

Man Cited in Threat to Nixon Gives Up

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ARROYO HONDO, N. M., Aug. 22 — Edwin M. Gaudet, who was accused of threatening President Nixon's life last week in New Orleans, surrendered to Federal and local officers today after almost two days of hiding in the rugged mountains of northern New Mexico.

Federal magistrate Robert McCoy ordered Mr. Gaudet jailed when he was unable to raise a \$100,000 bond. A Federal hearing will be held next Thursday to determine whether there is enough evidence to return him to New Orleans for trial.

Mr. Gaudet was not available for questions but his friends and neighbors maintained that the entire episode had been a case of mistaken identity. They said he was here Aug. 15, the day the alleged threat was made in New Orleans.

Federal and local officials in New Orleans continued to investigate another, separate report of a conspiracy to kill Mr. Nixon during his visit to New Orleans Monday. There was no apparent connection between that supposed conspiracy and Mr. Gaudet.

Persuaded to Give Up

Mr. Gaudet surrendered at noon on a dusty, rocky mountain road about a mile from this village after his wife and a cousin, Stanley Gaudet, found him last night and persuaded him to give himself up.

Dozens of local policemen and Federal Secret Service agents who had been searching for him agreed to pull back and let his wife and cousin try to bring him out.

Mr. Gaudet, 33 years old, a former New Orleans policeman, had spent two nights and part of two days hiding among the low juniper and piñon trees in the canyons and foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. He and his wife and two children have lived for a year at the Morning Star commune on land owned by Michael Duncan, a young native of North Carolina. The commune has disintegrated and most of its members have left. Mr. Duncan, who tired of having the commune on his land, got a court order in March evicting the group. Only the Gaudets and two other families remained.

In spite of his dissatisfaction with the commune, Mr. Duncan defended Mr. Gaudet against the charge that he had been overheard in a New Orleans drugstore saying that someone should kill the President and that he would be willing to do it if no one else would.

"We told the Federal officers that it couldn't possibly be Ed die," Mr. Duncan said this afternoon after the surrender. "He had been back from New Orleans a week when that [the threat] occurred."

Mr. Duncan said he thought that the New Orleans police had informed the Federal officers about Mr. Gaudet because "they had it in for him."

Mr. Gaudet left the New Orleans police force under a cloud several years ago. He was accused at the time of having "shot up" a French Quarter bar for no apparent reason. Mr. Duncan said that Mr. Gaudet had told him that he resigned because he disapproved of alleged police practices in New

Orleans, such as robbing drunks of their money.

Mr. Gaudet has a reputation among his friends for quick-tempered, impetuous behavior.

An impulsive act by Mr. Gaudet may have been responsible for expanding an attempt to arrest him into a full-fledged manhunt. When a Secret Service agent and some local officers tried to arrest him at the commune Monday, he ran off, saying he was not the man they wanted. A little later, he and other local policemen were involved in a shooting incident.

Shots were fired, but whether policemen and Mr. Gaudet fired directly at each other is disputed.

Friends say that Mr. Gaudet remained in hiding because he feared that law-enforcement officers would shoot him if he showed himself.

Accused of Assault

The Taos County district attorney charged Mr. Gaudet this afternoon with three counts of assaulting a police officer with intent to kill.

The Gaudets apparently had a simple but poor life here. They have subsisted on food bought with Federal food stamps and vegetables raised in a garden. He has had no job.

Asked to describe Mr. Gaudet's politics, Mr. Duncan replied with apparent reluctance, "You might say he's a primitive, simple, agrarian communist. I hesitate to use the word communist because people might misunderstand. He believes that people ought to have a chance to work the land. He's not an angry young man, not the revolutionary type who says, 'Let's burn it down.'"