

Hostages Saved in Break Try

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SAN JOSE—One prisoner was shot to death and two others wounded here today in an abortive attempt to escape from the Santa Clara County Jail.

The violent episode took place not more than 100 yards from the courthouse in which Angela Davis is on trial.

It bore spine-tingling similarities to the August, 1970, breakout attempt at Marin County Civic Center — the fatal encounter in which Miss Davis is accused.

And it caused cancellation of today's session of her trial. Formal proceedings began only yesterday.

Hostages Escape

Today, in contrast to the Marin escape and shootout, the hostages held by the prisoners escaped death or even serious injury.

They were rescued, slightly injured but in good shape, after one blast from a police officer's shotgun killed one



JACOB F. ZITZER
Slain break leader

of the captors and wounded two others.

Dead was a convicted murderer and robber from Los Angeles, Jacob Zitzer, 27, who escaped from San Quentin last Dec. 13 and was arrested as "Chuck Williamson" March 8 as a suspect in a Palo Alto robbery.

Confederate

One of his confederates was Norman Lucas, 22, also with an escape record. He was one of four prisoners who staked their lives on a crude rope hung from a window in the San Francisco County Jail Dec. 30, 1969. One fell and was killed, but Lucas and the others escaped.

The third in today's break attempt was identified as

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Ted Guerrero, a probation violator.

To demonstrate his desperation, Zitzer (alias Williamson) plunged a prison-made shiv into his own leg during the escape try to show deputies he would not hesitate to use the weapon on the hostages.

Their two hostages were Sue Kawamoto, 20, a medical secretary, and Deputy Public Defender Alexander Safonoff, 31. Each reportedly suffered some superficial cuts from the prisoners' knives.

The episode started shortly before 9 a.m. when the three prisoners reported sick at the prison dispensary.

Each Pulled Knives

Each pulled knives which appeared to be prison-made and had 12 inch blades.

They held Miss Kawamoto and Safonoff hostage for the next two harrowing hours in which the entire court-

driveway, who had orders to shoot to kill.

Another of the prisoners stepped forward and demanded Capt. Johnson's gun and handcuffs.

The intention: to take the captain along in the flight with the other two hostages.

Johnson refused.

The man stepped back a pace.

Shotgun Blast

One of the other officers in the room fired in that instant.

The one shotgun blast was heard outside the building.

The pellets' greatest force hit Williamson; the other two escaped with minor wounds.

Undersheriff Tom Rosa said Sgt. Robert Lees fired the shotgun blast that killed Zitzer.

Then the word came over the radios in the many patrol cars in the area:

"Code Four, everybody in custody."

Sheriff's Lt. Don Tamm reported over a public ad-

house-jail complex became an armed camp.

City policemen and sheriff's deputies armed with rifles and shotguns patrolled the roofs of the buildings in the complex.

Reporters and principals in the Davis trial clustered about to watch the action.

Ends in Basement

The greatest part of the drama, was played inside the jail building, and wound up in the basement as the prisoners prepared to flee in a car brought in at their demand.

The bloody conclusion came when Zitzer capped a two-hour negotiation session with Sheriff's Capt. Wesley Johnson by declaring:

"Either let us go or we kill our hostages."

Aware of Officers

It was obvious he was aware of the armed officers outside—including one sharpshooter stationed above the entrance to the basement

dress system to the crowd of reporters outside the building:

"It's over with, all suspects are in custody. The hostages are all right."

Flurry Outside

Just before the shotgun blast, there was a flurry outside the driveway entrance.

Apparently the officers in the area were given a signal that a break was imminent.

They scattered behind walls, seeking protection in case the commandeered car emerged.

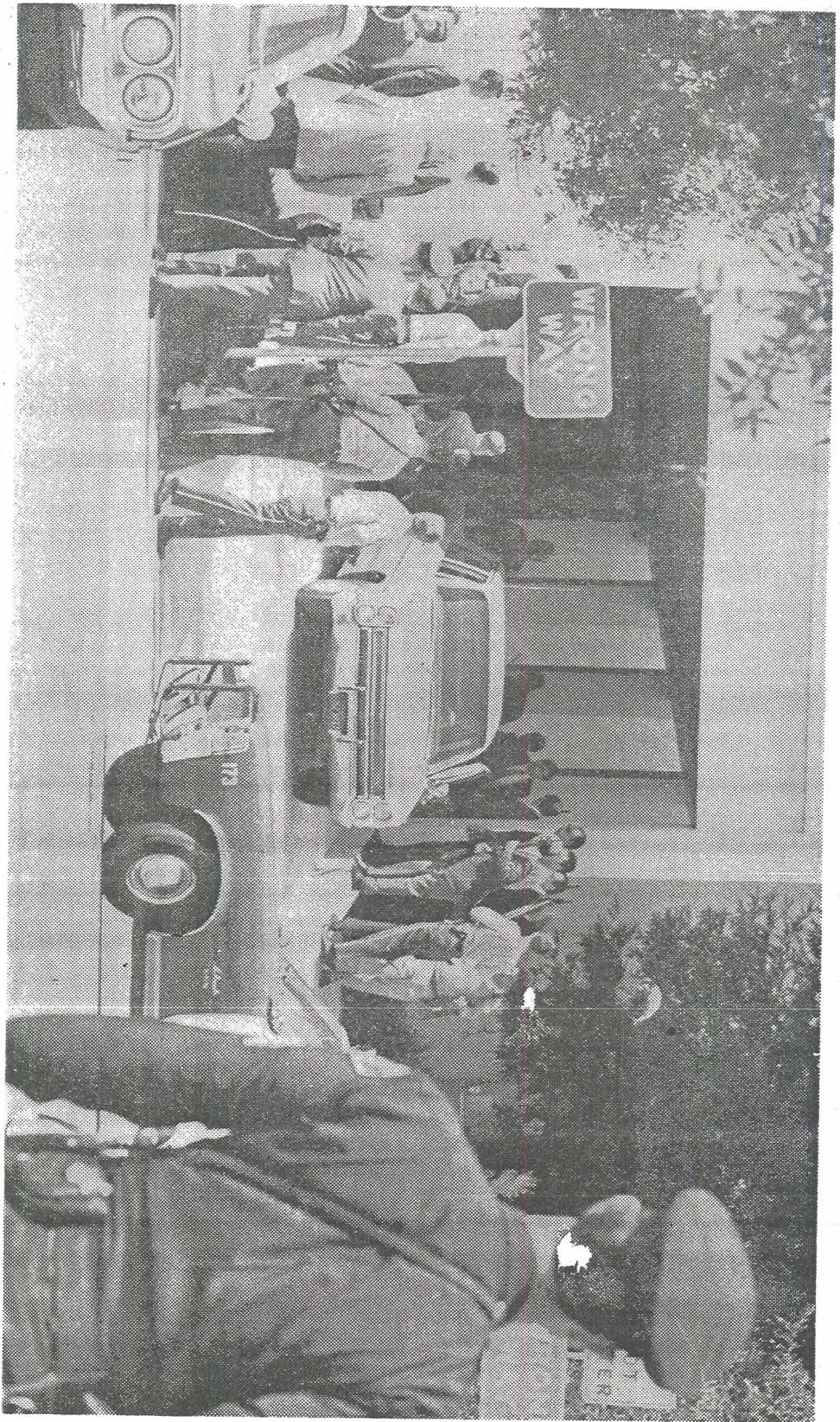
A man with a rifle, poised just above the driveway entrance, brought his weapon to his shoulder.

Rosa said later:

"We had no intention of letting them go with the hostages."

"If the sharpshooter (atop the garage entrance) had had an opportunity to kill them, he would have."

Today's break was not believed to have had any



Armed officers watch intently as car demanded for getaway rolls out of San Jose jail today during abortive escape
—Examiner photo by Seymour Snaer

connection with the Angela Davis case. Rather, it was viewed as another in a series of disturbances involving jail prisoners lately.

However, the denouement was shockingly similar to that of the Marin Civic Center breakout, in which the convict - perpetrators did manage to herd their hostages to a car and were driving away with them when the fatal gun battle broke out.