

Radicals Say They Can't Rem

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When the FBI announced last Thursday that it was seeking Ronald Kaufman as the man who allegedly planted time bombs in nine banks last summer, "movement people" across the

country began trying to figure out if he was one of them

The facts published about him made Kaufman eligible for several different slots on the spectrum of American radical left politics:

One-time member of Stu-

dents for a Democratic Society (SDS) Former shepherd of Yippie leader Abbie Hoffman. Recent resident of Berkeley, Calif. A 33-year-old AWOL Army private with a Ph.D. in psychology.

But the "movement people" drew a blank. Most had

never heard of Kaufman not even under one of his several aliases. Those who once knew him hadn't seen Kaufman in at least a year.

Radical priest Dick York at the Episcopal "Free Church" in Oakland, Calif., talked with some activist friends and found them as mystified as he was himself.

A Chicagoan who had known Kaufman during the demonstrations at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago said Kaufman had always opposed the tactics of the Weathermen, a militant faction of SDS which has taken credit for other bombings around the country.

Besides, as a long-time activist at the University of Wisconsin pointed out, Yippies seldom return to SDS.

Unknown in SDS

At 33, he said, Kaufman would be "a real old-timer" in SDS, and if he had an important role, that would be widely recognized—"Everyone who's ever been on the SDS side of the movement knows everybody else who has, and we don't know him."

The only clue in the movement's own internal manhunt for Kaufman seemed to lie in the identical letters he sent to newsmen, announcing the locations of the bombs and providing the keys to safety deposit boxes where they had been placed.

To some people, the letters (which the FBI says were in Kaufman's handprinting) were a polemical contribution to a search that has been going on within the movement in the last year for new modes of action.

"Kidnaping people and demanding property (or money) in exchange for their lives exemplifies the anti-life property value of our sick and brutal society," the letters said.

"The Movement in Amer-

ember Bank Bombing Suspect

ika would do better to kidnap property and offer it in exchange for the freedom of our people."

The letter went on to say that it would be simple, for example, to "kidnap a luxury hotel, a corporate office building or a superhighway and demand the release of political prisoners as ransom."

The device used in the "kidnapings," the letters explained, could be seven-month time bombs like the ones discovered in the safety deposit boxes, but substituting "highly reliable, nearly silent electronic watches" and "compact plastic explosive" for the cordless electric clocks and slow-burning powder used in the bank bombs.

Such a bomb, it said, "could easily be embedded in the structure of a building under construction (e.g., the new FBI building in Washington) or under the roadbed of a highway not yet paved over."

"In 3 or 4 months continued construction would make the device virtually undetectable. The authorities and the public would then be told who is to be freed in exchange for the exact location of the device. They would also be told how much time remained on the timer."

Should "the power structure" refuse to go along, the letters concluded, "they would then have the option of sitting around for months waiting for some portion of one of their empty toys to blow up."

"Who will want to vacation in that hotel, meet in that boardroom or drive on that super highway for the next few months?"

It was a chilling proposal, not only to the government but also to movement groups that have been increasingly rejecting violence



RONALD KAUFMAN
... wanted in bomb plots

as a tactic. But how the proposal might be viewed by the Weathermen and other "underground" groups was impossible to determine. Conceivably, someone among these could be sheltering Kaufman and other radical fugitives sought by the FBI.

In St. Louis—where Kaufman re-enlisted in the Army last summer under the name of James Edward Jensen—Chris Hayes found it inconceivable that Kaufman could have been involved with the local religious-radical movement in which Hayes is active. Whatever the government may think, he said, violence of any sort is now unacceptable among them.

But several people interviewed suggested that if the person who planted the bombs was already in the underground movement, he may have been a maverick "because of his extreme concern for lives." end insert

Long Planning Seen

If the FBI's information on the bombings is correct, and if the identification of

Kaufman is as certain as the bureau says it is, he apparently planned the action over a long period of time.

Using the name of Christopher Charles Mohr, the man the FBI says is Kaufman rented safety deposit boxes at nine banks in New York, Chicago and San Francisco a year ago and returned in July to plant the bombs.

Then he mailed deposit box keys to selected newsmen a month before the bombs were set to go off.

The man who called himself Mohr listed a Chicago address with each bank, but later mailed a change-of-address card to the post office in Chicago, requesting that his mail be forwarded to a San Francisco apartment. That apartment was occupied by Ronald Kaufman.

The FBI was able to release an unusual amount of information about the bombs, apparently because the man who planted them took little care to cover his tracks.

Fingerprints matching those of Kaufman allegedly were found on access slips to the safety deposit boxes, on the change-of-address card and on the bombs themselves.

"Most people who make bombs, or even Molotov cocktails," said one radical activist in the Middle West, "use plastic gloves. This guy was stupid."

The FBI search for Kaufman was reported to be centered in the Chicago area. All of the nine letters to newsmen announcing the bomb plants were mailed from that city on January 5.

Why Reenlist?

One puzzling aspect of Kaufman's personal history as reconstructed by the FBI was his enlistment in the Army last summer in St. Louis under a fictitious

name—hardly the usual pattern for a man holding a doctorate in experimental psychology who has already been discharged from six years in the Army reserve, two of them on active duty.

Some activists suggested that Kaufman had reenlisted—in a city where he was virtually anonymous—in order to further the goals of the growing GI resistance movement which urges militant antiwar actions within the service.

But the leaders of the RESIST office in Berkeley, where Kaufman lived before reentering the service, said they had never heard of him.

When he signed up in the Army last summer, Kaufman (alias Jensen) was assigned to basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., the same place he originally trained 15 years earlier.

It was during a three-week leave, at the end of which he was to report to Ft. Jackson, S. C., for shipment to Germany, that the serviceman who called himself Jensen disappeared.

It was not immediately clear whether he had already obtained military papers which might have aided him in going overseas.

Perhaps the most bizarre aspect of the bombing case was the name Kaufman allegedly used in renting the nine safety deposit boxes, Christopher Charles Mohr.

The Alumni Records Office at the University of Wisconsin confirmed last week that Charles J. Mohr, of New York City, was an undergraduate there at the same time as Kaufman in the late 1950s.

But Mohr died on April 17, 1960, of injuries suffered in the ring during an NCAA collegiate boxing tournament.