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WEEKLY- SUNDAY

JUL 16 1962

Cloak and Dagger Crime Tale Fails To Impress Jury

The tale the stocky Army sergeant told was bizarre, as full of mystery men and intrigue as any Hollywood thriller.

Sandy Joe Keesee told it this way: "Agent Buddy Carson of the Central Intelligence Agency" offered him a $1,200-a-month job last January. The task was to fly Carson to Cuba.

But to prevent the mission's failure, Keesee must have a cover story to tell the Cubans if he was arrested, Carson said. To build a reputation as a fugitive seeking asylum in Cuba, Keesee (already an Army deserter) should go on a crime spree, Carson suggested.

For two months, Keesee related he and Carson toured 25 states from Alaska to Florida, passing bum checks and skipping out on hotel bills. Was there any trouble? "He (Carson) said his agency had taken care of it."

Last March 23, Keesee's big day came. He said he flew Carson and a Latin American named Jose to Cuba in a light plane. "We saw a smoke signal," Keesee said, and Carson and Jose parachuted to the ground.

Keesee's plane was later forced down by Cubans. He was released, and returned to Florida 49 days later. "I was dumbfounded when they arrested me" in Florida," he said. "But I thought it was a cover-up so the Cubans wouldn't look for Carson."

The Federal Court jury in Austin, Tex., listening to Keesee wasn't so puzzled last week. After a snappy one-day trial, they found him guilty on a stolen car charge, the first of 152 charges lodged against Keesee during the crime spree.

Somehow, nobody seemed to believe Keesee's story about CIA Agent Carson.

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