

JAN 12 1973

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, JANUARY 12, 1973

Student Spy May Lose Credit for Political Work

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 11 — Thomas James Gregory, the college student who became a political spy, may not graduate as soon as he had planned.

He was to receive a degree in April from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, but a faculty member there said today that Mr. Gregory would not be given academic credits for working in, writing about and simultaneously spying on the Presidential campaigns of two Democrats last summer.

Mr. Gregory, 25 years old, testified in the Watergate bugging-burglary trial here today and said that he was hired by E. Howard Hunt Jr. last spring to engage in political espionage against Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine, then the front-running Democratic candidate.

Later, he said, he performed the same task from within the campaign organization of the eventual Democratic nominee, Senator George McGovern of South Dakota.

As part of an honors program for exceptionally bright and industrious students, he was to have received 16 credits for his participation in those campaigns and his authorship



Associated Press

Thomas James Gregory

of a term paper about his experiences.

"But if all of this is true, then he won't get any credits," said J. Keith Melville, Mr. Gregory's faculty adviser at the university. "At least he won't get any from me. He was supposed to be working for the Democrats, not against them."

Another faculty member at Brigham Young said he believed that without the 16 credits, Mr. Gregory would be short of the required number for graduation.

Campus Surprises

While he was testifying here today, news of his involvement in an alleged political espionage scheme directed at the Democrats last year took the conservative campus by surprise. It was the major story on the university newspaper's front page, and, according to several students, widely discussed on the campus.

"This is creating quite a stir around here," said one newspaper staff member.

Nevertheless, there apparently were few among the 25,000 Brigham Young students who knew much about Mr. Gregory or his habits. And from conversations with some who did know him, there emerged a contradictory picture of an enigmatic young man.

His roommate in a small boarding house near the campus said he had always believed him to be a Democrat. "I decided after several arguments not to discuss politics with him again," said George Oates. "He was such a 'gung-ho' Democrat, it was impossible."

But another friend of seven years said that Mr. Gregory "is anything but a Democrat. He's a steady, conservative Republican."

Absence Not Explained

"I always sort of thought of him as a loner," Mr. Oates said, in contrast to the appraisal of another student who described him as "quite gregarious."

But however his personality was interpreted by his associates, all agreed that Mr. Gregory's intellectual capability was extraordinary. "He's bright,

really bright," said Mr. Oates, who said he had been told nothing about his roommate's absence from the school this week.

Last week, along with all the other students at Brigham Young, a Mormon institution, Mr. Gregory had worked his way through the long registration lines to sign up for the winter-quarter classes; but when they began Monday, he was absent.

On that same day, his name appeared on a list of witnesses to testify for the prosecution here in the trial of the seven men accused of breaking into the Democratic National committee headquarters in the Watergate apartment-office complex last June.

Yesterday, the chief prosecutor roughly sketched the dimensions of Mr. Gregory's involvement—his recruitment by Mr. Hunt, the defendant who pleaded guilty today, his jobs in the headquarters of Senators Muskie and McGovern, his drugstore meetings to receive his \$175 weekly salary, and his decision to quit when asked to participate in a burglary.

On the witness stand today, Mr. Gregory freely reiterated that account, and in Provo, Mr. Melville, his faculty adviser or his honors program, spoke angrily about his student and "the nefarious creeps who came skulking around and lured him into it for \$175 a week."

He paused in his remarks before concluding, more sadness than anger in his voice: "I suppose the words 'honors program' have a kind of a strange ring in this context, don't they?"