

PROSECUTOR ASSAILS F.B.I. IN SLAYING CASE

Florida Investigating Report That
Marijuana Deal Was Set Up—
Bureau Denies Allegations

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PANAMA CITY, Fla., Dec. 11—The State of Florida is investigating charges by the prosecutor here that the Federal Bureau of Investigation set up a huge marijuana-smuggling deal in which four passers-by were murdered at Sandy Creek, Fla., last January.

Leo C. Jones, the prosecutor, said last week that the bodies of the four were found by a skin diver at the bottom of a small lake in August.

The prosecutor said he did not know when the F.B.I. first learned of the murders, but that a bureau informant, Bobby Vines, was on the scene of the shootings and met with his agency contact about two weeks later.

The F.B.I. agent in charge of the Jacksonville office, which oversees this part of Florida, denied Mr. Jones's allegations. Arthur F. Nehrbass, the agent, said he could "categorically deny that the F.B.I. had knowledge of the drug-smuggling operation in question, either before, during or immediately after its occurrence." "Nor did the F.B.I. have any knowledge of the so-called Sandy Creek slayings until the bodies were discovered," he added.

Mr. Jones said he had asked Attorney General Griffin B. Bell to investigate. In Washington, a spokesman for Mr. Bell said the request had been received but no action had been taken.

Calls Killings Senseless

In a news conference at his office in Panama City on Thursday, Mr. Jones called the four murders "senseless" and said they could have been prevented if the F.B.I. and state officers had notified him about the impending drug shipment. He said the bureau and the state police had set themselves up as "super" agencies and were attempting to usurp local police authority.

He said that about 70,000 pounds of marijuana, worth an estimated \$8 million to \$12 million on the wholesale market, was being brought to the Sandy Creek area on a 70-foot shrimp trawler at the time of the murders. It was to be ferried ashore at a deserted beach area about 12 miles from Panama City on the night of Jan. 23.

Two Panama City men, accompanied by two teen-age girls, wandered upon the scene during the unloading and were shot to death by guards hire to protect the huge shipment of marijuana from hijack-

Investigators have theorized that one of the men, George Sims, 39 years old, was killed because he had recognized one

of the guards, and that the other three, Sheila McAdams, 16, her sister, Sandy, 14 and Glenn Hood, 21, were slain because they had witnessed the first killing.

Mr. Sims was shot in the chest. The others were bound and gagged and shot in the back of the head. The bodies were then dumped into a small lake in a nearby county.

14 Charged in Killings

Fourteen men were charged with the murders in October, about two months after the remains were discovered. One of those accused was Mr. Vines, a 40-year-old Tallahassee resident who has since been granted immunity from prosecution.

Mr. Jones said Mr. Vines had alleged that an F.B.I. agent who was his neighbor recruited him in August 1976 as an informant and gave him \$50 to go to Cortez, Fla., to begin making arrangements for the January delivery of the marijuana.

Mr. Vines contended that he notified the F.B.I. a few days before the delivery date that the "marijuana was coming down," Mr. Jones said, and assumed that the agents had the Sandy Creek area staked out.

"Vines said that when the shooting started, he assumed the F.B.I. had the area secured tighter than a blanket," the prosecutor said.

No one knows why the four victims, who had been at a bar earlier, wandered onto the scene.

The prosecutor said that the marijuana involved in the incident had been brought to Florida from Colombia, but that he did not know where it was to have been taken. He said the operation had been ended after the first shooting, because of bad weather.

Backers Not Known to Official

"I don't know who was financing the deal," he said. "I don't think that's relevant."

He said that Mr. Vines reported having met with the F.B.I. agent who recruited him in Tallahassee on Feb. 7 and having been told, "Boy, you are in a lot of trouble."

Mr. Nehrbass, the bureau's agent in charge at Jacksonville, would not say if Mr. Vines had been an F.B.I. informant. It is bureau policy, he said, to decline comment on matters that may come up at a pending trial.

The agent Mr. Vines said he had met was reported to have been ordered to Quantico, Va., for training, and efforts to reach him there for comment were unsuccessful.

Mr. Jones said he was certain that Mr. Vines was an F.B.I. informant, however. On two occasions in October, he said, the United States Assistant Attorney in Tallahassee, Don Modesitt, had requested "He told me in a meeting at Tallahassee Oct. 4, 'We've got to help this man,'" Jones said.

Mr. Modesitt was reported by his staff to be unavailable for comment.

Jones quoted Mr. Vines as saying the F.B.I. told him on Sept. 23 that he could not have to testify in the case.

Agreed to Testify

Bay County grand jury investigating killings did grant Mr. Vines immunity and Mr. Jones said Mr. Vines had agreed to return to Panama City to testify when the other defendants go on trial. It had been disclosed.

Of the men accused in the slayings, Feb. 28, Mr. Vines's whereabouts have three were indicted Nov. 30 for first-degree murder and six for third-degree murder, a lesser offense. In addition to Mr. Vines, seven men have been granted immunity.

At the time it returned the indictments, the state grand jury issued a "presentment" accusing the F.B.I. and the state police of having "played a preparatory role" in the drug smuggling.