

Ex-Chicago Cop Tied To Klan Probed In Plot On Justices



DONALD HEATH

By Art Pejacque
Former Chicago policeman Donald Heath is one of five persons under investigation in connection with an alleged plot to assassinate the nine justices of the U.S. Supreme Court, it was learned Thursday.

Heath reportedly has returned to Chicago. After being fired from the force, he spent some time in Stone Mountain, Ga., headquarters of the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and later moved to Akron, Ohio.

He was arrested and fined in Akron last August after police found these items in his auto: a .22-caliber pistol, 75 rounds of ammunition, a loaded policeman's nightstick, five gallons of gasoline, rags, string, pipe casings and a small Klan sign suitable for mounting atop an auto by suction cups.

Reported Enlisted
After Heath was discharged as a policeman, the Klan elevated him from the post of Illinois leader to Midwest imperial dragon.

However, a woman aide of James R. Venable, an Atlanta lawyer and imperial wizard of the National Knights of the KKK, said Thursday that Heath was banished from the Klan in September for "unconducit."

She declined to elaborate except to observe that Venable has said in the past that he would "tolerate no hoodlums" in the Klan.

Venable's aide also said she heard that Heath was in Cleveland last week to appear before a federal grand jury. Asked where she got that information, she said, "Via shortwave radio."

She was asked if the Klan now is communicating by shortwave radio. She replied, "No, not necessarily. I just happen to own one."

More Than Loose Talk
The Justice Department source said the alleged assassination plot amounted to "much more than just loose talk over a coffee table."

The assassination plan was well worked out and could have been effective, the source said.

It was learned that the Federal Bureau of Investigation originally planned to arrest the five suspects but later decided to keep them under surveillance and to present information on them to the grand jury.

The grand jury reportedly was told that the plot originally was to be carried out Nov. 18 but was dropped for unknown reasons. The plan reportedly called for one member of the group to run into the Supreme Court Building in Washington and hurl explosives among the justices during a court session.

Dislike For Rulings
Members of the group were said to dislike some of the court's more liberal rulings.

Heath's link with the Klan was exposed last Dec. 28 when police raided his home and found thousands of rounds of small arms ammunition, a six-foot cross of the type the Klan employs as a fiery symbol of terrorism and vast quantities of hate literature.

Patrolman James Tobin, a police undercover man who helped expose the Klan cell, said Heath once told him of a plan to fire tear gas in a Loop theater where a Sidney Poitier movie was playing.

That alleged plan was not carried out. Tobin said Heath hatched the plan because he was infuriated that Poitier, a Negro, kisses a white woman in the movie, "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner."

Deierved Back
A Justice Department source in Washington confirmed that Heath is one of the five persons affected.