

hundreds of wild schemes to break into buildings and destroy federal property, ninety-nine percent of which never got beyond the discussion stage. But as these discussions were usually overheard by the FBI or reported on later by an informant, we were aware of most plans that came up, whether or not they were eventually rejected. The Berrigans and their followers had no desire to hurt anyone, they just wanted to call attention to their cause. Their most grandiose scheme was a bombing-kidnapping plot; the kidnapping of Henry Kissinger and the destruction of a tunnel area under the Capitol Building. My division was right on top of the case and I was waiting for the Berrigans to move so that we could have an air-tight case against them, but Hoover was immediately aware of the shock value and headline potential. He decided to make the Berrigans and their radical plots the centerpiece of his annual speech before the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Tolson called me a day or two before Hoover's Senate appearance to ask for anything I had on the Berrigans. "We can't publicize that," I told Tolson. "If we do, they won't take any action and we'll never get them. Besides, if Hoover tells the world about our surveillance, I don't think we'll even have a case against them, and they could have a case against us."

"What's the use," asked Tolson, "of having this information in our files if the director can't use it?" One of my own informants in the bureau told me that Tolson decided to go around me and get someone else to prepare a document of the Berrigans which Hoover could use. It was like telling the press in a small town where a bank robber lives and when he's going to do it. I was so alarmed that I sent Hoover a very sharply worded memo advising him not to testify on the Berrigans. To protect himself, Hoover did ask that the Senate go into executive session so that what he was about to divulge would be kept confidential. But one of the senators included in the executive group was Byrd of Virginia, a charter member of Hoover's senatorial stable. Byrd was Hoover's man, one of the few senators to be honored with an invitation to listen to Martin Luther King's motel room tapes. It was understood that Hoover would speak to the Senate off the record, that Byrd, with Hoover's connivance, would leak the information to the press, and that Hoover could say with authority, "I spoke off the

record." After all, a story about a group of radicals—probably Communist radicals to boot—blowing up Washington and kidnapping Henry Kissinger was too good to waste on senators.

Hoover's testimony backfired, as I warned him it would. Though Hoover had been a master of public relations, he was allowing personal prejudices to cloud his judgment. He had publicly implicated the Berrigans in a plot before any charges had been filed against them. The press throughout the nation pointed that out and Congressman William Anderson led an attack against Hoover in the House, while Senator George McGovern called for a congressional investigation of the FBI. Hoover and Tolson looked around for somebody to blame and called me into the office. "You should have warned me," Hoover said. "If you had warned me," he scolded. "I wouldn't have mentioned this information." He got red in the face as all the while Tolson was sitting behind him nodding his approval of Hoover's admonishment.

I got out a copy I'd saved of the memo I'd sent to Hoover advising him not to testify and put it on his desk. Hoover read it, looked up at me, and glared. "Why didn't you tear up that memo?" he asked.

"I thought I might need it for protection," I answered. A hush fell over our little group.

"You know you don't need that kind of protection in the bureau," he replied, smiling. It was like watching Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. If I hadn't saved a copy of that memo, he would have fired me then and there.

The late 1960s could be a dangerous time. A young professor got killed in his lab when angry students blew up the building he had been working in, and a young girl in Southern California lost an eye and one arm when a mailbox blew up as she was mailing a letter to her parents. The most famous explosion took place on West Eleventh Street in New York City. A group of Weathermen had been using an expensive Greenwich Village town house (Dustin Hoffman lived next door) as a bomb factory. The house was owned by Joe Wilkerson, a broadcast executive, and while he and his wife were out of town, their daughter Kathy invited her Weathermen cohorts to take advantage of their absence to use her home as their temporary headquarters. Kathy survived the explosion, but two of her friends did not. When

*Not with the story*