

Court Told of Spying on Attica Defense

By TOM GOLDSTEIN
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BUFFALO, April 21—A 26-year-old woman said under oath here today that she had spied on the Attica legal defense team for 14 months for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

During five hours of often rambling and confusing testimony at an emotional court hearing, the informer, Mary Jo Cook, told of infiltrating the defense camp and transmitting information to Gary Lash, an F.B.I. agent here.

At one point under cross-examination early in the afternoon, Miss Cook broke down in tears and sobbed, "It's my public shame."

'It's All in My Notes'

After a 10-minute recess, she returned to the witness stand and appeared to regain her composure as she skirted questions from Francis Cryan, a special Attica prosecutor, concerning details of the information she had given to the F.B.I.

"I can't remember," she said. "It's all in my notes and reports."

Lawyers for Bernard Stroble, a former Attica inmate who is charged with killing two other inmates during the 1971 state prison revolt, asked today that these F.B.I. reports be turned over to them. State Supreme Court Justice Joseph Mattina, who presided over the hearing, reserved decision on the request.

The F.B.I. has acknowledged that Miss Cook "furnished in-

Woman Says F.B.I. Got Reports, but Witness Is Vague on Details

formation to the bureau on a confidential basis, for which she was paid." However the agency said that "at no time has she furnished to the F.B.I. information on the Attica defense."

Mr. Lash, the man whom Miss Cook described as her "control agent," is scheduled to testify tomorrow. The purpose of this week's hearings is to determine if Miss Cook's undercover activities have prejudiced the case of Mr. Stroble.

At no time in her testimony did Miss Cook indicate that she knew Mr. Stroble or whether she had given information about him to the F.B.I. and whether the agency, in turn, had passed information along to the state prosecution.

Repeats Earlier Statements

Most of her testimony turned out to be an embellishment of what she said 10 days ago when she publicly stated that she had been an informer for the F.B.I. until last November.

Miss Cook said that at first she had infiltrated the Vietnam Veterans Against the War/Winter Soldier Organization before becoming involved in the Attica defense effort.

"I took the F.B.I. job on, thinking it was honorable," she said. "During the course of

it, I realized it was not honorable. I committed a political crime. It was as if I was a TV monitor into peoples lives. That's 1984. I can't believe I destroyed people's rights to privacy."

Before she stopped working for the F.B.I., Miss Cook said, "My life was a mess."

"I couldn't believe I could be that stupid," she added.

Justice Mattina recessed the court an hour ahead of schedule after Miss Cook broke down in an unrelated hearing, Malcolm H. Bell, the former chief assistant Attica prosecutor, testified about interviews he had had with two inmate witnesses in a kidnapping and assault case stemming from the 1971 riot.

His testimony was restricted to these conversations and did not touch on the charges he has made that Anthony G. Simonetti, the chief Attica prosecutor, covered up possible crimes committed by law enforcement officers during and the prisoners' rebellion.