

Post #18167

CIA Letter Phony, Tofte Lawyer Says

A lawyer for ousted CIA agent Hans V. Tofte charged yesterday that the super-secret organization "created" a phony letter by its director, Richard Helms, to Tofte to help beat a civil suit by Tofte against the agency chief.

Attorney Byron N. Scott told Judge William B. Jones in a Federal court hearing that Helms' lawyers gave him a "created letter" when he asked them to return one which Tofte says CIA employes stole from his Georgetown home last summer.

The letter is the subject of a \$25,000 damage suit brought by Tofte in U.S. District Court here. Tofte claims CIA employes entered his home at 1667 35th st. nw., posing as potential home buyers, and snatched some CIA documents as well as Tofte's personal file containing the letter he wants back.

Said "Raid" Was Planned

He said Helms and other

high-ranking CIA officials planned the "raid" at his home on the pretext of recovering the confidential agency documents he had taken from the main CIA office in Langley to study at home, contrary to agency regulations. Shortly after Tofte's public accusations, the CIA terminated Tofte's employment contract.

The letter in question, according to Tofte, is a warm personal note from Helms, written in mid-1955, urging Tofte to become a career employe of the agency.

Helms' lawyers insist that "no such letter ever existed" and have produced another one dated about the same time which they say may be the one in question. This second missive does not contain the warm personal language of the stolen one, Scott contended yesterday, and "I think it is a created letter."

Letter Called Vital

He told Judge Jones he needs the stolen letter to help Tofte recover his job with CIA.

Jones also transferred the entire Tofte-Helms case to General Sessions Court, noting that he does not feel that the claim is worth the \$25,000 Tofte is seeking. General Sessions litigation is limited to \$10,000, although juries in transferred cases are instructed that they can consider awards beyond \$10,000 if the original claims exceed that amount.