

AUG 11 1972

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Assassination Threat

NEW YORK AP - A young man was arrested Friday on a charge of attempting to arrange the assassination of President Nixon. Andrew B. Topping, 27, of Manhattan, was held in \$500,000 bail on a charge of threatening and attempting to kill the President of the United States.

Topping, dressed in a glen plaid suit, calmly answered questions as he was arraigned before U.S. Magistrate Martin D. Jacobs in the U.S. Courthouse on Foley Square.

Assistant U.S. Attorney William B. Gray said that Topping met Thursday night with Secret Service undercover agent Stewart J. Henry who posed as a killer for hire, and negotiated a deal to kill the President.

Topping was arrested at the Central Park Boat Basin as he gave the undercover agent \$1,000, Gray said.

Gray said that about a week ago, Topping made a request for an appointment with the President, which prompted a routine Secret Service inquiry.

The prosecutor said that, several days ago, a friend of Topping came to the Secret Service and reported that Topping had asked him to help find someone who could be hired to kill the President.

Gray said that Henry was assigned to pose as a prospective hireling and met Thursday night with Topping and the unnamed friend who had alerted the Secret Service.

Larry Greenberg, a Legal Aid Society lawyer representing the defendant at the arraignment, said Topping had lived virtually all his life in an apartment on West End Avenue and resided there now with his mother, Mrs. Sophia Topping, and his son, born five weeks ago, Gray said.

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Gray told the magistrate that Topping's wife had died under "mysterious circumstances" recently. He said when police went to the apartment they found weapons, seized them and arrested Topping. On that occasion the young man was released on his own recognizance on the earlier charge.

Gray, arguing for \$600,000 bail, said Topping recently had evidenced some financial affluence by "spending a considerable amount of money" for Pinkerton guards. The prosecutor did not say why Topping had hired the private protection service.

Topping, standing before the magistrate in handcuffs, told Jacobs in a clear, low voice, that he could afford an attorney and that he would be represented by a private lawyer on his next appearance, which Jacobs set for August 21.

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