

Grand Jurors Hear Father of Suspects

By PATRICIA SIMMS
Of The State Journal Staff

Donald Armstrong, father of two men charged in the Aug. 24 bombing of the Sterling Hall-Army Math Research Center, testified before the Dane County Grand Jury Tuesday after obtaining immunity.

Circuit Judge W. L. Jackman granted Armstrong, of 1721 Winchester St., immunity from prosecution for any crime in which he might be implicated,

with the exception of perjury, as a result of his 30-minute testimony.

JAMES VELOFF, foreman of the Grand Jury and manager of the Allied Radio Shack, said the secret group recommended that Armstrong be granted the immunity he sought.

Armstrong, who told Jackman that he did not know whether his sons, Karleton, 24, and Dwight, 19, were "dead or alive," had fought the subpoena

to appear before the Grand Jury investigating the Sterling Hall bombing.

Represented by three attorneys, Armstrong said that he had been subjected to illegal electronic wire-tapping of his telephone since the beginning of September, 1970, and had often been followed by law enforcement officers.

THE TALL, graying man called the Grand Jury probe "a kind of a political football."

"I can't tell them anymore than what I've already told them," Armstrong told Jackman. "It's pointless."

"I haven't heard from the boys," he said. "I don't know whether they are dead or alive. Maybe the Grand Jury can tell me something."

Armstrong criticized the Grand Jury because he said it was not drawn from a cross-section of people and all jury members were "screened" by Dane County Dist. Atty. Gerald Nichol.

"A GRAND Jury is something that should have gone out in the Dark Ages," he added.

Armstrong had charged that law enforcement officers maintained an illegal wire-tap on his home telephone, but Asst. Atty. Gen. David Mebane, one of the state attorneys conducting the probe, denied any such surveillance.

"We have not ordered any surveillance of Mr. Armstrong or his family, and we do not intend to," Mebane said.

Armstrong finally agreed to testify before the Grand Jury if the government would grant him immunity and would confine its questioning to incidents surrounding the bombing.

IT WAS NOT known whether the second provision was honored by the government, because all proceedings and participants are bound by law to secrecy.

After the half-hour testimony, Armstrong said he had "very little to say," but repeated his belief that his conversations are being tapped by the government.

Armstrong said he had just recently stopped cooperating with law enforcement officials because of their abuse of his feelings.

Armstrong, about 55, is an unemployed factory worker. He has said it has been difficult for him to obtain work because of publicity regarding his sons.

by Jim
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