

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

'Gainesville 8' Prosecutor Called Bigot

By Jack Anderson

The FBI's star witness in the Gainesville Eight case has charged that the federal prosecutor was a "bigot" who called black jurors "niggers," yet plied them with steak dinners in hopes they would vote guilty.

The jury unanimously acquitted the eight, most of them Vietnam veterans, in less than four hours. They had been accused of trying to disrupt the 1972 GOP convention in Miami.

The chief government witness was an FBI informer named William Walter Lemmer. A few days ago, he surfaced in Dallas, where he sought a job with the weekly paper *Iconoclast*.

The publisher, Doug Baker, interviewed Lemmer on tape with his consent. With no holds barred, Lemmer answered questions to prove he is no longer an FBI spy. A 60-page transcript of Lemmer's revelations has now been given to us exclusively.

"I was kind of happy" over the acquittal, Lemmer said. The chief prosecutor, Assistant U.S. Attorney Jack Carrouth, drank too much and was a "bigot," explained the former witness for the prosecution, adding:

"This yo-yo (Carrouth) comes out and says in a deep Southern Drawl, 'Well, I know that we have at least two votes for conviction. We've been feeding those two damn niggers on the jury steaks for the past six weeks. By God, I know that we

have at least two votes for conviction.'

"Well," observed Lemmer on the tape, "they fooled the --- out of him, because it was a unanimous vote... for acquittal."

When we reached Carrouth in Florida, he told us: "I absolutely deny it." Then he recognized that to call Lemmer a liar was to impeach the man he used as his own top witness. "What can you do?" Carrouth drawled helplessly.

On the tape, Lemmer said: "The case was bungled. And bungled badly." Yet, when the verdict came in so quickly, "I was kind of stunned by the suddenness of the whole thing... I wasn't ready to leave Florida... I was sitting there at \$36 a day (from the federal government) and I needed \$200 more to finish paying for a little Triumph sports car."

Lemmer said an informer's life is not an easy one. For one thing, the FBI insisted on information about whether "guys have sexual hangups... It's a Hoover hangover." The late J. Edgar Hoover often regaled President Lyndon Johnson with reports on the sexual improprieties of famous Americans. As a result of Hoover's interest, FBI files are spiced with sexual anecdotes about citizens, much of it rumor.

Lemmer also claimed the FBI brought him together with another witness in the trail—a violation of court rules which prevent witnesses from discussing

the case with each other while the trial is in progress. But Lemmer said his main advice to the other witness was: "Don't be nervous on the stand, man."

While Lemmer praised some of his FBI "handlers" for their decency and said one agent refused to carry out an unethical investigation of innocent Chicanos, Lemmer had harsh words for Justice Department circuit rider Guy Goodwin.

The hard-nosed Goodwin has made a career of spending hundreds of thousands of the taxpayers' dollars in unwise and unsuccessful cases against militants. Most of Goodwin's major cases have ended in acquittals.

Lemmer said Goodwin refused him support payments he had been promised. "The Justice Department did not follow through with their commitment to me," Lemmer complained.

He denied charges he got paid \$14,000 for his services, plus rent and other expenses. "I barely spent \$5,000 altogether," he said.

Reviewing his life as an FBI informer, Lemmer conceded that "during the trial I was a dirty ----." But now, he said, "I'm not particularly proud of it... It's hard to go around telling people, 'Hey, like I used to be a Justice Department spy.'

"I see my position the same way I'm sure that (ex-White House counsel) John Dean saw his and like everybody else that got caught up in the little spy machinery... I was involved in

it. I admit it, you know. I'm not involved in it now. I never want to hear about it again."

Footnote: Despite Lemmer's protests of innocence, the *Iconoclast* did not give him a permanent job. Editor Baker said the fear lingered that Lemmer would do to the newspaper what he did to the Vietnam vets.

In a statement to us, the FBI vehemently denied probing "sexual hangups." As for the meeting between Lemmer and the other witness, the FBI said the agents warned both men against talking about the case and were on hand to make sure the visit was no more than social small talk. The statement contended that the FBI no longer has any ties with Lemmer.

The Justice Department denied making support commitments to Lemmer, and the FBI said it had routinely paid Lemmer as provided under law for services and expenses.

Sacrificial Animals—Defense Department experiments on the biological effects of radiation have cost the lives of more than 40,000 test animals since 1970.

The Pentagon brass, seeking criteria to predict casualties during a nuclear attack, have sacrificed 920 monkeys, 376 dogs, 610 swine and 38,500 rodents over the last four years.

One study, involving 420 monkeys, pigs and dogs, determined the radiation dosage necessary to cause "permanent incapacitation"—death, in non-Pentagonese language.