

# BECKWITH NABBED WITH BOMB IN N.O.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following story was compiled by States-Item staffers Jack Dempsey, Walt Philbin and Bill Rainey.

The man who was twice tried for the ambush slaying of Negro civil rights leader Medgar Evers was arrested

here early today with a homemade time bomb in his car.

Police said Byron de La Beckwith, 52, of Greenwood, Miss., was headed to New Orleans to commit a crime, but they would not say what the crime was.

Beckwith was booked on a number

of counts, including illegal possession of dynamite and carrying a concealed weapon.

BECKWITH WAS arrested by New Orleans Police Department intelligence officers at about 1 a.m. on Interstate 10 at the twin bridges.

- Beckwith, whose trials for the 1963 murder of Evers, ended in mistrials, was booked with:
- Attempted aggravated arson.
- Illegal possession of dynamite.
- Carrying a concealed weapon, a .45-caliber automatic pistol.
- Aggravated assault.

POLICE said that when he was arrested Beckwith had the .45-automatic in his belt. The time bomb was found in the car, they said.

Mississippi Gov. Bill Waller, who as a young district attorney prosecuted Beckwith in the Evers slaying case, refused comment on Beckwith's

arrest, except to say, "I'm glad he was in New Orleans."

Police said they had received confidential information that Beckwith was headed for New Orleans to commit a crime. A roadblock was set up at the twin bridges—where the New Orleans city limits begin—and Beckwith was arrested by officers John C. Evans and Bernard Windstein Jr. of the intelligence division.

A police spokesman said it is known what crime Beckwith was believed planning to commit and where it would be committed. But the spokesman said he could not release details. He said he also could not reveal the source of the confidential information.

At a magistrate's hearing this morning bonds totalling \$8,500 were set by Magistrate Robert Collins and a pre-

## Police seize Beckwith

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liminary hearing for Beckwith was fixed for Oct. 9.

JUDGE COLLINS set bond at \$5,000 on the attempted aggravated arson charge, \$2,500 on the concealed weapon charge and \$1,000 on the assault charge.

Beckwith was not formally charged with the illegal possession of dynamite count.

After his two mistrials in the Evers slaying, Beckwith, a staunch segregationist, ran for lieutenant governor of Mississippi in 1967. He finished fifth in a six-man race, gathering slightly more than 3,000 votes.

EVERS, THE 37-year-old Mississippi field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, was gunned down in the driveway of his Jackson, Miss., home on the night of June 12, 1963.

Evers was the brother of Fayette, Miss., Mayor Charles Evers, who moved to Mississippi from Chicago shortly after the shooting and took over his dead brother's NAACP post.

The murder weapon, a 30.06 Enfield rifle, was found near Medgar Evers' home in North Jackson.

Beckwith was arrested June 22, 1963, and charged with murder. The FBI said one of 1,500 imported gun telescopic sights led them to Beckwith. They found five of the Japanese six-power scopes had been shipped to a Grenada, Miss., gun dealer, the FBI said. One of those was traced to Beckwith, the FBI said.

After his arrest Jackson police said a fingerprint on the gun's scope matched Beckwith's print.

**BECKWITH FIRST** went on trial for

the Evers slaying on Jan. 23, 1964. The prosecutor in the case was young Hinds County Dist. Atty. Bill Waller, now governor of Mississippi.

After three days of jury selection the trial opened on Feb. 1.

During the trial the Grenada gun dealer testified he had sold the rifle's scope to Beckwith and FBI agents testified the murder weapon had been traced to the Citizens Council member.

The prosecution rested on the eighth day of the trial. The defense used only one day, with Beckwith taking the stand for 2½ hours to deny he was the Evers sniper.

After deliberating 11 hours the jury announced it was hopelessly deadlocked and a mistrial was declared on Feb. 7. The jury reported it was six for conviction and six for acquittal.

ON APRIL 6, 1964, Beckwith went on trial again with Waller again the prosecutor.

An FBI agent testified Beckwith's fingerprints were on the murder weapon and that the prints were no more than 12 hours old when they were lifted from the weapon.

At the second trial a Greenwood policeman and other witnesses testified Beckwith was in Greenwood at the time Evers was shot.

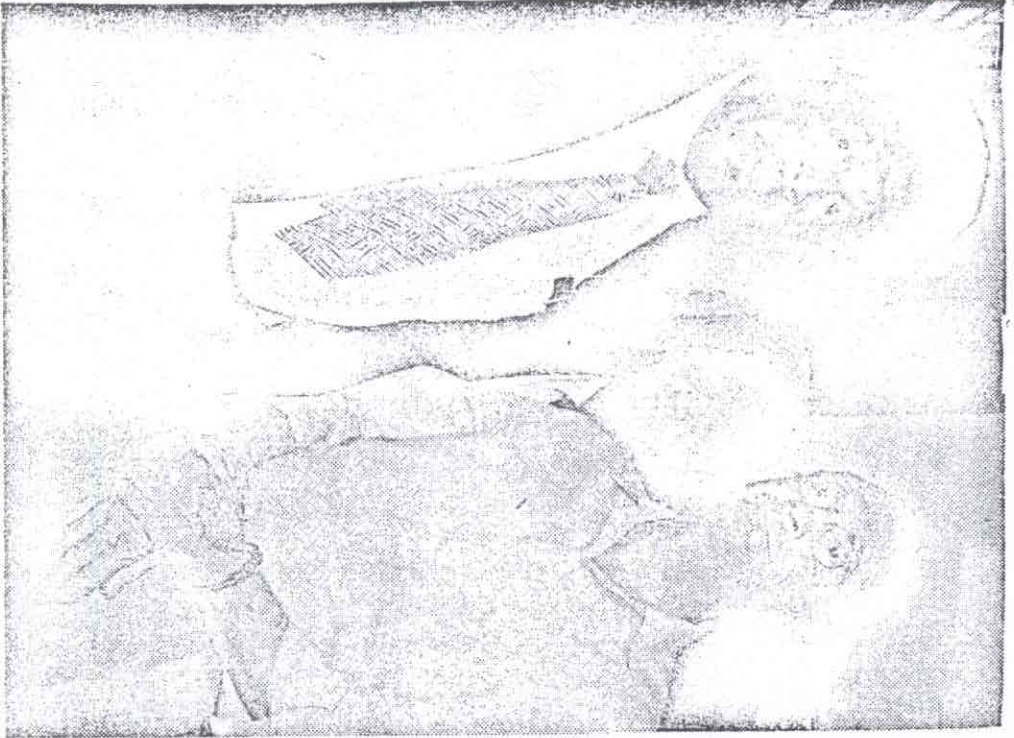
Beckwith told the all-white jury of a life dedicated to fighting racial integration but said he was "not concerned about Medgar Evers specifically."

HE AGAIN denied having killed the civil rights leader.

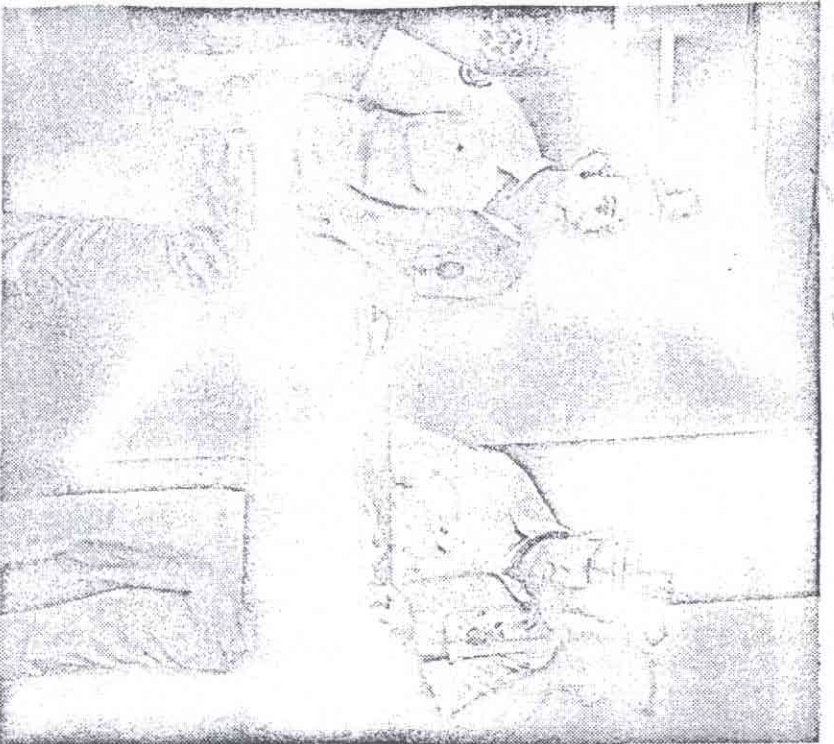
The second jury deliberated 10 hours and announced that it, too, was hopelessly deadlocked. After "many, many ballots," the jury foreman reported, the jury was eight for acquittal and four for conviction. A second mistrial was declared.

The state never tried the case again.





**In** His wrists cuffed, Byron de la Beckwith stands beside  
Criminal Courts deputy following his arrest on Inter-  
state-10 this morning. (States-Town photo by Mike  
Bates.)  
**custody**



**Dangerous**  
Carrying a box containing a homemade time bomb  
confiscated in the arrest of Byron de la Beckwith  
are police Lt. John Lopinto, commander of the  
emergency service Sgt. Glen Keller. (States-  
Town photo by Janice [unclear] Illinois.)  
**cargo**