

37 Protesters at White House Liken Nixon to Herod

WASHINGTON, Dec. 25 (UPI)—In what the Rev. Philip E. Berrigan called "our way of celebrating Christmas," 37 protesters performed a medieval morality play in front of the White House today and said a mass that likened President Nixon to King Herod. Six persons were arrested.

Two protesters were arrested for vaulting the black iron fence around the White House and walking toward the mansion where Mr. Nixon was having Christmas dinner with his family. The two demonstrators, Deborah Daniell and Mitchell Snyder, were charged by the Secret Service with unlawful entry.

The two, according to an eyewitness, John McGuirk, "went over the fence and walked directly toward the rotunda. Mitch was grabbed right away and hauled off. Debbie knelt down and was carried off. They were trying to deliver pictures of Vietnamese children who were mutilated because of Nixon's orders."

Four other protesters who chained themselves to the fence were arrested on charges of disorderly conduct. They were identified as Rosemary Brandle, Teresa Kohlenberg, Gerard Gange and Joan Cavanaugh.

Dolls Tossed Over Fence

A sack of mutilated and bloody baby dolls was tossed over the fence as part of the protest. "It was our way of celebrating Christmas," said Father Berrigan, the antiwar priest who was jailed for pouring blood on draft files in Catonsville, Md., in 1968.

The morality play, performed by the protesters in medieval costumes, portrays Herod, the king who, according to Christian theology, killed all infants under the age of 2 in Palestine and was a "prince of purgatory and chief captain of hell." Jesus and His parents escaped to



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Protesters who performed a medieval morality play yesterday near the White House

Egypt and returned after Herod had died.

"In light of what is going on around the world and especially in Indochina, with a continuing war there, we wanted to worship as Christians here and have not only a morality play and a Christian liturgy," Father Berrigan said, adding: "We also wanted to face our leader in some way—as those people who went over the fence did—with the massacre of innocents in Indochina over the past 10

years. It's still going on today. The kids take the brunt of it, so we tied in Christmas with the feast of the Holy Innocents and we liken Herod to Nixon."

Family Celebration

Inside the White House, President Nixon and his family celebrated Christmas quietly, exchanging gifts in the family quarters.

The Nixons exchanged gifts around a gaily decorated tree at breakfast time. The gifts

were a family secret. Mrs. Nixon has maintained that the family does not exchange many gifts but prefers to donate to charities.

The Nixons' elder daughter and her husband, Edward F. Cox, were the only ones present with the couple in the breakfast gift exchanges. Their younger daughter and her husband, David Eisenhower, visited his parents in Phoenixville, Pa., and arrived at the White House later in the day.