

By **JOHN KIFNER**

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GAINESVILLE, Fla., Aug 9— The defense began today its efforts to crack the testimony of the Government's star witness, William W. Lemmer, in the trial of seven antiwar veterans and a supporter charged with plotting assault on the Republican National Convention with automatic weapons, slingshots and crossbows.

In bench conferences before Federal District Judge Winston E. Arnow and a 40-minute hearing in the judge's chambers, the prosecution fought to keep Mr. Lemmer's medical history out of the trial.

The defense, on the other hand, appeared thwarted by Judge Arnow in its attempts to trace Mr. Lemmer's activities as an informer for the Federal Bureau of Investigation and to portray him as an agent-provocate who thought up plots for which others were arrested.

Judge Arnow ruled that the questions went too far afield.

His ruling came as a defense attorney, Nancy Stearns, began asking Mr. Lemmer about an incident in August last year when he and four others were seized with a U-haul trailer full of wild Kansas marijuana.

Tape-Recorded 'Confession'

All of the other members of the group were arrested, but Mr. Lemmer was set free.

In a 17-hour tape-recorded "confession" given to two members of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War after he had been unmasked as an informer, he said that his release had been arranged by the F.B.I.

After prosecution objections had been sustained, another defense attorney, Brady Coleman, attempted to ask about an incident on Oct. 15, 1971,

when F.B.I. agents and the local police, hiding at the Old Main Building at the University of Arkansas arrested 19-year-old Mark C. Vanciel with a fire-bomb. Mr. Coleman's questions, too, were stopped.

In an affidavit in Federal District Court in Tallahassee, the two veterans who questioned Mr. Lemmer, Martin Jordan and Donald C. Donner, said that he had told them he had "counseled, aided and abetted a teenager in a plot to blow up Old Main."

After the defense attorneys protested that in previous cases the conduct of informers and undercover agents had been held a valid issue, Judge Arnow recessed the trial while lawyers for both sides prepared legal briefs on the question.

Acts as Own Lawyer

Mr. Lemmer is staying in a Holiday Inn in a room, according to a well-placed source that opens onto that of Richard O'Connell, his former Fayetteville F.B.I. control agent. He is signing his meal checks "U. S. Lemmer" and decorating them with a drawing of a teddy bear similar to the ones he used to draw on the letters he sent to his former wife, Mary.

The cross-examination began with a defendant, William L. Patterson, acting as his own lawyer, asking Mr. Lemmer a series of questions about meetings with various people. Mr. Lemmer said that he did not remember most of them.

The defense asked Mr. Lemmer if he was familiar with "Mary, Queen of Arkansas," the title of a song on an album by Bruce Springstein, which the veterans feel contains similarities to their case.

Another song on the album contains the lyric "and now, young Scott with a slingshot,

finally found a tender spot . . ." One defendant, Scott Camil, is the alleged ringleader of the alleged slingshot plot.

Late this afternoon, Judge Arnow ordered the telephones in the basement press room of the courthouse inspected for possible bugs.

Witness Investigated

Meanwhile, it was learned that Joseph W. Fennell, the Government's second prosecution witness was under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for alleged false bookkeeping and mispending of funds while director of the Alachua County Housing Authority here.

"Right now, it's in the hands of the United States Attorney's Office in Tallahassee," a bureau spokesman in Jacksonville told Will Corbin, a Gainesville Sun reporter.

"I think Carrouth would be about the only one who could help you on that," he said.

Jack Carrouth, the chief courtroom prosecutor in the veterans trial declined comment.

Mr. Fennell, an employee of a local private detective agency, has also been arrested twice on bad check charges, The Sun reported.

Mr. Fennell testified that a defendant Scott Camil, had discussed with him plans for violence at the Republican National Convention.

The first prosecution witness, Mr. Fennell's boss, Charles R. Marshall, swore that he had been a policeman in the town of Pinellas Park for three years, that he currently carried a private investigator's license and that he concealed weapons permit had been routinely rescinded because he was no longer in the security guard business.

Chief Ernest Van Horn of the Pinellas Park Police Department said however, that Mr. Marshall had never been on the force there. The Florida Bureau of Licenses said that the private detective license had been revoked for nonpayment of fee and that Mr. Marshall's purported police experience was the basis on which it had been issued.

The local District Attorney's and County Sheriff's Offices said that they had recommended that Mr. Marshall's concealed weapons license be taken away.