

A statement by 26 San Quentin prisoners

George Jackson is dead

Courtroom in San Francisco, Tuesday morning, Aug. 2: John Cluechette and Fleeta Drumgo, the remaining two Soledad Brothers enter into a spectator-filled courtroom. A voice from the audience shouts: "What happened to George?" John Cluechette answered: "They murdered him . . . first they shot him in the back . . . then they came up to him and he wasn't dead, and they shot him in the head."

— reported by Dave Stevens, KPFK

Editor's note: All of the information concerning George Jackson's death in this week's issue of the Free Press was compiled by Karen Wald. Karen had originally completed a long article which, because of a lack of news from within San Quentin, was based largely on the commentary of various prison officials. As presstime came, however, a flood of information from those actually involved became available and the first story was killed in deference to the statement of Angela Davis, the statement of the 26 prisoners who were with George when he was killed and the courtroom proceedings on Tuesday morning.

Karen Wald told the Free Press

Tuesday that prison officials changed their story of what happened on August 21 almost a dozen times before settling on a tale so absurd that it can hardly be taken seriously. The final story says that Jackson was smuggled a gun in a tape recorder by attorney Stephen Bingham. This first point is ludicrous because of San Quentin's efficient and super-thorough security checks of all visitors. The gun itself (a nine-millimeter revolver) would fit into very few tape recorders. Those in which it would fit would undoubtedly be unoperative and therefore detectable by virtue of its spacial requirements.

The official line further states that George Jackson then concealed the gun in his hair, which is not only near-impossible just from an exposure standpoint but also because even if Jackson were able to conceal the gun he would never have had time to do it properly.

Warden Parks has also said that Jackson, in addition to making an escape attempt on his own, led the other prisoners as well. Nothing would seem further from reality. Jackson's trial was to begin in only two weeks and he undoubtedly wished to use that as a platform for laying open the gross injustices flourishing in San Quentin and the entire country without. George Jackson was also scheduled as a defense witness in Angela Davis' trial and it is inconceivable that he would have done anything to jeopardize her struggle.

Up until Tuesday there had been no word from anyone but San Quentin officials and their agents. The following statement, however, was made public Tuesday. It is the sworn affidavit of the 26 men who were involved in the shoot-em-up. The testimony was read to the press by George Jackson's counsel John Thorne.

"We the undersigned, each being held incommunicado because of suffering from both wounds and internal injuries inflicted on our persons by known and unknown agents of Warden Louis S. Nelson, state that Warden Louis S. Nelson and Associate Warden James W. L. Park, through their agents, did, on August 21, 1971, kill one George Jackson and conspire to murder the undersigned who refused to join the state official's conspiracy.

"That officers Doe 1, Doe 2, Doe 3 did open the cell gates and order the undersigned to come from their cells. Thereafter gunshots, or what appeared to be gunshots, went off and all went into the cell in back of the same building to avoid being shot. Thereafter prison guards armed with guns entered the cell block and ordered the undersigned to come out or be killed.

"The undersigned were ordered by the officers to take off all their clothes and walk from the cell one at a time. Each of the undersigned endured vicious physical beatings by prison guards with black jacks, clubs and guns. Each of the undersigned was handcuffed and made to lay naked on the ground from approximately 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

"At this time one inmate, Alan Mancino, who was hand and leg-chained on the ground, was begging the guards to loosen the handcuffs cutting him. He was told to 'keep his mouth shut' by the officer guard who shot part of his leg off with a rifle. There Mancino was made to lay, begging for a doctor for an hour before the guard would allow him to be moved.

"Thereafter the undersigned was made to lay on the ground while prison guards threatened to kill them and shot all around the undersigned.

"At approximately 10:00 p.m. the prison guards interrogated again.

"The undersigned were beaten in such a way that wounds and injuries still show on their bodies and they still suffer from the aforesaid beatings, and are being held incommunicado by Warden Louis Nelson.

"That while being held incommunicado the undersigned are being constantly threatened by prison guards and are living in an atmosphere of fear. That the undersigned are denied the right to have legal papers and seek permission to further offer affidavits and testimony at one hearing.

"That defendant Nelson (Nelson was named as a co-defendant with Park in this affidavit) is continuing his beastly acts.

"We declare under penalty of perjury the foregoing is true and correct."

The affidavit is signed by all 26.



Steve Shames Photon West/LNS

“I have a young, courageous brother whom I love more than I love myself. But I have given him up to the revolution. I accept the possibility of his eventual death as I accept the possibility of my own. Some moment of weakness, a flip, a mistake since we are the men who can make none, will bring the blow that kills. I accept this as a necessary part of our lives. I don't want to raise any more black slaves. We have a determined enemy who will accept us only on a master-slave basis. When I revolt, slavery dies with me. I refuse to pass it down again. The terms of my existence are founded on that.”

from Prison Letters
by George Jackson