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New Papers Detail Role of FBI Informant

By Bill Richards

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OKLAHOMA CITY, Oct. 24—A former reporter for the Nashville Tennessean told FBI officials here last year she was willing to perjure herself rather than acknowledge she had received confidential FBI files, according to FBI memos made public.

Jacque Srouji, the journalist who has also been identified as an FBI informant, was reported in the newly released documents to have received copies of confidential federal files on the investigation into the death of plutonium worker Karen G. Silkwood.

Srouji's role in the Silkwood matter drew national attention when she testified before the House Commerce Subcommittee on Energy and Power last year.

The documents, which were obtained in a lawsuit here indicate that Srouji told federal agents she had obtained about 20 copies of FBI documents and 50 files belonging to the Kerr-McGee Corp., Silkwood's employer at the time of her death.

According to the memos and to testimony here last week by Lawrence Olson, Srouji's FBI contact and an agent in the Oklahoma City FBI field office, Srouji had been an informant for the bureau while she worked for the Nashville Banner and the Tennessean over the last decade. She used the Silkwood files to write a book on the nuclear industry. The project, she indicated to agents here, was suggested by FBI officials "in order to make contacts in that area."

The information was obtained during depositions and discovery proceedings in a damage suit filed by Silkwood's family against several FBI agents, Srouji and Kerr-McGee officials.

Silkwood, who was active in the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union local at the Kerr-McGee plutonium facility in Crescent, Okla., was on her way to deliver company documents to a union official and a newspaper reporter when her car ran off the road and hit a concrete culvert on Nov. 13, 1974.

Her death was ruled an accident the following day by the Oklahoma High-

way Patrol. However, numerous women's rights organizations, environmental groups and union supporters have argued that she may have been murdered.

The suit pending here in federal District Court does not deal with Silkwood's death but rather charges a violation of her civil rights as a union official by company and federal officials. It also charges negligence on the part of the company in allowing Silkwood to become contaminated with plutonium shortly before the car accident.

The Justice Department, which is defending the FBI agents in the suit, has moved to have a gag order placed on the case. Federal attorneys charged last week that disclosures of evidence by Silkwood's attorneys could prejudice the case against the agents. A hearing on the federal request is set for Thursday in federal court here.

Last Friday the FBI turned over 20 heavily censored files it compiled on its investigation into the Silkwood case. The files, which were made available to The Washington Post today, show that FBI agent Olson and Kerr-McGee security chief James Reading contradicted each other in sworn testimony regarding Srouji.

Srouji was fired by the Tennessean last year after she admitted supplying information about the paper's reporters to FBI agents in Nashville.

In a deposition to Silkwood's lawyers in February she also said she had turned over information on possible FBI perjury during the Wounded Knee trial in South Dakota. Olson said in a deposition he received classified information from Srouji in 1975.

In addition, the files show that while the Justice Department ordered FBI agents here to look into possible violations of Silkwood's rights after her death, Reading, the Kerr-McGee security chief, gained the impression federal agents were instead working to prove Silkwood was either smuggling plutonium out of the plant or trying to embarrass Kerr-McGee by falsely doctoring company production data.

The case has also turned up testimony by former senior Kerr-McGee official of widespread incidents of contamination at the plutonium plant here. The plant was shut down last year but Kerr-McGee has still been unable to account for up to 38 pounds of plutonium which was missing at the time of the shutdown. The former official denied the company's allegation that the plutonium was lost in the plant's pipes when it was closed.