

1941-1971

George Jackson

George Jackson was an African-American who co-founded the The Black Guerrilla Family, a Marxist revolutionary organization. His life story is a reminder of how the human spirit takes its stand even while being physically locked down. A revolutionist in the making, Jackson made efforts to eradicate racism and provide safety and dignity to prison inmates. He was imprisoned after he was found guilty of robbing at a gas station at gun point. He spent much of his time in prison reading voraciously and studying political economy and radical theory. He would also spend time writing his thoughts. He also wrote to many of his friends and supporters from prison. These writings were later made into the well-known books *Soledad Brother* and *Blood in My Eye*. He widely condemned racism and was critical of the prison system, which took the lives of his close friends. The letters that he wrote from prison were a reflection of the rebellious spirit and the rage at the system that filled the minds of African-American men at the time. At the age of 29 he was shot and killed in prison in what is believed to have been an escape attempt.



Childhood and Early Life

- George Lester Jackson was born in Chicago, Illinois on September 23, 1941 to Lester and Georgia Bea Jackson. He had four siblings.
- Since there were several juvenile convictions against him, including assault, burglary and armed robbery, he spent time in the California Youth Authority corrections facility in Paso Robles.
- In 1961, he was sentenced to prison for a year for armed robbery. At the age of eighteen, he had robbed a gas station at gun point.
- At the San Quentin State Prison, he became a part of a revolutionary group and assaulted prison guards and inmates. His imprisonment was extended for this reason.

Later Life

- In 1966, while still in prison, he became acquainted with W.L. Nolen, who introduced him to Marxist and Maoist ideology. The duo soon formed a close friendship.
- In 1966, along with Nolen, he co-founded the African-American Marxist revolutionary organization The Black Guerrilla Family.
- After he became involved in The Black Guerrilla Family, he became more disciplined as a person and spent much of his time studying political economy and radical theory.

- Spending more and more time in solitary confinement, he began to read voraciously. He also wrote many letters to his friends and supporters. These were later published as books, *Soledad Brother* and *Blood in My Eye*.
- It is believed that after he met Huey Percy Newton in jail, he became a part of the Black Panther Party. Newton was the co-founder of the Black Panther Party, a black revolutionary socialist organization.
- In 1969, along with W.L. Nolen, he was shifted from San Quentin to Soledad prison in Monterey County, California. The following year, W.L. Nolen was killed by a prison guard, along with two other inmates, after they rioted with members of the Aryan Brotherhood, a white supremacist organization.
- After the death of his friend Nolen, Jackson became focused on the need for safety precautions for other prisoners. He also became confrontational.
- On January, 16, 1970, along with Fleeta Drumgo and John Clutchette, he was charged with the murder of a prison guard named, John V. Mills. Mills was beaten and thrown from the third floor.
- On August 21, 1971, he was shot to death by prison guards in San Quentin Prison, three days before the commencement of his murder trial. Prison officials described it as an escape attempt.

Personal Life and Legacy

- On August 28, 1971, George's funeral was held at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in Oakland, California.
- In November 1971, singer Bob Dylan dedicated the song, 'George Jackson' in his honor.
- In 1972, saxophonist Archie Shepp dedicated parts of his album *Attica Blues* to George.
- In 2003, American rapper Ja Rule named his album *Blood In My Eye* after Jackson's book of the same title.
- In 1998, Stanley Williams dedicated his book *Life in Prison* to George.
- The 2007 film *Black August*, directed by Samm Styles, was based on George's life. The film covered his last fourteen months.

Source

George Jackson Biography, Thefamouspeople.com