackson and others.