

Security Aide for Indians Says

By JOHN KIFNER

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CHICAGO, March 12—The American Indian Movement's chief security officer during the trial of the leaders of the Wounded Knee take-over said today that he was a paid informer for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The Government, in a sworn affidavit at the trial, had appeared to contend that it had no informer in the defense ranks.

The informer, Douglass Durham, was the chief aide and confidante of Dennis J. Banks, one of the two defendants and a co-leader of the American Indian Movement. In addition to being the organization's national security director, he became, in effect, its chief bureaucrat.

"I exercised so much control that you couldn't see Dennis or Russell [Means, the other defendant and co-leader] without going through me, you couldn't contact any other chapter without going through me, you couldn't contact any other chapter without going through me, and if you wanted money you had to see me," Mr. Durham said.

Cash Payments Raised

During the trial, Mr. Durham was the only person, other than defendants and lawyers, with regular access to the room in which defense strategy was planned. He said that his proximity to the A.I.M. leadership had caused his cash payments from the F.B.I. to be raised from \$900 a month to \$1,100.

He said he was given a special telephone number during the trial, which was held in St. Paul, to call a three-man F.B.I. team headed by Ray Williams.

Reached at the Minneapolis office of the F.B.I., Special Agent Ray Williams said, "We are unable to comment on that."

Following the 71-day occupation of the village of Wounded Knee on the Oglala Sioux reservation of Pine Ridge in South Dakota by more than 200 Indian militants in the late winter and early spring of 1973, Mr. Means and Mr. Banks were indicted on Federal charges of conspiracy, larceny and assault on government officers.

Charges Dismissed

The charges were dismissed after an eight-and-a-half-month trial last Sept. 17 by Judge Frederick J. Nichol of Federal District Court when a juror became sick and the Government declined to proceed with a jury of 11. A Government appeal on the case was argued yesterday in St. Louis.

In dismissing the charges, Judge Nichol assailed the prosecution, contending that it had deliberately deceived the court. He was particularly critical of the F.B.I., whose agents, he said, had given testimony that was not true, and had withheld documents or furnished altered documents to defense attorneys.

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He Was F. B. I. Informer

"It's hard for me to believe that the F.B.I., which I have revered for so long, has stooped so low," the judge said.

In an interview last night, the 37-year-old Mr. Durham described what he said were his activities as an F.B.I. informer.

His cover was broken on Friday, he said, when, after some members of the group became suspicious, he was confronted with law enforcement documents that proved his role as an informer.

He said he was "relieved" because he had come to respect Mr. Banks and to believe that A.I.M. was a "legal, social organization that wasn't doing anything wrong."

Mr. Durham, a large man with his black, shoulder-length hair, recounted his career as a police undercover agent in his native city of Des Moines, Iowa.

He said that after serving in the Marine Corps, he joined the Des Moines police force, working in a burglar-infested neighborhood, but left the force after his wife died.

He later worked in and then

managed a series of restaurants, some of which became hangouts for burglars, Mr. Durham said.

At the same time, he added, he was learning to fly a plane and to scuba dive, and was developing skills as a photographer, studying locks and burglar tools and reading about psychology—all abilities that would eventually serve him as an informer.

He said that he began passing the information to the F.B.I. and the local police, and eventually became a police undercover operative on criminal cases in several Midwestern cities.

He said he was taking photographs for an underground paper called Pax, whose editor

asked him to go to Wounded Knee during the Indian take-over.

Reporting this to the F.B.I., he entered the encampment with press credentials, took photographs and gave a report on the Indian group's defenses.

After returning to Des Moines, he said, the F.B.I. suggested that he get in touch with Harvey Major, the leader of the local A.I.M. chapter. Mr. Durham became the publicity officer and later the assistant director of the chapter.

Mr. Durham's swarthy skin, dark eyes, and high cheekbones gives him an Indian look, and appearance heightened by the large turquoise ring and beaded belt buckle he wears and by the headband he

wore around his hair when he was the Indian group's chief security officer. He told the A.I.M. members that he was one-fourth Chippewa.

At one point, he said he helped lead an armed take-over of the Grimes State Office Building in Des Moines. He said he first informed the state police of the impending take-over, and that they paid a \$100 fine he received for disturbing the peace.

It was his skill as a pilot that first brought him close to Mr. Banks, he said, and the F.B.I. encouraged him to maintain the relationship.

Mr. Banks had gone into hiding in Canada after the in-

dictment and before the bond was raised. He got a message to Mr. Durham to meet him in Yellow Knife, in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Durham did, and Mr. Banks gave him two rolls of movie film that Mr. Durham turned over to the F.B.I.

Then, with the F.B.I.'s knowledge, Mr. Durham again flew to Canada in a rented plane and spirited Mr. Banks to Rapid City, S.D., in time to avoid forfeiting bond on state charges.

Later, Mr. Durham said that he flew Mr. Banks around the country on speaking trips and that at one point the F.B.I. gave him a \$1,000 "bonus," made out to the charter service, to pay for the plane.