

Gainesville FBI Men After Taps

GAINESVILLE (Fla.) — (UPI) — The prosecution in the Gainesville Eight conspiracy trial claimed yesterday that two FBI agents accused of spying on defense attorneys were looking for taps on the telephones of the U.S. Attorney and judge in the case.

The agents were discovered with electronic surveillance equipment on the opening day of the trial Tuesday in a broom closet next to the defense room.

The attorneys were talking to defendants John Briggs, Scott Camil, Alton Foss, John Kniffen, Peter Mahoney, Stan Michelsen, William Patterson and John Perdue — accused of plotting to disrupt the Republican National Convention — when the agents were spotted in the broom closet.

"The government intends to show that prior to Tuesday, there was possible evidence of a wiretap going to the U.S. Attorney's office," Justice Department Attorney Robert Schneider told Judge Winston Arnow at a hearing yesterday.

Later, Deputy U.S. Marshal William A. Joyce said he had discussed "an alleged wiretap problem in the building" with agent Carl Ekblad, one of the two FBI men. Joyce said one of the suspected taps was to the judge's office.

Ekblad and agent Robert Romann were discovered by Arthur Eckendorf, a New York psychologist and a member of the Vietnam Veterans against the war, who spotted somebody through a grate connecting the defense attorney's office with the broom closet.