

Trial Is Told of Miami Attack

Post 8/4/73

By Timothy Robinson

GAINESVILLE, Fla., Aug. 3 — Five-man "fire teams" of radicals armed with homemade hand grenades and bombs were prepared to attack buildings in Miami to divert police who were controlling antiwar demonstrators at the Republican National Convention in adjoining Miami Beach last summer, the government charged today.

The elaborate plan was detailed by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jack Carrouth, who is prosecuting eight antiwar protesters — seven of them leaders of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War — on charges of conspiring to cause riots at the convention.

But the defense — including two defendants speaking in their own behalf — maintained in its opening statements that the alleged conspiracy never existed, but was concocted by the government in an attempt to discredit the VVAW and justify the Watergate break-in.

Defense attempts to link the case directly to the Watergate scandal in court were quickly tossed out by U.S. District Judge Winston E. Arnow, who said "The government is not on trial here."

However, Judge Arnow did allow defense attorney Larry Turner to tell the jury that one of the reported government informants in the case, Pablo Fernandez of Miami, was on the payroll of the Committee to Reelect the President.

An hour later, the first government witness in the trial and the Justice Department attorney who had been

questioning him clashed over his testimony.

The conflict came as defense attorneys were attempting to question the witness about a statement he made to an FBI agent. Government attorneys had said in court that they had no previous written statements by the witness, but the witness testified that he had read such a statement and signed it.

Judge Arnow, obviously angered at the conflicting versions, immediately sent the jury from the courtroom as the defense began to argue that it should have access to the statement.

The government claimed, however, that the statement witness Charles Marshao FBI report of the agent's interview with him and should not be turned over.

No immediate ruling was made on the issue.

In outlining his case, Carrouth told the jury the defendants' bizarre arsenal included slingshots like those used for hunting small game, rifles, hand grenades made out of cherry bombs dipped in glue and layered with BBs, bombs made of glycerin and potassium permanganate, and cross bows.

Carrouth first stuck to the dry language of the indictment in listing the charges against the eight, before breaking off to define "fire teams" as squads organized to attack buildings, police cars and stores.

From there, Carrouth outlined this alleged plan on the part of the defendants:

Demonstrators from all over the country — "they said as many as 15,000" — would infiltrate peaceful marches in Miami Beach.

They would be armed with the slingshots that would be concealed "in their groins, (and) around the ankles of people wearing bell bottom trousers."

They would use the cover of the crowd to fire lead weights, ball bearings, and "fried marbles" at the police. The "fried marbles" were described by Carrouth as "very serious weapons" — regular glass marbles heated and then dipped in ice-cold water so they would crystallize and shatter when fired "into legs or bodies."

The police, thus harassed and attacked, would "come down on the peaceful demonstrators." At that point, Carrouth said, the veterans in Miami Beach would contact the fire teams in Miami by walkie-talkies and tell them to start their attacks.

To hatch this plot, according to Carrouth, the defendants, led by a 27-year-old former Marine, Scott Camil, held secret meetings in an attic in Gainesville attended by members of a group known as the Southern Coalition of VVAW.

Later, further meetings were held at the home of defendant Alton Foss in Hialeah, Fla., Carrouth said. The government said it will show that at these meetings there was a map of the city of Miami that was color coded to show police stations and other buildings.

"The plan was to hit these buildings with fire teams if the word was given by Camil," Carrouth said. "These were known as Mr. Camil's fire teams—he was the only one who would know their composition."

Meanwhile, Judge Arnow

asked a phone company expert in electronic surveillance to examine a telephone wireroom in which two FBI agents were found here earlier this week.

The room is adjacent to one that was being used by defense lawyers for a staff meeting, and the defense has charged it was an attempt to overhear their conversations or otherwise bug the discussions. A hearing is scheduled Saturday afternoon on the incident.

Plans