

AIM Says Former Aide Was Informer for FBI

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By Joel D. Weisman

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CHICAGO, March 12—A spokesman for the American Indian Movement (AIM) said today that organization's former chief security officer has admitted he was a paid FBI informant.

Several clergymen of the United Methodist Church, which has mediated several Indian-government disputes, also charged that AIM has been infiltrated by the FBI.

The FBI would neither confirm nor deny the charges. The alleged informant, Douglas Durham, 38, of St. Paul, Minn., could not be reached for comment.

The AIM chief of security was responsible for screening persons and groups seeking to meet with top AIM leaders. He also was the personal bodyguard of Dennis Banks, AIM's national executive director.

The informant allegedly alerted government officials of impending Indian demonstrations. He also allegedly told the Justice Department

details of legal defenses prepared by lawyers for Indians arrested at various demonstrations, according to Ken Tilsen of St. Paul, chief counsel for AIM. Tilsen would not name the informant. He was identified as Durham by United Methodist Church officials.

Tilsen said the FBI "invaded our defense, which we feel is illegal," adding: "We will probably ask the government to drop remaining charges against about 30 persons" from the 71-day seizure of Wounded Knee, S.D., in 1973.

More than 150 participants in the Wounded Knee takeover were indicted on charges ranging from violation of the civil disobedience act to robbery or conspiracy. About 110 of the defendants were acquitted or not prosecuted. Nine were convicted and have appealed.

Indian leaders confronted Durham with several of his own "secret documents" describing Indian activities, according to the Rev. John P.

Adams, of the United Methodist church's department of law, justice, and communications. Adams said he witnessed the confrontation last Friday in a hotel room in Des Moines, Iowa. "At first, Durham denied being an informant, then he admitted it," Adams said.

Durham, once a free-lance photographer, allegedly infiltrated AIM shortly after the Wounded Knee takeover began in February 1973. Adams said Durham admitted receiving varying amounts of money from the FBI, depending on the frequency and the importance of the information supplied.

Durham reportedly apologized to AIM leaders for his activities and supposedly was considering making a public statement criticizing FBI infiltration practices.

Tom Coll of the FBI external affairs division said the FBI's refusal to comment was based, in part, on the agency's desire to insure fair trials for remaining AIM defendants.