

## News Analysis

# Motive Still a Mystery In Carr Assassination

By Ed Montgomery

The search for the motive in the assassination of James E. Carr is focused on the black militant's tangled alliances in several camps of the revolutionary movement, both black and white.

Carr, himself a suspected assassin, was ambushed and shot to death early Thursday as he left the San Jose home of his mother-in-law, Mrs. Joan Hammer, who has been active in numerous radical causes.

Two men associated with the Black Panthers in Los Angeles were arrested moments later as they sped through Morgan Hill. They have been booked for Carr's execution.

Authorities believe Carr's murder was a "hit" job, ordered by someone high within the ranks of the militants.

## Motive Unknown

Why, they don't know. His own attorney, Richard Hodge, said many persons had reason to want to kill Carr.

His friendship with Panther Huey Newton might have made him an enemy of the followers of exiled Eldridge Cleaver.

Then there were the frequently circulated reports that Carr had been skimming money from the Angela Davis defense

fund and that of the Soledad Brothers. No substantiation for these reports has surfaced.

Carr's source of income was a matter of speculation. While he was in San Francisco county jail for several months last year, the payments on his new Toyota jeep continued without interruption.

Some indiration of Carr's wide-ranging activities may be seen in two letters.

## Escape Plot

One, its contents disclosed for the first time, involved an elaborate San Quentin escape plot outlined by the late Soledad Brother George Jackson some five months prior to the August 21 break attempt that claimed six

lives, including Jackson's.

Carr had spent most of his adult life in various prisons. He was a cellmate of Jackson in San Quentin.

Later, at San Luis Obispo Men's Colony East, Carr served as the unofficial "campus bodyguard" of Panther leader Huey Newton.

Upon parole from San Luis Obispo, Carr took a job under Prof. Herman Blake within the black studies program at UC Santa Cruz as a tutoring

assistant at \$3.75 an hour. He also took courses.

While there he became acquainted with Betsy Hammer, daughter of Joan Hammer. Betsy is the mother of Carr's infant daughter.

## In Pocket

Betsy Hammer took two pair of Carr's trousers to a cleaner in Santa Cruz. The cleaner, in a pocket of one pair of pants, found a letter in an envelope of a well-known radical attorney.

This letter was turned over to authorities, photostated, and replaced.

This letter, which had been smuggled in and out of San Quentin, read, not verbatim but in effect:

"Never fear, I'm prepared to deal with our problems. I have gained the implements of struggle — the knowledge of technical devices.

"As available material we have six pounds of C-4 (the most devastating plastic explosive known), five high-powered rifles, adequate handguns and reloading equipment."

The letter then related that Carr and others were going "to the hills" regularly to train in the use of weapons.

The letter stated the

importance of acquiring property in the high Sierra as a permanent training ground for militants.

In summarizing, the letter stated, in essence, "We are prepared to do anything that can be done."

The reply, identified as Jackson's handwriting, was on the back of the original letter.

The reply spelled out what Jackson needed to effect a prison break.

He asked for 10 plastic test tubes containing plastic explosive to be smuggled into the prison in the vaginas of women visitors, which he, in turn, would insert in his rectum pending return to his cell.

He also asked for two .22 caliber Derringer pistols, and drew a diagram of how the small weapons were to be concealed in the hollowed-out, wooden heels of women visitors. He said the shoes should have metal buckles or metal straps, to explain away any tripping of the prison metal detector to which all visitors are subjected.

The missive gave precise instructions for driving a metal spike into the ground on the hill overlooking San Quentin, to which was to be attached a loose-link metal chain.

The chain was to be thrown over the high wire bringing electricity into the prison, causing a short which, presumably, would throw the prison into darkness.

### Jeep on Standby

A jeep with four-wheel drive was to be standing by outside the prison walls. A mountainous escape route which would frustrate pursuit was to be selected in advance.

The reply closed with a salute to a prominent black militant "and all

the rest."

The second letter, intercepted March 27 of last year at the Denver jail, had been intended for Panther Rory Hithe, being held there along with Panther Landon Williams in connection with a Panther murder case in New Haven, Conn.

This letter, brought in by a visitor to Hithe, read:

"Rory — We got some information from ELD that Van Jolly, John

Seale and Redwine killed Fred Bennette (Panther captain Fred Bennett). They shot him and burned him so that he can't be identified."

Police said they were satisfied the references were to Van Tylor,

Thomas Overton Jolly, Viron Redwine (one-time bodyguard to Huey Newton) and John Seale, brother to Bobby Seale, all Panther functionaries.

### Death Trip

According to an informant's sworn testimony, Bennett, who often served as a substitute speaker for Bobby Seale, was enticed to accompany four Panthers from Oakland to San Jose.

From San Jose Bennett assertedly was driven in a jeep by Carr to a remote cabin in the Santa Cruz Mountains which and served as a bomb factory for militants.

There, according to the sworn statement, Carr shot Bennett twice in the head, burned his body with high-octane gasoline and pulverized his bones with a shovel.

But he overlooked three keys and a belt buckle, which, together with skull reconstructed fragments reflecting a previous head wound, led to Bennett's positive identification. Carr assertedly was paid \$200 and given the death weapon. He was never charged in this case, however.

Asserted witness to the slaying was James Edward Johnson, 29, former Stanford University student and an acknowledged explosives and electronics expert, now believed hiding in Canada.

In a recent exclusive telephone interview with The Examiner, Johnson's mother from New York said, "My son doesn't dare return to California. His life would be in jeopardy."

According to authorities, Carr's sister, Gwendolyn, is married to Louis Tackwood, who recently disclosed himself to have been a black undercover agent for police.