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HOOVER'S IMPACT ON 'PLOT' RELATED

Witness Says Disclosure
Caused Abandonment
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HARRISBURG, Pa., March 6 —The Government's chief witness in the conspiracy trial of the Rev. Philip F. Berrigan and six other antiwar activists testified today that J. Edgar Hoover's disclosure of the alleged plot had caused it to be hastily abandoned.

But the witness, Boyd F. Douglas Jr., also indicated that the defendants had already dropped the alleged plan to kidnap Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's foreign affairs adviser, before the Federal Bureau of Investigation director told a Senate subcommittee about it in November, 1970.

Douglas, who served as a courier for the alleged conspirators and also as an F.B.I. informer, testified that he received a letter from Sister Elizabeth McAlister of New York City, who is one of the defendants, three weeks before the F.B.I. director spoke.

Letter Is Cited

Sister Elizabeth was supposed to "coordinate" the Kissinger kidnapping with the blowing up of some utility tunnels in Washington on Feb. 14, 1971, Douglas said, but she complained in the letter: "I really don't know where the project is at (or isn't) at to brief Phil [Father Berrigan]."

Defense attorneys have contended that the Government's case against the Berrigan group is a frame-up. They recalled that Mr. Hoover was seeking a \$14-million supplemental appropriation for 1,000 additional agents and 702 clerks when he told the Senators that the conspiracy existed.

The defendants, known as the Harrisburg Seven, are charged with conspiring to kidnap Mr. Kissinger and to blow up heating tunnels to Government buildings in Washington. Professing to be nonviolent, they meant no physical harm to anyone, hoping only that their actions would hasten the end of the Vietnam war and the release of all "political prisoners," the Government says.

Douglas started betraying the alleged conspirators to the F.B.I. in the late spring of 1970, soon after he became trusted courier between Father Berrigan, a fellow prisoner of Douglas's at Lewisburg Federal Prison, and Sister Elizabeth, the priest's chief contact with radicals of the Roman Catholic left.

Hoover Testimony

In November, Mr. Hoover told a Senate appropriations subcommittee that an "anarchist group" led by Father Berrigan and his brother, the Rev. Daniel J. Berrigan, planned to kidnap "a highly placed Government official."

The Government later obtained an indictment naming the Berrigans as leaders of the conspiracy, but Father Daniel Berrigan's name was removed in a superseding indictment.

Douglas testified that the publicity generated by the Hoover testimony frightened the conspirators. Douglas said he was warned by one of the defendants, the Rev. Joseph Wenderoth of Baltimore, a few days after Mr. Hoover's remarks not to discuss the Washington project with anyone.

The "Feds" were all about, Father Wenderoth cautioned, although he added: "Please don't take my panic seriously," Douglas said.

Early in 1971, Douglas testified, Sister Elizabeth was "highly suspicious I was the leak."

Just before she had hung up after a telephone conversation with Douglas, she had suddenly heard their conversation being replayed on a tape recorder, Douglas said.

'The Inner Circle'

"She told me as far as the Kissinger kidnapping was concerned, only the inner circle knew of it," Douglas said. "She said she could name them on the fingers of her hand. Some felt the leak was me. I told her she was wrong. I said: 'I'm sorry you feel that way. Guess we'll find out soon.'"

Douglas, who has been convicted of forgery and assault, said he had asked \$50,000 from the F.B.I. for betraying the group, but that his contact had told him "absolutely no" and "forget it."

However, the bureau gave him \$1,500 for information about a draft board raid in Rochester allegedly fomented by the Berrigan group, he said. The F.B.I. paid him "a few hundred" for expenses. And since last December he has been drawing \$36 a day in "witness fees and per diem expenses."