

Witness at Berrigan Trial Says He Posed as 'Political Prisoner'

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By HOMER BIGART MAR 10 1972

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HARRISBURG, Pa., March 9 —Boyd F. Douglas Jr. admitted under cross-examination today that he posed as a "political prisoner" while gathering information about an alleged conspiracy by priests and nuns to kidnap Henry A. Kissinger, the Presidential aide. But Douglas, an informer for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, flushed and cried out, "That is a lie!" when asked if he had planned to extort money from the Roman Catholic Left.

Douglas who has received more than \$9,000 from the bureau for information about the Rev. Philip F. Berrigan and six other antiwar activists, said that he told students and faculty members at Bucknell University in 1970 that he had been convicted of conspiring to blow up a military convoy carrying napalm. That was a lie, he admitted today.

At that time he was serving a five-year term in the Federal prison at Lewisburg, Pa., for passing bad check and pulling a gun on an arresting Federal agent.

Allowed to leave prison daily and attend classes at nearby Bucknell, Douglas became a courier of messages between Father Berrigan, who was imprisoned for destroying draft records, and other defendants.

Says He Lied to F.B.I.

Douglas admitted several other lies and deceptions in cross-examination by Terry F. Lenzner, defense counsel.

He once lied to the F.B.I., he said, when he told an agent that he did not know how a statement by Father Berrigan had been carried to a group of demonstrators outside the prison gate who were protesting the conditions of the priest's confinement.

Douglas said that he himself had slipped the priest's statement to the crowd. Asked why he lied to the bureau, he replied that he "didn't want to create friction between the F.B.I. and the Federal Bureau of Prisons."

The defense suggested that at least one piece of Government evidence had been fabricated to support an exposure of the alleged conspiracy by J. Edgar Hoover, director of the bureau. Mr. Hoover told a Senate subcommittee Nov. 27, 1970, that an "anarchist group" was plotting to kidnap a high Government official and blow up heating tunnels serving Government buildings in Washington.

'Agenda' for Destruction

The disputed evidence included an alleged "agenda" that Douglas said was dictated to him by Father Berrigan just before the priest was transferred to Danbury, Conn.

Douglas said that Father Berrigan called him into the prison library one day in late August, 1970. He said that the priest told him to write in his notebook 15 items of information essential to the destruction of the tunnel system in

Washington, such as the dimensions of the tunnels and the precise location of generators.

He said Father Berrigan told him that another defendant, the Rev. Joseph R. Wenderoth, would obtain the information.

Although Douglas had been giving information daily to the F.B.I., he said he did not disclose this document to the bureau until Dec. 5, 1970, more than a week after Mr. Hoover's statement.

Forgot the Evidence

He said that he had forgotten it, along with a "little black notebook" containing telephone numbers. He said that he remembered and produced these items when Federal agents, after Mr. Hoover's disclosure, began questioning him for everything he knew about the Berrigan group.

Paul O'Dwyer, another defense lawyer, questioned Douglas about what he called the meager information the informer supplied about the alleged conspiracy in the three months before Mr. Hoover spoke.

Mr. O'Dwyer had the witness read a long series of bureau reports of information received from him. Unlike earlier letters that sketched the alleged plot, the messages of September, October and November contained only vague references to the "Washington project."

Douglas reported a telephone message from one defendant, Sister Elizabeth McAlister, on Nov. 24, in which the New York nun counseled patience, purportedly telling Douglas, "Plans take a lot of work to get organized."

"Were you impatient?" Mr. O'Dwyer asked.

Douglas, who has denied he served as a provocateur, said slowly, "I might possibly have asked her where the plans were then."