

Jewish Leader Called Target of Beckwith

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A. I. Botnick, the head of the Jewish Anti-Defamation League here and a reported target of attack by the man tried twice for the 1963 murder of civil rights leader Medgar Evers, has apparently gone into hiding.

Police yesterday, arrested Byron de la Beckwith as he drove into New Orleans with a bomb and several rifles.

Television station WVUE in New Orleans said it had learned from sources close to the investigation his target was Botnick's home.

The station said Botnick, who could not be reached for comment, had moved his family out of his New Orleans home several days ago

after receiving threats on his life.

WVUE quoted its sources as saying Beckwith's plan was to plant the bomb at Botnick's home, wait for it to explode and make his escape with the help of the numerous weapons he carried.

Botnick had been working in Mississippi for the Jewish organization in recent weeks, the station said, but had no further details.

Federal authorities said they would charge Beckwith violation of a section of the Gun Control Act of 1968 which forbids possession of an explosive device. Beckwith was not convicted in either trial in the Evers' case.

Bomb 'target' paid for tips on Klan plot

A. I. Botnick may have been the target of a bomb carried by segregationist Byron de La Beckwith because of his role in thwarting a Ku Klux Klan plot in Meridian, Miss., five years ago, according to police sources.

Botnick, director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, has admitted paying \$36,500 to Klan informants for information about the planned bombing of the home of Meridian businessman Meyer Davidson. That was on June 30, 1968.

In that case, Thomas Albert Tarrants III, a self-styled guerrilla fighter for the Klan, was captured by police after placing a home-made bomb at Davidson's home.

The bomb confiscated in the arrest of Beckwith Thursday in New Orleans is similar to the one taken in the Meridian arrest, according to police sources.

POLICE SAID Beckwith, 52, of Greenwood, Miss., was on his way here to plant a bomb at Botnick's home when he was apprehended with a sizeable arsenal including a time bomb—in his car.

In the Meridian incident five years ago, a gun battle erupted when police emerged from concealment. Mrs. Kathy Ainsworth, 26, a Jackson, Miss., school teacher, was shot to death as she sat in Tarrants' car.

Tarrants was convicted and sentenced to 30 years in prison for the bombing attempt.

Following the incident, Botnick said he paid \$36,500 to Raymond and Alton Wayne Roberts to act as informers on Klan activities. He said they tipped him off on the bomb plot.

THE MONEY paid the informants reportedly was raised by the Meridian Jewish community following the bombing of Temple Beth Israel there.

Three weeks ago Beckwith attended the Citizens Council of America rally in Jackson, Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace was principal speaker.

At that rally, sources said, Beckwith was heard to make anti-Semitic statements, including threats on Botnick's life.

Botnick has not been available for comment. His telephone was left off the hook most of the day yesterday. After it was replaced, no one answered.

Beckwith was tried twice for the 1963 shooting of civil rights leader Medgar Evers, but both trials ended in hung juries.