

FBI Informer's Assurance 31877 Is Wearing Thin

By Betty Medsger

Washington Post Staff Writer

HARRISBURG, Pa.—Convict Boyd F. Douglas Jr. seemed to have a good thing going in the summer and fall of 1970.

Imprisoned Catholic priest Philip Berrigan would help him with his college papers when he returned at night to Lewisburg, Pa., Federal Penitentiary from nearby Bucknell University where Douglas was a full-time student on a study-release program.

And, at the same time, the FBI was paying part of his tuition.

While a federal prisoner that summer he had an apartment in Lewisburg, at 204 S. 6th St., where he let Tom Love, a local peace activist, live at no expense. After Douglas moved out of the apartment in September, he asked the FBI to pay the back rent.

Meanwhile, Douglas was regularly reporting to the FBI that summer about Father Berrigan and his friends, in and out of prison, and about Love and his friends on the Bucknell campus.

Douglas helped arrange a program on the Bucknell campus the night of Nov. 18, 1970, to raise funds for the defense of eight persons arrested on Labor Day in Rochester as they raided federal offices there.

He wrote a letter to the speaker that evening, attorney William Cunningham, and said he hoped the evening would bring in "plenty of loot for the Rochester people."

But a month before, Douglas had been given \$1,500 by the FBI for tipping them on the Rochester raid.

For two weeks, Douglas has been on the stand as the principal witness in the trial

here of Father Berrigan and kidnap presidential adviser charged with conspiracy to kidnap presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger, to bomb tunnels under federal buildings and to raid federal offices.

The informer, who once asked the FBI for \$50,000 in return for information about the defendants in this case, was chipper the first week on the stand as chief prosecutor William S. Lynch elicited from him the basis of the government's case:

- The texts of letters he smuggled out of prison for two of the defendants, Father Berrigan and Sister Elizabeth McAlister, and

- Conversations he says he had with the other defendants about the plot.

But Douglas' second week on the stand was tough. He began to look weary. His temper was on edge numerous times.

Early in the cross-examination he seemed to enjoy relating the clever techniques he developed in the early '60's, when he was just 21, to defraud banks, a skill that has sent him to federal prisons for two long terms.

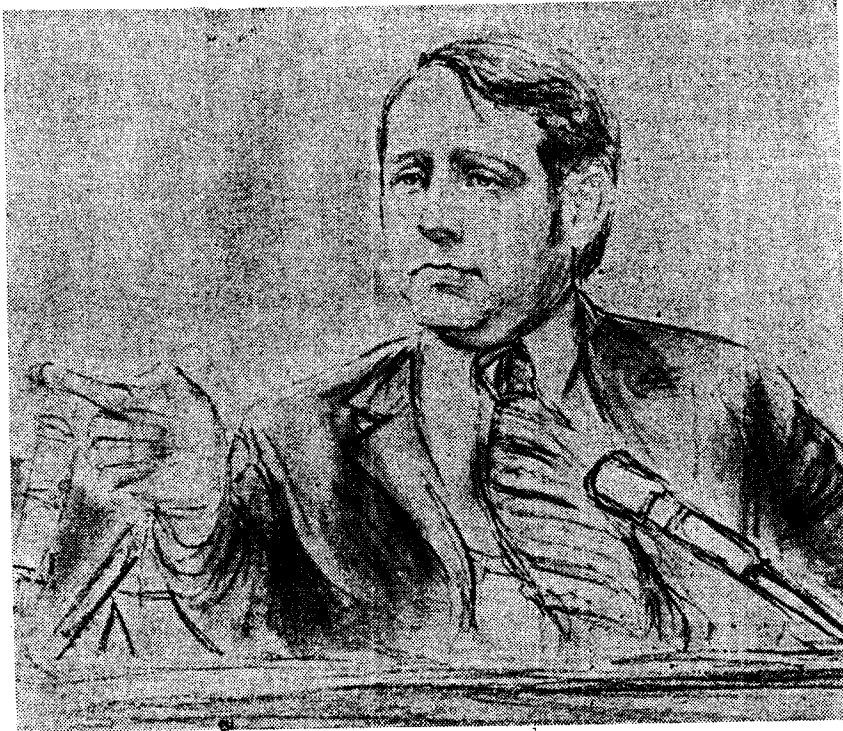
His temper didn't flare until defense attorneys began asking him about his activities in 1970.

Like Father Berrigan, he had deep gray shadows under his eyes by Friday as cross-examination by defense attorneys elicited more and more admissions from Douglas in an attempt to affirm some of the defense contentions:

- That Douglas was an agent provocateur.

- That he was conning the Catholic Left, students and professors at Bucknell University and the FBI simultaneously in 1970.

To be sure, Douglas got some provocative informa-



Sketch Copyright by ABC-TV News

Boyd F. Douglas Jr. found second week on stand in Berrigan trial wearing.

tion from the Berrigan-McAlister letters he smuggled, read, had his girl friends copy and then passed on to the FBI.

Two letters exchanged by the nun and priest in late August are the core of the most serious part of the conspiracy charges.

They discuss the possibility of a plan "to kidnap—in our terminology make a citizen's arrest of —someone like Henry Kissinger." And another of the more than 20 long personal letters briefly mentions a "subterranean project in the District," which Douglas says is the

plan to blow up the tunnels in Washington.

But Douglas apparently had difficulty knowing whether the ideas posed in the letters actually developed into a conspiracy. That despite the fact that he had posed as an explosives expert and, he testified, was assigned either to place the explosives in the tunnels or train someone else how to handle explosives.

On Friday he identified a letter he wrote to Sister McAlister in November ask-

ing her to go to Father Berrigan, who had been transferred from Lewisburg Aug. 25 to Danbury, Conn., Federal Prison, to find out what was happening with the plans for the plot.

In the same letter he told the Sister who, Douglas has testified, was the coordinator of both the tunnel and kidnap plot, "I really have not talked much to Joe about the D. C. project."

"Joe"—the Rev. Joseph Wenderoth, a Baltimore parish priest who is a defendant—was one of Father Berrigan's main "lieutenants," according to Douglas, and a key figure in the tunnels project.

Douglas wrote quite a few letters. Anne Walsh, a former nun from Boston, said Douglas wrote her three letters in the fall of 1970 asking her to write to him. He has testified that he identified her to the FBI as part of the Catholic Left. She was subpoenaed by the grand jury that twice indicted the defendants.

"I know what you are about as Phil Berrigan is my friend, "Douglas began a fall 1970 letter to Susan Williams, a woman he had

never met.

The letter to Miss Williams, say defense attorneys, is like many Douglas wrote that fall to movement persons he had not met but wanted, they say, to entrap.

"I am a federal prisoner, serving five years for conspiracy . . . Since I am unable to come to you, I would like for you to come here when you have the time . . . There may be an interesting project that would interest you after the turn of the year . . . You may drop me a line if you wish. Send it to Dr. Richard Drinnon, chairman, history department, Bucknell University . . ."

Describing "where I am at politically" in his letter to Miss Williams, Douglas said he was a "Totally committed non-violent revolutionary, who believes in strategic sabotage."

Douglas said he got that self-description from a book on civil disobedience he kept at his apartment.

Miss Williams was later arrested in the Rochester draft-board raid, thanks to Douglas' tip.

consin when they're killing many and many every day in Vietnam?"

But Douglas had testified that his last conversation with Father Berrigan was Aug. 23. The bombing of the building in at the University of Wisconsin took place Aug. 24. Father Berrigan was transferred from Lewisburg early Aug. 25.

In the fall of 1970 Douglas asked the FBI to give him \$400 a month to travel up and down the East Coast visiting prisoners and others so he could get more information on matters related to this case.

At the same time, he admitted in cross-examination, he asked Bucknell University officials for a grant to study prisons during the month of January 1971. His project, as described to Bucknell professor Eugene Chenoweth, would be entitled, "Field Survey of the Federal Penal System."

But all plans for January apparently were scratched when the FBI speeded up its efforts to nab the Catholic Left after Hoover's testimony before a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Nov. 27, 1970.

It was on Dec. 5, 1970, while he was still a prisoner, that FBI agents met with Douglas in a Holiday Inn in Danville, Pa., and had him for the first time name all the persons in the alleged conspiracy. He did so and then they equipped him with electronic surveillance equipment to engage the alleged conspirators in conversations about the plot.

He recorded two conversations, a telephone conversation with Father Wenderoth and a face-to-face conversation with Sister McAlister in New York in which she told him she smelled a rat and thought he was an informer.

Less than a week later Douglas testified here before the grand jury that indicted the defendants.

Subsequently he began a new life, armed a short time later with the alias Robert Dunne, and a Master's Charge card given him by the FBI in Omaha. He married in Arizona March 16, 1971, and settled in Des Moines in April.

Douglas has also testified that in July 1970 he asked a woman named Betsy Sandel to go to a demonstration at the gates of Lewisburg Prison and, on the same day of the demonstration, met with the FBI and identified her as one of the demonstrators.

Douglas has told the jury that much of what he said in the summer of 1970 was fabrication, including his conversations with Father Berrigan—though he insists that nothing he has told about Father Berrigan is a lie.

Portraying the priest as not a gentle non-violent type, he said Friday he recalled Father Berrigan's reaction to the bombing of the building at the University of Wisconsin in which one person was killed.

"Wasn't he shocked and horrified?" said defense attorney J. Thomas Meaker.

"No," said Douglas, smiling at the jury, adding, "He said, 'What's one life in Wis-