

Reduced Charge in Gaudet Case

Taos, N.M.

Edwin Gaudet was jailed yesterday on a reduced charge that he fired at a policeman who was trying to arrest him.

A federal charge of threatening to kill President Nixon was dropped last Friday when a witness was unable to identify Gaudet as the man she said she heard make the threat.

Gaudet was held in this northern New Mexico town in lieu of \$25,000 bond. He originally was held in Albuquerque under \$300,000 bond on three state counts of assault stemming from a Secret Service agent's effort to arrest Gaudet at a commune near Taos on August 2.

Gaudet eluded officers in the mountains for two days before he surrendered peacefully last Wednesday.

PLEA

Gaudet appeared before a magistrate but said he would talk to an attorney before entering a plea.

Assistant District Attorney James Brandenburg said he reduced the charge from three counts of shooting at officers to one count because the other two policemen could not positively testify that Gaudet was firing at them.

Brandenburg said one of these officers, however, will testify he saw Gaudet aim his rifle and fire at another policeman.

INTERVIEW

In an interview, Gaudet said he fired one shot on Monday at the ground to stop a non-uniformed man who was aiming a pistol at him.

He repeated what his cousin, Stanley Gaudet, said earlier: that his rifle jammed after the first and only shot was fired.

"The first thing that went through my mind was he was some kind of crazy rancher. I did not make an attempt on the life of this man. I made an attempt to make him fall back," Gaudet said.

Gaudet said he never would have left the hills around Morning Star Commune if he had known the state charges were going to be filed against him.

He said he came down because he knew the federal charge of threatening the life of the President in New Orleans "was false and could be exposed."

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