

## Plotting for the FBI

It isn't necessary to admire the Berrigan group to be disturbed by the FBI's role in such cases. The Berrigan Catholic leftists are fervent in their antiwar convictions. But they skillfully practice one of the most irritating forms of agitation in our media-wise era—the attention-getting stunt that is symbolically violent. You could just hear their talk: what do we do next; how about kidnapping—you know, making a citizen's arrest of someone like Henry Kissinger? No, that might get bloody; how about blowing up the government's underground heating tunnels in Washington?

On the strength of such kooky exchanges, J. Edgar Hoover went before a congressional committee, and while asking for money to hire 1,000 additional agents, testified that the FBI had uncovered a "plot to kidnap a highly placed government official." Now, after nearly two years' effort and at least \$1.5 million expended, the government has failed to satisfy a jury that any such conspiracy really existed. Its star witness was an unsavory informer who had been convicted for impersonation, fraud and assault with a gun. He was—despite a record of two escapes from custody—regularly allowed out of Lewisburg Prison, permitting him to carry messages for Philip Berrigan; he offered to provide the plotters with an untraceable gun; and the FBI gave him two manuals on explosives so that he could pose as a demolition expert. He asked for \$50,000 tax-free from the government, and was paid at least \$9,000. It's not entrapment, said the Harrisburg judge, to help people do what they have every in-

tention of doing—but the jury wasn't satisfied that the defendants really had such intentions.

And then there is Robert W. Hardy, a much more reputable informant, who went to the FBI when he learned that friends of his intended to destroy the draft board files in Camden, N.J. He was told to help them. "It's difficult for me to determine whether they had completely given up the action when I joined them," he now says. "I became, unknowingly, a provocateur." Hardy offered them a gun—it was refused. He did provide them with hammers, ropes, drills, bits, etc., which the FBI paid for, diagrammed the building for them, taught them how to avoid the alarms, how to recognize unmarked police cars, and toted them around in a van which was wired to broadcast all their conversations directly to the FBI. Twenty-eight defendants await trial for the draft board raid. Informant Hardy says: "I told the FBI many times that it couldn't have happened if I wasn't there."

Makes you wonder: what if, having penetrated the group so easily, the man from the FBI had talked them out of their silly schemes, instead of trying to help them pull it off? Would he have been considered a useless informer?