

Drug Raids Terrorize 2 Families—by Mistake

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Special to The New York Times

COLLINSVILLE, Ill., April 28 — Herbert Giglotto was asleep with his wife in their townhouse apartment here the other night. He heard a crash by the front door. He stumbled from bed.

"One more step, you [obscenity] and you're dead," said a voice in the darkness. And Mr. Giglotto felt a gun barrel against his forehead.

One half hour later across town Don Askew, his wife Virginia and their son Michael were sitting down to a late fish supper.

Their dog Charlie barked. Mrs. Askew went to the living room, then gasped, "My God, Don, there's a man at the window."

There was, in fact, a man at every window. Each pointed a pistol inside. And three men stood by the door with shotguns.

Thus began a night of terror for two families here last Monday. Their doors were kicked in, their homes damaged, their arms shackled. And the screaming bearded men told some they were to die.

No Known Warrants

The long-haired, unshaven, poorly dressed armed men who burst into the homes shouting obscenities were Federal narcotics agents hunting, with no known warrants, for something or someone.

They went, however, to the wrong houses. And when

they realized their error, after some innocent residents had begged for their lives, the men disappeared with no apologies.

"I think people should know," said Mrs. Giglotto, "that this sort of thing can happen in America now. God only knows how many families this has happened to."

The incident was among the latest in a deadly war that the agents wage against what President Nixon has called the nation's "Public Enemy No. 1"—the drug dealer.

But this week the agents' actions here prompted charges of "Gestapo tactics," a \$100,000 lawsuit, some angry editorials, a Federal

investigation and a good deal of fear in this quiet southern Illinois community of 19,600, 15 miles east of St. Louis.

Except to confirm that the men involved were, in fact, narcotics agents, no one in the Federal Government would explain the incidents this week pending completion of the investigation, the results of which may not be made public.

38 Teams Nationally

Around the country there are 38 teams of narcotics agents like the one in St. Louis. The men were drawn from local police forces and the Justice Department's Bureau of Narcotics and

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Dangerous Drugs in January, 1972, when President Nixon created the Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement.

The raids here were the first such mistakes by law officers in the drive against the drug traffic. On Jan. 9, 15 state policemen carrying rifles broke down two doors of the William Pi home in Winthrop, Mass. They issued brusque orders, held the family at gunpoint and overturned furniture before realizing they had entered the wrong house.

Six days later John J. Kehoe, state public safety commissioner, publicly apologized. But the family, some of whose relatives had been arrested by the Gestapo in Poland during World War II, rejected the apology and hired a lawyer.

Story of Raid

Despite the official silence on the raids here, the families were talking. And were their neighbors and local officials. Reconstructed from dozens of interviews here is the story they tell.

Herbert Giglotto is a 41-year-old boilermaker who lives with his wife, Evelyn, in a tri-level apartment 1003B Arrowhead Drive. They have no children. Mrs. Giglotto has had several miscarriages, but she says she believes she is pregnant again.

They had retired at 8 P.M. Monday because Mrs. Giglotto arises for work at 5 A.M.

At 9:30 P.M. there was a crash. That was the second door being ripped out. A second crash followed. It was the inside door buckled off its hinges.

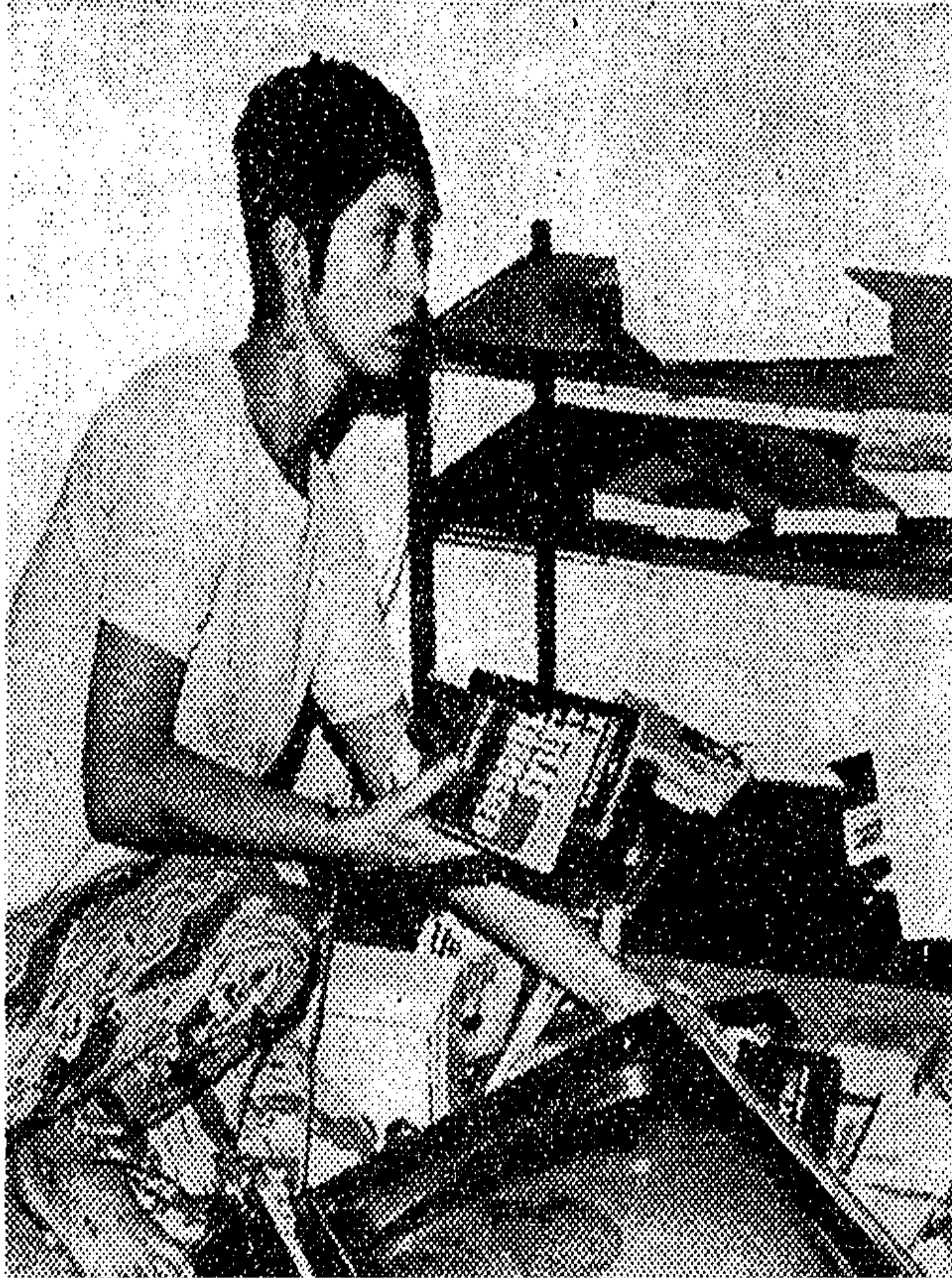
Mr. Giglotto reached the top of the stairs when a man put a gun to his head.

The boilermaker turned his wife. "Honey, we're dead," he said. "That's right, you [obscenity]," said the man.

He threw Mr. Giglotto down on the bed, handcuffed his arms behind his back and said: "You move and you're dead. Who's that bitch?"

The room had filled with 15 men. They were tearing down shelves and ripping clothes out of closets and drawers.

"That's my wife," said



Evelyn Giglotto picking up books and TV set thrown on floor by Federal agents during raid Monday night.

life.

"Please don't kill him," she screamed, "please don't."

"Shut up," the man said. He ordered Mrs. Giglotto, who was clad only in a short green negligee, to lie on the floor. Another man threw a sheet across part of her exposed body.

There were crashes elsewhere. A television set, among other things, was thrown across a room. An antique plaster dragon was shattered. Cameras were bashed on the floor. Papers were strewn about.

Then one man flashed a small gold batige for an instant, but not long enough to read. And he rattled off a list of names that Mr. Giglotto did not recognize.

"You're going to die if you don't tell us where the drugs are," said the man.

"We've Made a Mistake" "Please, please, before you shoot, check my wallet," screamed Mr. Giglotto, who says aspirin is the strongest drug he takes. Just then there was a voice on the stairs.

"We've made a mistake," it said.

Mr. Giglotto was released and the room emptied.

"Why, why did you do this?" Mr. Giglotto asked as he struggled to put on some pants.

"Boy, you shut your

Outside, a man was moving one of Mr. Giglotto's construction hardhats. Giglotto's pets—three dogs and a cat—had been thrown outdoors.

"If you don't have a dren," Mrs. Giglotto to visitor later, "well, your sort of become your dren."

"[Obscenity] your animal," one man said Monday night. "I don't care about [obscenity] pets."

And the men walked down the street.

Cruising Car

At about that time 21-year-old Don Askew was turning from his East Louis gas station to his best, six-room home at Garnet Street on Collinsville's North Side. The dead end street, a one-lane cul-de-sac, is little traveled.

So Arnold Blass, a 31-year-old next-door neighbor was puzzled by the car that cruised back and forth. He had just cleaned a .22-caliber pistol and put it in his house.

Now Mr. Blass was in his backyard chatting with Freiburg, a friend, and cleaning some freshly-caught carp.

Suddenly, they saw "gedy-looking hippies"

ing across the vacant lot toward them. One man pushed Freiburg, who knocked him down instead against an old icebox. Another man seized Mr. Blass's knife.

Then a man produced a badge for a second.

"Is that all the identification you've got?" asked Mr. Freiburg. "I can buy one of these in any dime store."

By then Mrs. Askew, who died for the late Mrs. Blass when she was dying of cancer three years ago, was screaming for the police. As Mr. Blass turned toward his house, three men barred his way, shaking their heads angrily.

"It's a good thing I didn't have my gun," Mr. Blass said earlier.

When Mrs. Askew saw the first man, her husband called to call the police. But the man in the shadows by the window motioned her away from the phone.

Thought It Was a Gang

Mr. Askew thought the dangers were a motorcycle gang after his 16-year-old son for some teen-age grievance. Then he saw the armed men at the door.

"You kids go on home now before I call the police," said, holding the door shut.

Then, slowly, without a word, one of the men leaned back and kicked the door just below the glass. The muddy footprint is still there.

Mrs. Askew ran screaming toward a bedroom. She fainted and hit her head on a table. Her son went for the phone.

"Hold it, boy," said the voice in the window.

Then one man at the door waved a badge briefly. Mr. Askew opened the door promptly and stepped back. Only then did he see a pistol pointed at his back through the kitchen window and a man standing by the bathroom with a shotgun in his hands.

That man had ripped open a screen and kicked in a back door that Mr. Askew had nailed shut eight years ago. Pieces of grass and mud are still on the floor by the cracked dresser.

"If I kept a gun by the door, I'd have used it," Mr. Askew said later. "Those two others would have gotten me for sure. And it would all be a mistake."

Searched the House

The men searched the home. "Do you know John Coleman?" they asked.

"No," replied Mr. Askew. "I can't breathe," said Mrs. Askew.

"Take it easy, lady," one man responded. "We're Federal agents and we've gotten a bum tip." They began to leave.

"Wait until the police get

here," said Mr. Askew.

"We can't," the man said. "We've got four more places to go tonight. Here's a phone number. Call and they'll pay any damages."

The number was for the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs in St. Louis.

In his stockinged feet Mr. Askew followed the 25 men to the Collinsville police station, where the agents identified themselves to Chief Paul Cigliana and reportedly admitted they had no warrants. Then they drove away.

On Wednesday the Askews, through their lawyer, Richard Shaikewitz, sued the Federal Government for \$100,000 for violation of their civil rights. The Giglottes retained an attorney also.

"I can't compete with a Government like this," said Mr. Giglotto.

To Study Jury Action

Madison County's assistant state's attorney, Robert Trone, scheduled a meeting Monday with the two families to determine possible grand jury action against the raiders.

In Washington Myles J. Ambrose, Special Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Office for Drug Abuse Law Enforcement, ordered a "thorough investigation" and said "appropriate action" would be taken against any Federal agents who acted "improperly."

There was no identification of the raiding party members.

In a telephone interview Mr. Ambrose said: "Drug people are the very vermin of humanity. They are dangerous. Occasionally we must adopt their dress and tactics. But if any acted improperly, we will take action. People who use their badge for illegal purposes are worse than the criminals they seek."

The Collinsville Herald said the raiders acted like "a bunch of power-crazy adolescents who had seen too many shoot-em-up movies."

Neither family slept at all Monday. Both women involved had been taking medication for nervous conditions for some time. Mrs. Askew went into seclusion at a relative's. Mrs. Giglotto is unable to sleep, will not stay in her bedroom and has not cleaned up the damage.

"I'm just a simple housewife," she said, "I want to clean up my home, but I can't. Our things seem dirtied somehow. They aren't ours any more."

At night now the couple jump at every little sound. And Mr. Giglotto has lost a week's wages to stay with his wife.

"Every day I get madder," he said. "They acted like those German Gestapos. If they were representatives of the Federal Government, we're all in trouble."