

Gainesville 8 Trial Continues ^{FPost 9/7/73}

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP) — An FBI informer testified Monday a defendant in the Gainesville Eight trial told him he was training political assassination squads and trading dope for guns.

William Lemmer, a former Special Forces trooper and ex-member of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, said Scott Camil, then Florida coordinator for the antiwar group, told him at a VVAW meeting in 1971 he was organizing the squads and calling them "Phoenix II."

Lemmer, of Texarkana, Ark., said the code word referred to a similar CIA-backed political elimination program once used against suspected Communist sympathizers in South Vietnam.

Defense attorneys asked U. S. District Court Judge Winston

Arnow to declare a mistrial, saying Lemmer's testimony was inflammatory, prejudicial and irrelevant.

Arnow refused, on the ground that the material was necessary to show the intent of the defendant.

The eight VVAW members are charged with plotting violence during the 1972 Republican National Convention in Miami Beach. The indictment specifies meetings among defendants in which the alleged conspiracy was hatched.

Lemmer said that during the November 1971 meeting in Kansas City, Camil "made the statement he was conducting training operations on a farm, he didn't say what farm, but that his people were developing into what was referred to as political assassination squads."

"At the time, there were no specific targets mentioned," Lemmer said. "He said the squads were being put together in case they were ever needed."

Lemmer is expected to be the government's star witness. It was mainly on the weight of his information that a grand jury in Tallahassee brought the indictment against the eight last year.

The defendants are Camil, 26; Stanley K. Michelson Jr., 23, and John Briggs, 20, of Gainesville; William J. Patterson, 24, of Austin, Tex.; Peter J. Mahoney, 23, and John Kniffen, 25, of New York City; Alton C. Foss, 25, of Hialeah, Fla.; and Donald P. Perdue of Hollywood, Fla.