

4 Named in Plot To Raid Commune

BUFFALO (N.Y.) — (UPI) — Four men, including a graduate student and a former deputy sheriff, were indicted today on charges of conspiring to shoot up a commune in an attempt to frighten away the residents. One resident was shot and wounded.

The two-count indictment, handed up by a federal grand jury, accused the four of staging an armed raid on the commune in Kendall, N.Y., in December, 1969.

Named in the indictments were Richard J. Wagner, a former Orleans County deputy sheriff; Bryon J. Nichols, 28, of Cheektowaga, N.Y.; Alan R. Magee, 23, of Batavia, N.Y., and Richard M. Williams, 26, identified as a graduate student at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Rights Case

The indictment alleged the four conspired together and with others to violate the civil rights of nine members of the commune and to oppress, threaten and intimidate them in violation of their rights.

The indictment also accused the four of entering the home — with force of arms — and seizing, detaining and controlling the occupants in violation of their constitutional rights.

One of the residents of the commune, Michael E. Hackett, 26, was shot and wounded in both legs during the raid.

Discussed

The case drew national attention last May when the Buffalo Evening News disclosed in a copyrighted story that Nichols and Magee told U.S. Attorney H. Kenneth Schroeder they and an unnamed third party raided the commune with the intention of terrorizing the residents and killing them if necessary to drive them out of the county.

Nichols and Magee allegedly told Schroeder last May that they and another person

discussed plans for the raid on several occasions at the Orleans County Sheriff's Department.

The two said that they and their companion wore slitted pillow cases over their heads during the raid while a fourth man waited in a getaway car, the newspaper said.

They allegedly said they broke into the house during a blinding snowstorm and shot Hackett when he tried to escape up a staircase.

Nichols was described by the news as "a tough undercover agent for many police agencies."