

SFChronicle  
Bomb

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Suspect  
Arrested

Brattleboro, Vt.

Patricia Elizabeth Swinton, 33, charged with conspiracy as an alleged member of a leftist group that bombed a series of corporation and government buildings in New York City in 1969, was arrested yesterday in a health food store as she stacked jars of peanut butter.

"I'm sorry," she whispered to stunned fellow workers at the Good Life health food store as two FBI agents and Brattleboro police detective Gordon Smith handcuffed her and led her down Main street to a car.

Fellow workers said she appeared very pale as she was led away in a driving snow and sleet storm.

Miss Swinton was charged with conspiring to destroy government property for her alleged part in the bombings of eight New York buildings



AP Wirephoto

PATRICIA SWINTON  
N.Y. explosions in 1969

between July 27, 1969, and Nov. 12, 1969.

Three members of the radical, leftist group were arrested on Nov. 12, 1969. They entered guilty pleas for their parts in the bomb-

Back Page Col. 1

From Page 1

ings of a federal office building, a military induction center, the Chase Manhattan bank, the RCA building, the General Motors building and others.

A federal warrant was issued against Miss Swinton on Nov. 13, 1969, in New York City.

Agents said she had been working as a clerk at the health food store for about 1½ years. They believe she had lived in the Brattleboro area more than two years, previously working as a waitress in several restaurants.

Miss Swinton, a native of Baltimore, had used an alias, Susan Karen Davis, and also was known as Shoshana Davis, officials said.

She has been living the past year or so at the Packer's Corners farm, a commune of ten persons in the adjoining town of Guilford. The century-old wooden farm house formerly was known as the Total Loss farm.

Last week, when a fire broke out in a small wooden sugar house that the commune uses to boil sap to make maple sugar, Miss Swinton was the one who extinguished it.

The commune was started by Raymond Mungo of Lawrence, Mass., one of the founders of the national commune movement. He was the former editor of the Students for Democratic Society-Liberation News Service, known as the SDS-LNS. He also was editor of the Boston University News, a student-run paper.

Although Mungo has moved, some of his original communards still live there. None would identify himself, but they all said they were not aware of Miss Swinton's identity.

It was one of the communes that really worked. Membership was limited and those permitted to join had to work regularly. They

were not permitted to pan-handle and got along well with the townsfolk. Police said they posed no problems.

Officials said that before coming to Brattleboro, a quiet college community crowded with persons seeking alternative ways of life, Miss Swinton lived in Acworth, N.H., a town of 475 persons in the southwestern section of the state, bordering on Vermont.

William Oates, proprietor of the Good Life health food store, said he hired Miss Swinton because of her "maturity and poise." He said, "She was reliable as a clerk."

Fellow workers, who refused to be identified, described Miss Swinton as "quiet and meditative." One worker said, "She was a wonderful lady, a sweet person."

It was ironic that she was arrested while stacking jars of peanut butter. According to the FBI release, Miss Swinton was arrested on Aug. 8, 1970, by the Missoula, Mont., police on a petty larceny charge for stealing two cans of peanut butter from a food market.

Using a fictitious identity, she was released and ordered to leave Missoula before her true identity was determined.

Others charged in the bombings conspiracy were Samuel Joseph Melville, John David Hughey and Jane Laurean Alpert, who were arrested on Nov. 12, 1969.

Melville pleaded guilty and was sent to the Attica correctional facility in New York, where he died in the Sept. 13, 1971 Attica uprising.

Miss Alpert pleaded guilty in 1970, but jumped bail and became a fugitive until she surrendered Nov. 14, 1974.

Hughey pleaded guilty and has served his prison sentence, authorities said.

United Press