

Informer Says Berrigan Told of Entering Tunnels

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An ex-convict testified today that the Rev. Philip F. Berrigan told him in a prison yard conversation that the priest had posed as an underground electrician and entered utility tunnels in Washington to determine the feasibility of blowing them up as an antiwar gesture.

The Government's main witness, Boyd F. Douglas Jr., an informer for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, said he acted during the spring and summer of 1970 as a trusted courier between Father Berrigan, who was his fellow prisoner at the Federal penitentiary in Lewisburg, and a group of antiwar activists.

He said he soon became disturbed by the messages and started copying them even before the F.B.I. enlisted him as an informer. He said he did this so that the authorities would appreciate "the threat of these people to the United States Government."

The Government charges that Father Berrigan and six other defendants conspired to blow up heating tunnels to Government buildings on Washington's Birthday, 1970, and to kidnap the Presidential aide Henry A. Kissinger the next day. The group is also charged with plotting raids on draft boards in other Eastern cities, the indictment alleges.

Douglas, who is a dark pudgy man with a double chin and black hair brushed down over one side of his forehead, was a fairly relaxed witness when Assistant Attorney General William S. Lynch called him to the stand.

As he entered the courtroom, Douglas cast a fleeting glance at Father Berrigan and smiled. The priest regarded him sternly. Father Berrigan took copious notes during the informer's testimony.

Douglas said he was serving a five-year term at Lewisburg for armed assault on an F.B.I. agent and for interstate transportation of forged securities when Father Berrigan was

brought to the prison early in May, 1970, to serve six years for destruction of draft records in Baltimore and Catonsville, Md.

By that time Douglas had won unusual privileges at Lewisburg. Alone among 1,400 prisoners he was allowed to attend classes at Bucknell University, where he took courses in psychology and political science and became acquainted with the chairman of the political science department, Dr. Richard Drinnon.

Arrival of Priest

He said he had never heard of Father Berrigan until Dr. Drinnon told him in late April that the priest was about to be confined to Lewisburg. After Father Berrigan arrived, Douglas approached him and said, according to the testimony, that he had been told by Dr. Drinnon to "do what I could" for the priest.

Douglas said he had presented himself as a man who had been betrayed by the prison authorities. He said he told the priest he had volunteered for medical tests that left scars on his arms and legs, which he testified was true, and that the Government had promised to reward him with parole, which he testified was not true.

The witness went on:

"Father Phil said, 'Is there any way you could get messages out or make phone calls to a friend of mine?'"

"I said I could get a letter out if that's what he wanted."

Thus, according to the testimony, began Douglas's brief career as a prison courier. Douglas testified that beginning with the very first letter, which he said was addressed to a New York nun, Sister Elizabeth McAlister, one of the defendants, he read all the contents.

He said he gave the first letters to Dr. Drinnon to be forwarded, but later, he said, Father Berrigan suggested bypassing Dr. Drinnon, explaining that the educator had refused to become involved in a draft board raid and that he "didn't entirely trust Drinnon."

So at Father Berrigan's suggestion, Douglas testified, he began transmitting and receiving mail for the priest.

Meanwhile in prison yard chats, Douglas said, he told Father Berrigan that he was "quite sympathetic to the whole philosophy of burning draft board records."

Douglas said that one day in May, 1970, Father Berrigan confided that he had looked at "several projects throughout the country" and had fixed on "the destruction of utility systems in Washington."

He said he had been down in the tunnel system with another individual," Douglas testified. "He said he posed as an electrical engineer. There was no problem in getting access and several General Services

Administration people raised no objection when they encountered him there.

"Father Berrigan said that to destroy the pipes would have utmost impact on the United States Government if destroyed and destroyed right," Douglas said.

Douglas testified the priest told him he entered the tunnel system unchallenged through the Forrestal Building, known in Washington as the Little Pentagon because it contains Defense Department offices.

Douglas said he had lied to the priest, posing as an expert on explosives after the priest had expressed concern lest the blasts injure anyone. Father Berrigan was "afraid of explosions erupting into Pennsylvania Avenue," Douglas said.