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Claim of 'FBI Informer'

Right-Wing Death Plots

Los Angeles

Right-wing organizations in San Diego made death threats against liberals and planned to assassinate Angela Davis, Jerry Rubin and President Nixon under the financial support of an FBI informer, the Los Angeles Times reports.

In a lengthy interview yesterday, Howard Berry Godfrey, a 32-year-old former San Diego city fireman, told the Times of rising through the ranks of extremist right-wing organizations concurrently with his rise in pay as an FBI informer.

Godfrey said he first became involved in right-wing groups on 1967 when a San Diego FBI agent "asked me to infiltrate and furnish some information." He rose to the head of the San Diego branch of the Minutemen and was a cofounder of the paramilitary Secret Army Organization (SAO).

He said the FBI did not direct the terror campaign against liberals, but he told the bureau about the actions, sometimes before the events.

Contacted by the Times, FBI Director Clarence Kelley said, "We did not commission him (Godfrey) nor would we condone him to commit any acts that have been alleged. We certainly would not engage in any acts of that type."

Among the exploits reported by Godfrey to the Times:

•Plotting the assassination of President Nixon, who the right-wing groups believed to be too liberal in his dealings with the people's Republic of China.

•Planning to kill controversial radicals Angela Davis, Jerry Rubin and Marxist professor Herbert Marcuse.

•Damaging the printing plants and the firebombing staffers' cars at two now-defunct alternative newspapers, the Street Journal and the Door.

•Threatening the life of San Diego city councilwoman Maureen O'Connor and her sister.

•Firing shots and wounding a woman guest at the home of Peter Bohmer, a Marxist economics professor at San Diego State College.

Godfrey said the FBI's position concerning his terrorist activities was, "Stay out of as much as I could. Stay in, but stay out. In other words, I was not embouraged to participate in any illegal activities and encouraged to prevent as much illegal activity as I could, which I did."

Godfrey said he once received a financial bonus from the FBI after he turned in files stolen in a series of burglaries at the offices of the Peace and Freedom party and leftist organizations.

Asked if he was encouraged to steal, Godfrey said, "Well, the FBI was happy to get the files, but it's hard to say whether it was encouragement of the FBI or the agent. I don't know whether the encouragement was official or unofficial."

Godfrey's activities are now being studied by the Senate select committee on intelligence.

His double role ended in 1972 when he was subpoenaed to appear before a San Diego county grand jury investigating the SAO.

Jerry Lynn Davis, an SAO member who was indicted after Godfrey's testimony, indicated that Godfrey's FBI support was quite tangible. "There were times when we could not have existed without his financial support." Davis said.

An FBI agent with the San Diego office, Jordan Naylor, vouched for Godfrey's reliability. "Anything you've gotten from him you can pretty well stay with... I trust him implicitly," said Naylor. "You can depend on what he says as accurate..."

Godfrey said he was convinced the assassination plots against Davis and Marcuse would have been carried out, but "I talked it down to prevent it from happening. I said it would make them (Davis and Marcuse) martyrs."

The planning of an attack on Mr. Nixon took place in May, 1972.

At that stage, Godfrey tried but failed to withdraw as an FBI informant.

Associated Press

Noted in following files:
W/gate 25 Jun 73
Infiltrators 25 Jun 73
Nixon 27 Jan 76
CIA (d) 27 Jun 75

See also WK Star-Times, 25 Jun 73, filed W/gate.
See LA Free Press, 8 Sep 72, ~~filed~~ filed Infiltrators.

x sub...
27 Jun 73
...
... 12 Jan 76