

Underground 'Exciting' to Gold

By MICHAEL T. KAUFMAN

Two weeks before his body was found in the rubble of a dynamite-blasted townhouse on West 11th Street, Theodore Gold, a 23-year-old Weatherman revolutionary, told an old college friend:

"I've been doing a lot of exciting underground things, and I know now I'm not afraid to die."

The friend had known Mr. Gold for years. He had seen him become vice chairman of the Columbia chapter of Students for a Democratic Society in 1967 and a year later he saw the intense sociology major take a leadership role in the strike that immobilized the Morning-side campus.

After their class was graduated in June of 1968, the friend saw Mr. Gold only intermittently. He learned that his classmate was teaching at a school for disabled children and that he was organizing a group called Teachers for a Democratic Society.

He knew that Mr. Gold was in close contact with Mark Rudd and perhaps a dozen others who had evolved revolutionary roles in the turbulence of that Columbia spring.

But then three weeks ago, the friend, who asked that his name not be used, was sitting in a snack bar at Columbia when Mr. Gold approached and talked freely about his life as a Weatherman.

Headed Chicago Commune

He said he was the head of a Chicago commune and that the group was no in the process of breaking out of their large collectives in which 30 or 40 persons lived together and that for security reasons they were banding together in fours and fives.

He remembers Mr. Gold saying "the communes were an effective experience, they robbed us of such bourgeois hang-ups like privacy and monogamy." At one point in the conversation, the friend remarked on how happy and content Mr. Gold appeared. The Weatherman smiled and responded: "We don't think in terms of being happy. We think in terms of being strong people."

Mr. Gold asked his friend if he knew of any apartments that could be used for Weatherman meetings in New York and he asked if his classmate could land him any money to help him get to Chicago. The friend said all he could spare at the moment was a dollar.

At the time, Mr. Gold was presumably living in the \$275,000 Wilkerson home at 18 West 11th Street. His classmate asked him how he survived and how the Weatherman supported themselves. "We steal," was the response.

The conversation also touched

I Know Now I'm Not Afraid to Die,' He Told a Friend

on Mr. Gold's longstanding mania for sports. At Columbia he used to revere the baseball Giants and would read box scores every morning. Did he still do that, the friend asked. Mr. Gold laughed and answered: "Sometimes I think I'll have to wait for Willie Mays to retire before I become a good Communist."

The conversation sketched out what Mr. Gold had been doing in the years after the Columbia trouble. Conversations with others who knew him provided a bit more information.

A group of younger Columbia radicals tried a few days after his death to lower the campus flag to half staff. Before they were dispersed by campus guards they succeeded in writing a crayon inscription on the base of the flagpole. It said: "In Memory of Ted Gold. Fight like him."

Some of those who took part in that action said that Mr. Gold had been at the Wilkerson House writing a history of the S.D.S. with Cathlyn P. Wilkerson. They understood that a number of publishers were interested in the work as a textbook covering the group from its birth with the Port Huron Statement to last summer's Weatherman Manifesto.

The only other literary effort of Mr. Gold's that they knew about was a series of lyrics set to popular songs and issued sometime back as the Weatherman Songbook. There was one called, "I'm Dreaming of a White Riot," and another to a rock time that began, "We need a red party so that we can learn to struggle."

Puzzled by Explosion

The three young people who talked of Mr. Gold were all members of a now defunct radical group called the Mad Dogs, which had some tactical differences with the Weatherman faction.

"We had our differences with Ted," said one young girl, "but we loved him and we knew he was dedicated to the struggle."

What puzzled the three people was how there had come to be an explosion. They insisted that Mr. Gold was an important enough Weatherman to assume that he was being watched and that it is a dictum of the movement that "you keep your underground and overground work separate."

One of the youths offered the conjecture that the dynamite had been planted in the building by provocateurs.

From other sources, who

again asked not to be identified, it was learned that in late August or early September Mr. Gold traveled to some foreign country for a meeting with representatives of the National Liberation Front. On that trip he was reportedly accompanied by Kathy Boudin, 26 years old, who is believed to have been in the house when the explosion occurred and is thought to have escaped with Miss Wilkerson.

Robert Siegel is now a student at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. He had known Mr. Gold since both of them were juniors at Stuyvesant High School. They met in a group called Friends of the Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee, which Mr. Gold had helped to organize. On weekends, back in 1968, they would go off to solicit food for shipment to black communities in Mississippi.

Called Hard Worker

Mr. Siegel, who accompanied Mr. Gold to Columbia, regarded his friend as a hard working student. In his first years at college he talked of going to law school. "He was serious and committed," Mr. Siegel said. "He had a leftist orientation but it was then within the framework of acceptable student activism."

During his summers of his sophomore and junior years Mr. Gold worked as a counselor for groups slum children taking part in Project Double Discovery, a live-in tutorial program on the Columbia campus.

His superior in the program, Roger Lahecka, now an assistant dean at the college, remembers Mr. Gold as one of the most dedicated counselors in the program. "He was tough on the kids but they respected him for it."

Mr. Siegel says that Mr. Gold was something of a "frustrated jock." He was a good schoolyard ballplayer and had been a miler on his high school team, but quit when he learned that the Ethiopian marathon champion averaged a better time for a mile in running 26 of them than he did just running one.

In his first two years on campus, Mr. Siegel recalled, Mr. Gold had been active in Columbia Congress of Racial Equality, which was the precursor of the S.D.S. Chapter. A year after the chapter was formed he was chosen its vice chairman, while his roommate, Ted Kapchuk, was chosen chairman. Two weeks after that the group held what was the largest demonstration up to that time to protest marine recruiting.

The following year the leadership passed to Mr. Rudd, whose style was more dynamic and angry. Mr. Gold was characterized by those who knew him as a forceful speaker, but far less emotional than was Mr. Rudd.

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