

1972
LIB
Please return this Medsger story Harris-
burg jury. I hear such views almost
every political contact (of which
few) in this area, close to and simi-
lar to that, even same original eth-
nic origins. How can there be legal
justice except by accident when the
state dominates popular views, bel-
iefs that may be held with any de-
gree of safety and is at liberty to
hoke up charges that achieve immediate
acceptance only because they do come
from the state? Had an interesting
experience with Medsger. She did some
of the (fine) recent Post work on J.
Edgar. I asked her if she'd like to
borrow one of the few copies of F-U
I'd had to buy, and I did tell her
I'd had to buy them. She never did
retrun it, after some months, and in
response to my second or third phoned
request she sent it through the
Post's metered machine first class
but entirely unwrapped, in an over-
large manila envelope. It got here
unsalable. I doubt she read any of
it. Earlier I had offered her access
to and copies of my early Hoover data
going back to the 30s. She thought it
it was great, important, and I've
heard not another word. When she was
first assigned to the Harrisburg
story and had done one saying that a
DJ Internal Security lawyer named
Tafe was the ramroad and was telling
people to appear before the grand
jury or face charges, she thought it
McCarthyism for me to give her clips
on Tafe's arrest on an undenied crim-
inal charge, twice impersonating an
FBI man. But it was not McCarthyism
to quote straight and unquestioningl
ly every anto-defendants statement
from any source, and everything

~~ever alleged mag~~

against any of them by any one was,
natch, straight news to the Post. As
a fact it was news; for Hoover is kind
of jealous about who calls himself FBI
And how would you think Hoover viewed
it when the reason was for a drunk to
get more free drinks? That is what
happened on Bourbon St.! H

Berrigan Jury Hunt Recalled

By Betty Medsger

Washington Post Staff Writer

HARRISBURG, Pa.—

Brenda Krebs had a good time for several days in a room high in the newest downtown building here during the last two weeks, but she had been married only 15 months and didn't want to leave her husband.

Barbara Comitz enjoyed her stay in the room, but when she went home she found her neighbors were upset with her for having been there.

Robert Baltimore spent only two days in the room, and when he left he said, "Frankly, what went on in there was an injustice."

These three persons were among 46 found acceptable for jury duty in the conspiracy trial of the Rev. Philip Berrigan and six others. They were chosen (after 11 days of intensive questioning) from an original panel of 300 people drawn from 11 counties in central Pennsylvania. The final 12 were chosen from the 46 last Tuesday. Since then the search for six alternates has continued.

The 34 spent their time in a courtroom on the north floor of the federal building, guarded on the outside by men and women marshals and located across from the courtroom where the questioning of prospective jurors was in progress.

They played pinocle, knit sweaters, showed each other photographs of children and grandchildren — and discussed the defendants in the controversial case.

Interviews with more than a dozen of those excused in the final selection disclose their version of the thoughts of jurors and provide a glimpse of attitudes in the region.

Most Discussed

They indicated that the defendant most talked about was not the most famous one, Father Berrigan, but perhaps the least publicized defendant, Eqbal Ahmad, a Muslim from West Pakistan who had been in this country for 15 years and is on

the faculty of the Adlai Stevenson Institute for International Affairs.

The defendants in the case charged with conspiracy to kidnap presidential adviser Henry Kissinger, to bomb tunnels under federal buildings in Washington, and to raid federal offices.

Mrs. Comitz said she was surprised when she went home Tuesday and heard what her neighbors thought of the recent experience.

"I had never done anything like that," said Mrs. Comitz, a housewife from York, who had said during questioning of prospective jurors that she read no newspapers and had no opinion on the Vietnam war. "I was disappointed not to get accepted," she said.

"The neighbors didn't like my going there," she added, "They all think everybody up there is guilty. They thought that because I was willing to go up as a prospective juror that I was willing to be involved somehow with the defendants.

"I don't really have an opinion one way or another, but I did get to think they

looked like pretty nice people."

Woke Up Crying

Brenda Krebs lives in Waynesboro, Pa., a small town southwest of Gettysburg, two miles from the Pennsylvania-Maryland border.

She says she woke up crying a few times, during the time that she had to make the daily treks upstate to Harrisburg to see if she'd be among the 12. "I told my husband that I didn't see where there was any law that says you can't sleep with your husband," said Mrs. Krebs, laughing as she recounted how she felt when she learned the jury would be sequestered for the length of the trial.

"I know the judge said we weren't supposed to say anything about the case," said Mrs. Krebs one evening last week in an interview in the living room of her Waynesboro apartment, "but you

just can't help it. It was on all our minds."

Ahmad apparently was a puzzle to her. "I couldn't understand it myself," she said. "We have too many troublemakers in the United States, so many problems . . . Others wondered the same thing. They wondered why he's creating a problem here, or why he's even here.

"They (the government) could send him home and tell him not to come back. Instead, they are giving him a fair shake. Like I said, we have enough troublemakers and radicals here—let them do it in their own country . . . What business is it of his what goes on here?"

Agree He's Scarey

Two other prospective jurors, Constance Mills, a secretary for a state agency, and Charles Bullock, a bartender here, recalled that on one occasion when the jurors returned from the courtroom to their waiting room, one of them said, "That Indian's scarey," a reference to Ahmad. The response from those around the man who said it, according to Miss Mills and Bullock, was a soft chorus of "yeah" and "uh huh."

Robert Mann, an Allis-Chalmers employee from Brogue, said he overheard someone say about Ahmad, "If he doesn't like it here, why did he come here?"

Mrs. Krebs also was troubled by the presence of Ramsey Clark as a defense attorney.

"I was surprised by Ramsey Clark," she said "Now was he fired as attorney general? . . . Oh, he just left with the Johnson administration. Well, being attorney general of the United States at one time, how can he now be defending people who are against the United States? . . . Several people felt that way . . .

"Several of the people had the impression that (William) Kunstler is behind the scenes running the show. They thought he was not out in the front but in the background investigating things." Kunstler, a defense lawyer in several recent

trials of radicals, is not on the defense team.

Mrs. Krebs said she was surprised to see several young persons among the jurors—there are four

under 35—because her husband, a social studies teacher and high school football and basketball coach, had told her that “the defendants will probably pick older people so they can pull the wool over their eyes.”

“Several of us agreed that the spectators shouldn’t have been in the courtroom when we were questioned,” said Mrs. Krebs.

“They asked us that question about how do we feel about long-haired people, could we take their testimony as seriously as the testimony of a clean-shaven FBI agent. . . . People held back on that question because of the long-haired spectators.

Well Protected Inside

“Those marshals protected us in the building. They wouldn’t even let us get on an elevator by ourselves. But they didn’t do anything about us when we left the building. We could’ve walked out and been clobbered over the head by some of those people.”

Back at Jeanette Casner’s bar in Lewistown, they were “pretty proud” of her, she said for making it to the final round.

“I think it’s an honor, also a duty,” said Mrs. Casner, who had said in court that she purposely didn’t read much because she didn’t want to get in any arguments over politics or religion in the bar.

She elaborated in an interview after the jury was selected: “You get into an argument so easily if you know something.”

As for the Vietnam war, an issue she had been questioned about by attorneys, she said, “They don’t seem to respect wars the way they did in World War II . . .

“If you want to live in a free country you should be proud to fight for it. We’ve never been without a war yet.”

Arthur Taylor, a tool keeper who said he was from “down in the country” near Brogue in York County, agreed with Mrs. Casner. Asked how he felt about this case, he said, “If my son grows up and wants

to go and fight for his country, I’d sign for him; and if he didn’t want to go and fight, well, he’d go anyway. That’s just how I feel about my country.”

Critical of Boudin

Both Miss Mills and Bertha Keller, who runs a country grocery store near Hamlin, Pa., were sharply critical of Leonard Boudin, the defense team’s expert on cross-examination.

Miss Mills described him as “a typical New York lawyer.” She said she’s never seen a New York lawyer but “they say New York is a bad place. Now I know that’s right . . . He’s a pain in the ass.” She said she didn’t like being questioned about her views on the war.

“That last lawyer really worked on me,” said Mrs. Keller. Also angry about being interrogated about her views on Vietnam, she said, “He wanted me to say my three sons shouldn’t have gone into the service. But I’m proud of them . . . And

why should I say I hate the government. I have to live here . . . Just like if I had not gone up there when they called me (to jury duty) they would have come to get me.” She told Boudin in court she thought the government was correct in all things and should not be questioned.

Robert Baltimore, a civil rights official in the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, was an Air Force pilot in the Pacific in World War II. He proudly states that he was one of the first black pilots to fly with a white crew.

He said he was upset when he left the courtroom Tuesday. He had become part of the 46 only the day before and observed the group only two days.

“There was a lot of talking about the case,” said Baltimore about the courtroom where the group waited. “When you get right down to it, they were not much concerned about the issues but primarily concerned that Ahmad is a dark-skinned alien; secondly, that priests and nuns are involved, and, thirdly, with the issues . . .

“As far as the judge is concerned, yes, they can get a fair trial. He’s a good judge, fair and unbiased. But as far as the jury is concerned, I don’t know after hearing what I heard back there.”

A father of seven who is raising five additional children not his own, Baltimore said, “I want to make it clear that I think the concept of our government is very good. I’m a very patriotic man.”