

UW bombing no surprise to FBI, magazine reports

DEC 28 1978

Sterling Hall Bombing 2 col

By William R. Wineke
Of The State Journal

Mother Jones, a San Francisco-based investigative magazine, will assert in its February/March issue that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had advance knowledge of the August, 1970 bombing of the Army Mathematics Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The magazine will charge that FBI informers had infiltrated the so-called "New Year's Gang," which allegedly bombed the AMRC and also the Badger Army Ammunition Plant on New Year's Day, 1970 and, later, the University Primate Laboratory and that the FBI knew of the plans to bomb the AMRC.

A physics graduate student, Robert Fassnacht, was killed in the AMRC bombing.

The bombing was later traced to four Madison residents, Karleton Armstrong, his brother, Dwight, David Fine and Leo Burt.

The Armstrongs and Fine are now in prison; Burt has never been captured.

The Madison FBI office said the bombing is still under investigation because Burt has not yet been apprehended and that the FBI would have no comment on the allegations.

According to the publisher of Mother Jones, Mark Dowie, the February/March issue of the magazine has not yet been published.

But, he said, the article on the bombing is the result of a nine-month investigation by the Center for Investigative Reporting, an Oakland, Calif., organization of investigative writers that provides internships for journalism students and provides services to publications unable to provide their own investigative staffs.

The investigation has uncovered, the magazine said, "voluminous and compelling evidence suggesting that a shadowy partner in crime to the bombing and accidental death of a 33-year-old scientist was none other than the FBI itself."

Dowie said the magazine will also show that "police agents not only followed the van (used to blow up the building) to the Math Center but they

knew what was in the van and what was going to happen."

In a telephone interview, Dowie said the FBI had also fed its information to local police authorities, though he added that "we don't know which police agencies they were."

Ralph Hanson, chief of protection and security at the UW, said Wednesday "I didn't know anything about the bombing before it happened and I don't think anyone did except the people who did the bombing."

Former Dane County District Attorney James Boll said his office had no information about the bombing until the federal government issued

warrants for the arrest of the suspects and added that former Sheriff Vernon Leslie "was as surprised as I when the federal charges came out."

Leslie could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Take-Over, a local "underground" publication has insisted for years that the FBI knew in advance of the bombing plans and Karleton Armstrong told reporters in a press conference last June that he believes the government had foreknowledge of the bombing and that he was "used" by the government to discredit the anti-war movement.

Armstrong's attorney, Mark Frankel, said Wednesday he has seen some of the preliminary drafts of the Mother Jones article and that they appeared to build a "strong circumstantial case" that the government did know of the bombing plans in advance.

Both Frankel and Dowie said one reason the government should have known of the plans is that, in Dowie's words "all of them talked too much."

In addition, the magazine will insist that the FBI had a fingerprint from the Badger Ammunition Plant bombing which turned out to be Karleton Armstrong's.

The Mother Jones article was written by David Newman, Sandra Sutherland and Jon Stewart. Newman is a former editor of the Daily Cardinal, a UW-Madison student newspaper.



Wisconsin
State Journal

Metro

• Thursday

December 28, 1978

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One bombing suspect at large

Of the four suspects in the 1970 bombing of the Army Mathematics Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, three are in jail and one, Leo Burt, remains at large.

Karleton Armstrong, 32, a Madison native, is completing a 14-year prison term at the Fox Lake Correctional Institution. He was arrested in February, 1972, in Toronto and sentenced to 23 years in jail in November, 1973. Last June, Circuit Judge P. Charles Jones reduced his sentence to 14 years, making him eligible for release Oct. 7, 1979.

His brother, Dwight Armstrong, 26, was captured in Toronto on April 9, 1977, and was sentenced to seven years in prison on June 10 of that year by Federal Judge Myron Gordon. He is serving his term in the Oxford federal prison.

David Fine, 26, was arrested in California on June 7, 1976, and is serving a seven-year term at the Robert F. Kennedy Youth Center in Morgantown, Va.

Burt, 30, is from Haverstown, Pa.