

# Feds Get Fred

## Fifth Estate Collective

Fred Chase was wearing an “I am Tom Sincavitch” button pinned to his Levi jacket. Fred was waiting for the FBI to take him from his sanctuary at Sacred Heart Church in much the same way that Tom had waited for the same thing almost a year before in St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church.

Fred was supposed to begin trial on May 4 for destroying the draft records of some 34 draft boards in Chicago last May, but was refusing to cooperate with the court system. “I didn’t show up for the trial because I don’t think they have a legitimate right to try me,” he told the Fifth Estate the day he and his supporters and family moved into the church.

Fred and 14 others entered the South Side draft board offices on May 25, 1969, and brought out as many files and records of registrants as they could carry. The files were then doused with gasoline and set ablaze.

Marge Katrosick and Joe Mulligan from Detroit were among the participants along with several priests and one nun. All are charged with felonies related to the destruction of government property that could bring a total jail sentence of up to 23 years in prison. If Maryknoll Sister Linda Quint is convicted, it will be the first time in U.S. history that a nun has been found guilty of a felony.

Fred said, “I destroyed the draft files because I thought it was the right thing to do and I was following my conscience.” The Chicago 15, as they have come to be called, purposely chose the boards that had high numbers of black and latino registrants.

Fred has been active in draft resistance activity in the Detroit area for several years and was one of the people who aided Tom Sincavitch when Tom refused to report for army reserve summer camp. Sincavitch was just recently released from Leavenworth after spending about a year in prison.

As his activity in the anti-draft movement progressed, Fred saw the need to move beyond personal witness. “I had already said you can’t use my body for the war, but now I wanted to say, you can’t use anyone else’s either.”

The long wait from Sunday through Wednesday ended when 8 FBI agents broke through the back door of the church and rushed Fred off to trial in Chicago Federal Court. Once at court his bond of \$2,500 was forfeited and he was sentenced to 20 days in jail for refusing to stand when the judge entered the court.

“I said I would recognize him as a fellow human being and rise for that, but not as a judge of other men,” Fred explained.

Three of the original 15 have not shown up for trial and are the object of a nationwide FBI search. Was it worth it? Fred thinks he will do at least five years time for his act of political vandalism, but “we gave 20,000 to 50,000 guys another chance to decide whether they wanted to be used by the Selective Service system.” At this writing, 31 of the 34 boards that were hit are still not functioning.

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