Jailed Nun Charges U.S. Taps Phones Of Catholic Order

By Betty Medsger
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A nun cited for civil contempt of court and jailed yesterday in Harrisburg charged that the U.S. government tapped the telephones of her Roman Catholic religious order, the Sacred Heart of Mary, throughout the United States and at its headquarters in Rome.

Sister Jogues Eagan, 52, cited the phone tapping as one of six reasons for her refusal to testify before a grand jury investigating an alleged conspiracy to kidnap presidential adviser Henry Kissinger and bomb tunnels under federal buildings in Washington.

Asked about the alleged tapping, a Justice Department spokesman said, "No comment."

Sister Jogues will remain in York County Jail "until she purges herself," said FBI sources.

Bail was denied, as it frequently is in civil contempt charges. Persons so charged usually remain in jail the life of the grand jury session. The jury could sit up to 18 months.

One of the seven alleged coconspirators who have been named, but not charged, in the bomb-kidnap indictment, Sister Jogues refused to testify earlier this month before the same grand jury, which earlier indicted the Rev. Philip Berrigan and five others.

She was granted immunity from prosecution and ordered to testify before the grand jury yesterday.

In a written statement given to reporters, Sister Jogues said she refused because the immunity law is unconstitutional, fails to protect her against future prosecution and would permit the grand jury to use her testimony against her in future cases.

Sister Jogues lives at one of the order's residences in New York City. She did not say what made her believe phones had been tapped.

She appeared before the grand jury for an hour Jan. 15, and it is possible telephone calls were mentioned in the questioning. Five telephone calls are cited as "overt acts" in the indictment.

"The evidence on the basis of which I have been named as an unindicted coconspirator, subpoenaed to testify and asked questions," Sister Jogues said in her statement, "was secured by illegal wiretaps."

The government is attempting to seek immunity for three of the four remaining prospective grand jury witnesses—Mrs. Zoia Horn, 52, and Pat Rom, 27, both Bucknell University librarians, and Joseph M. Joynt, 9804 McMillan Ave., Silver Spring.

Joynt, a General Services Administration employee, is expected to testify today after being granted immunity. His sister, Mrs. Patricia J. Chanel, 1502 Live Oak Dr., Silver Spring, is the fourth prospective witness.

Mrs. Chanel was active in the Catholic peace movement and has known several of the persons indicted in the case. Her brother works as an elevator engineer at the Forrestal Building here.

At a press conference yesterday in St. Francis and Xavier Roman Catholic Church in East Baltimore, the two priests and former priest from Baltimore who were indicted as conspirators charged that they had been "framed by the government through the FBI and the Justice Department."

Anthony Scoblick, 30, a Josephite priest who married last summer, said he thought the Catholic activists were accused instead of an admittedly violent segment of the peace movement because "I really think the nonviolent movement is extremely effective."

One of the priests, the Rev. Neil McLaughlin, said lawyer William Kunstler is not retained by any of the defendants "and most likely will not be." Kunstler visited the Berrigan brothers in prison after the indictments were announced.

The Baltimore men are free on bail in the custody of Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, archbishop of Baltimore. Two other defendants, Sister Elizabeth McAlister of South Orange, N.J., and Eqbal Ahmad, 40, a Pakistani graduate student, also are free.

The other defendant, Berrigan, whom J. Edgar Hoover maintains masterminded the alleged conspiracy from his cell at Lewisburg Federal Prison, is now serving a prison term in Danbury, Conn., for destroying draft records in Catonsville. His brother, the Rev. Daniel Berrigan, an alleged coconspirator in the case, is also at Danbury.

United Press International

The Rev. Neil McLaughlin, the Rev. Joseph Wenderoth, and Anthony Scoblick, from left, defendants in alleged conspiracy to kidnap presidential adviser Henry Kissinger, talk to reporters at a church in Baltimore.