

COP'S 100 DAYS IN THE KLAN!

Tear-Gas Attack Plot On A Loop Theater Revealed

By Hugh Hough

The leader of the Ku Klux Klan cell in the Chicago Police Department planned a tear-gas attack on a Loop theater where a Sidney Poitier movie was playing, it was disclosed Saturday.

McCann James Tobin, the Negro-white undercover man who exposed Klansmen in blue, told of tear-gas plot and other aspects of the Klan operation in an interview.

Tobin said police Klan leader Jerald Heath last October showed me two tear-gas bombs and told me I was to go to movie and set them off."

Reason: Klan leaders in South were incensed Negro actor Poitier kisses white woman in the movie "Who's Coming to Dinner?"

Damning Called Off by Tobin, Heath said off the tear-gas plot he was informed that a rent Poitier movie, "To With Love," was playing in Loop and that the film

the first time many of the details of his 100 days as a Klan infiltrator.

Talks Of Informers Just once, said Tobin, did he consider himself in physical danger of Klan reprisal.

"One night last fall I thought I was exposed," Tobin said. "Heath started talking about informers and what happens to them."

"He said they are taken care of by the 'Black Robes'—a select group of black-robed 'hit' men from the South.

"But it turned out that Heath didn't suspect me, after all. I guess he was just trying to impress me with the Klan's security system."

Becomes Eye-Witness

Tobin, who is Irish and a practicing Roman Catholic, went on to become Grand Cyclops, or president of the police Klan unit, or Klavenn.

When he was assigned to investigate the Klan last September, said Tobin, all he knew about the national Klan organization was that the objects of its hate included Negroes, Jews and Roman Catholics.

"John Mutchmore, the head of the police task force (and now deputy superintendent), called me and asked me to check into unverified reports of Klan activity in the department," said Tobin.

"I worked with Heath in the Fillmore District, so there was no trouble in getting assigned with him to a two-man car."

Increases Hate Talk

Tobin said that for the first few days they rode together, Heath limited his hate talks to occasional slurs against Negroes, Jews, Greeks and Italians.

"Then, one day he asked me about my religion, and I told him that I used to be a Catholic, but that my wife and I had switched to the Protestant religion," Tobin recalled.

"He liked that."

Heath immediately launched into a tirade against prominent Catholics—John Cardinal Cody, Mayor Daley, and the Rev. James Groppi, the civil rights

activist from Milwaukee, Tobin said.

Tobin agreed with Heath that such individuals were "a threat to the white race."

Arm-Aching Rites

Within a few days, Heath identified himself as the leader of the Klan in Illinois and swore Tobin into the Klan in a 90-minute ceremony that left Tobin with aching arms because he had to raise them so often for oath-taking.

With the ceremony went a warning from Heath that "in 102 years, the Invisible Empire has never been successfully infiltrated from within."

Tobin, who has been termed a "real fixer" by Imperial Wizard Heath since exposure of

Undercover Policeman Tells Of 100 Days In The Klan

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The Klan's capers, disclosed that failure of the police Klansmen's white robes to arrive on time prevented Chicago's strangest Halloween party of 1967 from coming off in style.

"We wore to wear our robes for the first time at the Halloween night meeting," Tobin recalls.

Given Hate Letters

But even without the robes, the Klan business went on. Tobin says Heath gave him 200 copies of a Klan hate letter at the meeting. They were designed to stir up anti-Negro sentiment and were to be mailed to residents of Cicero, Berwyn and fringe areas of

racial change, Tobin recalls. But Heath supplied no stamps, and instead of using Police Department expense money to mail the letters, Tobin later burned them.

Tobin reached his zenith in Klan ceremonial matters in December when Heath allowed him to swear in a non-police recruit as a new Klan member.

"The recruit was a real kook—a typical Klansman," Tobin recalls. "He had been with the local Nazi Party until it crumbled. He had wanted to join the Minutemen (a militant right-wing group), but they wouldn't have him."

Grilled By Heath

"Heath really grilled him before I swore him in. He asked the guy if he would 'do anything for the Klan?' and the recruit said he would."

"Would you kill Groppi?" Heath asked him.

"I'd have to think about that," the recruit answered. "Later," said Tobin, Heath laughed off the Kill-Groppi question, saying that the murder of the priest would "just make him a martyr."

Didn't Tell Wife

In his testimony before the Police Board, Tobin said Heath once advanced a plan for killing Mayor Daley with a bazooka. Heath was serious

about that, Tobin maintains.

"Tobin, who has won four departmental commendations and 10 credible mentions during his 11 years on the force, didn't tell his wife, Janet, about his Klan undercover work until a few days before Heath's home was raided in December.

How did she take the news? "She understood," said Tobin. "She knows a policeman can catch some strange assignments."

The Tobins, who were high school sweethearts on the West Side, have three sons.

Tobin says he is proud that the Klan was never able to recruit more than six of the Chicago Police Department's more than 10,000 members. (Three of the police Klan recruits quit the force and therefore were not involved in the Police Board trial.)

Views On Prejudice

Asked about his personal view of prejudice and police work, Tobin replied:

"If you have any prejudice, you leave it on your doorstep when you go to work in the morning. I don't think you can be a good policeman if you are racially prejudiced."

"A policeman has to deal with facts. You aren't a good policeman if you let prejudice color the facts."

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