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FTN-RFK

Charges Against Criminologist 'Vendetta,' Chief Davis Says

BY RICHARD WEST
Times Staff Writer

Charges that police criminologist DeWayne A. Wolfer erred and violated procedure in the ballistics investigation of the Robert F. Kennedy assassination and other murder cases are part of a "vendetta" against Wolfer, Police Chief Ed Davis said Tuesday.

"I think that we're going to find that the charges are totally untrue," Davis said during a news conference called to announce a Citizens Neighborhood Watch Campaign against burglaries and other crimes.

He said that Wolfer, "in my estimation, is the top expert (in criminology) in the country."

Davis has ordered a police board of inquiry to investigate the charges, made to the Civil Service Commission by attorney Barbara Warner Blehr in an effort to block Wolfer's appointment as permanent head of the police crime laboratory.

Commenting on one of Mrs. Blehr's charges, that Wolfer testified a different gun entirely from the one Sirhan B. Sirhan used to shoot Kennedy, Davis said.

"A similar type gun was used just to test the noise . . . to determine whether the sound would carry to where witnesses said they heard shots."

Stipulation by Defense

He added that the Sirhan defense stipulated to the use of the similar weapon in this manner.

Davis said that criminologists supporting Mrs. Blehr's charges had been bested by Wolfer in murder trials. The chief intimated that they were using this means to get back at Wolfer.

Mrs. Blehr "just lost an important case in court," Davis said. He did not elaborate.

Told of Davis' comment, Mrs. Blehr said, "What important case is he talking about? Frankly, I haven't had any lately. Oh, there was one murder case in Pasadena recently that I lost, justifiably so, but that had nothing to do with LAPD. That was a sheriff's office case and they were just great."

Mrs. Blehr also denied that her action represented a "vendetta"

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Continued from First Page against Wolfer. "I honestly don't personally know any of these gentlemen," she said.

Davis said that leveling charges against Wolfer was "one way of getting a lot of publicity for someone." The publicity, though, may not be so good "when the facts finally come out," he added.

The chief said that Wolfer, who has 20 years' experience in his field, has had his reputation "damaged" by the charges and that "I understand he has a good civil lawyer."

2,000 Supermarkets

Davis announced at the Parker Center

gest they have a neighborhood watch."

Representatives of more than a dozen leading supermarket chains in Southern California were introduced by Davis at the news conference.

William Tormey, executive vice president of the Southern California Grocers Assn., predicted that the antiburglary campaign will make an "impact," as 15 million persons pass through the checkstands of Los Angeles supermarkets every three days.

On another matter, Davis said he found it "encouraging" that black, Mexican-American and Jewish voters

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2 Part II—Fri., June 4, 1971

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Bullet Not From Sirhan Gun, Attorney Claims

Luke McKissack, chief defense attorney for condemned assassin Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, said Thursday that his office has evidence that one of the bullets recovered from the scene of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy's murder was not fired from Sirhan's gun.

McKissack also said that there is "some evidence" that someone else in the Ambassador pantry the night of June 5, 1968, was there "with the same intention as Sirhan" and may have "seized on the impulse of the moment" to shoot at Kennedy after Sirhan began firing. McKissack did not re-

veal his evidence or speculate on who a second gunman might have been, but said the information would be produced if a current police board of inquiry into the Sirhan ballistics investigation fails to result in full public disclosure.

LAPD ballistics expert DeWayne Wolfer's investigation was criticized last Friday by attorney Barbara Warner Blehr, who wrote to the Civil Service Commission in an effort to block Wolfer's forthcoming permanent appointment as head of the LAPD crime lab. Mrs. Blehr charged Wolfer with violation of scientific procedure in his investigative work.

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