

LETTERS ARE READ TO BERRIGAN JURY

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Priest Allegedly Agreed to
Kidnapping of Kissinger
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HARRISBURG, Pa., March 3 —A proposal to kidnap Henry A. Kissinger, an adviser to President Nixon, "opens the door to murder," the Rev. Philip F. Berrigan warned a New York nun, according to letters introduced by the Government today at the antiwar conspiracy trial of the priest and six other defendants.

Father Berrigan was said to have agreed to the "brilliant but grandiose" project in a purported reply to the nun, Sister Elizabeth McAlister, and suggested that it be coordinated with a plot to blow up utility tunnels serving Government buildings in Washington.

Boyd F. Douglas Jr., F.B.I. informer and star Government witness who purportedly served as courier between Father Berrigan and Sister Elizabeth in the summer of 1970 when the alleged conspiracy was hatched, testified that the priest had reluctantly agreed when the informer told him that a gun would be needed for the Kissinger kidnapping.

"I told him I could obtain a gun," Douglas testified. "He said possibly we could use blanks instead of real bullets."

Priest Called Mastermind

Father Berrigan is the alleged mastermind of a group of priests, nuns and laymen of the Catholic left accused by the Government of plotting to blow up heating tunnels in Washington on Washington's Birthday, 1971, and to abduct Mr. Kissinger on the following day. The seven defendants, all Catholics except Egbal Ahmad, a Pakistani scholar, insist that they never planned any acts of violence.

Before the jury was brought in this morning, Federal District Judge R. Dixon Herman ordered to prison Mrs. Zoia Horn, a former Bucknell University librarian who had refused to testify against the defendants and called the trial a "black charade."

"Take her away," Judge Herman ordered when Mrs. Horn, 52 years old, persisted today in her refusal despite a grant of full immunity. Federal marshals led her from the courtroom, and she was taken to Dauphin County Prison. On orders of the judge, she will remain there for the duration of the trial unless she "purges herself" by deciding to testify.

In his purported letter to Sister Elizabeth Aug. 22, 1970, Father Berrigan tempered his warning on violence.

"When I refer to murder," he said, "it is not to prohibit it absolutely (violence versus non-violence bag). It is merely to observe that one has set the precedent, and that later on, when Government resistance to this sort of thing stiffens, men will be killed."

Months of Planning

Kidnapping Mr. Kissinger would take months of planning, the priest allegedly said in the letter. "The thing to do," he suggested, "is find out where he goes for weekends, or where he shacks up — if he shacks up."

The priest was reacting to a letter from Sister Elizabeth in which the nun allegedly relayed what she said was a plan outlined to her by "Eq" (identified by Government counsel as a co-defendant, Egbal Ahmad).

Sister Elizabeth allegedly sketched the plot this way: "to kidnap — in our terminology make a citizen's arrest of— someone like Henry Kissinger."

"Him [Kissinger] because of his influence as policy-maker yet sans Cabinet status, he would therefore not be as much protected as one of the bigger wigs," she said.

"He is a bachelor, which would mean if he were so guarded he would be anxious to have unguarded moments where he could carry on his private affairs—literally and figuratively. To issue a set of demands, E.G., cessation of use of B52's over North Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and release of political prisoners.

'Indictment' Suggested

"Hold him for about a week during which big wigs of the liberal ilk would be brought to him—also kidnapped if necessary (which, for the most part it would be)—and hold a trial or grand jury affair out of which an indictment would be brought.

"There is no pretense of the demands being met and he would be released after this time with a word that we're non violent as opposed to you who would let a man be killed—one of your own—so that you can go on killing.

"The liberals would also be released as would a film of the whole proceedings in which, hopefully, he would be far more honest than he is on his own territory. The impact of such a thing would be phenomenal. Reasons for wanting to do it: It will ultimately be done by some one here and end in fiasco or violence and killing.

"Eq. wants to do it and do it well before anyone else does it badly, and I believe he has the know-how to direct such an escapade."

Sister Elizabeth allegedly sent her letter to Father Berrigan, then a prisoner at the Federal Penitentiary in Lewisburg, Pa., through a mail drop set up by Douglas, a prisoner released daily to attend classes at Bucknell.