

Court Told Partner Copied Booklet on Explosive Units

1/30/75
By Laura A. Kiernan
Washington Post Staff Writer

Michael J. Morrissey testified in Arlington Circuit Court yesterday that last May he prepared a catalogue of devices like telephone receivers and cigarette boxes designed to carry explosives and told the court his former business partner, Barbara Fox Spindel, photocopied the booklet for him in the government office where she works.

He testified that during the preparation of the catalogue "she (Mrs. Spindel) and her boyfriend saw and handled the equipment," which the catalogue described as everyday items like flashlights that could be exploded with assorted trigger mechanisms, also available through the catalogue.

Before yesterday's hearing, and in a telephone conversation late yesterday, Mrs. Spindel denied any knowledge of the catalogue or of the equipment.

Although one armaments maker previously had described the equipment as assassination devices, a spokesman for the Treasury Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms said yesterday that the items in Morrissey's catalogue are not destructive devices as defined by Title II of the 1968 Gun Control Act.

Agents for the Falls Church office recently examined the devices and a spokes-

man there indicated that they were not destructive simply because they did not contain the actual explosives.

According to the catalogue the devices were complete except for "the explosive charge, which is added by the user."

The devices were intended for sale to U.S. government agencies for use outside the country, according to the catalogue. The bureau began its investigation last Thursday, according to the spokesman, after newspaper accounts revealed the existence of the catalogue and reported that the devices had been demonstrated for two officials of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Yesterday's court preceeding in Arlington stemmed from a request by Mrs. Spindel that Morrissey be permanently enjoined from doing business under the trade name B. R. Fox Co., Inc., an electronics firm he and Mrs. Spindel once operated from a white brick laboratory in the backyard of her Fairfax County home.

After hearing Morrissey testify that he had done no business for B. R. Fox Company since November, Circuit Court Judge Paul D. Brown declined to order a permanent injunction and instead continued indefinitely a temporary one he signed last week.

See EXPLOSIVES, D4, Col. 1

Court Told That Partner Copied Book

EXPLOSIVES, From D1

Morrissey, an electronics engineer and recent law school graduate, testified yesterday that mainly through his own efforts, B. R. Fox did "\$67,000 worth of business in 1974." He did not elaborate on the business or his clientele and refused to do so for a reporter after the hearing.

Morrissey denied Mrs Spindel's charge in the complaint that the catalogue of devices, which she described as of questionable legality, had been widely disseminated.

There were only three copies of the catalogue Morrissey said. He said he has one copy and testified he made available another copy to "Mr. Conein," an apparent reference to Lucien Conein, one of the DEA officials who witnessed the demonstration of the devices, and one copy to Mitchell WerBell III, a Georgia armaments dealer.

Morrissey, who said he is vice president and treasurer of B. R. Fox, and Mrs. Spindel, who is the president, have been involved in an ownership dispute over the business since November. According to Morrissey's testimony. Under the terms of the temporary injunction, Morrissey is ordered not to distribute the catalogue or conduct any business transactions for the company without Mrs. Spindel's written permission.