

Woman Sought In Bombing At Cambridge

By Peter A. Jay

Washington Post Staff Writer

An early morning explosion ripped open the courthouse in Cambridge, Md., yesterday, adding to the tension that has gripped Maryland since another blast 24 hours earlier forced postponement of the trial of H. Rap Brown in Bel Air, Md.

Police said they have a "definite lead" and are looking

for a suspect, described only as a white woman who was seen in the building before it closed.

In Bel Air, the second of two Negroes killed late Monday when an explosion shattered their borrowed car was identified by the FBI as William Herman (Che) Payne, 26, a native of Covington, Ky., and a black activist who had worked in the deep South.

The presumed driver of the car was identified on Tuesday as Ralph E. Featherstone, 30, of Washington, a friend of Brown's and a program chairman of the Student National (formerly Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Brown, the national chairman of SNCC, has been missing since Sunday. His trial on charges of incitement to riot and arson in Cambridge, moved to Bel Air at the request of the state, is scheduled to reopen Monday.

State police remained on alert in Bel Air and Cambridge yesterday, and national guard units stood by ready to mobilize. High officials visited Cambridge, and Gov. Marvin Mandel said he will introduce emergency legislation in the General Assembly to strengthen Maryland's laws on

the use and transport of explosives.

Although there was widespread speculation, even among police, that the Cambridge and Bel Air explosions were related, this was never suggested officially. Lt. Col. Thomas Smith of the Maryland State Police said he thought the Cambridge bombing "was a political gesture."

State and federal officials continued to study the blast that took the lives of Featherstone and Payne, but had no information yesterday to add to their earlier conclusion that the bomb was carried inside the car. Whether it was carried voluntarily or unwittingly was unknown.

Mandel released the text of a note he said was found on the body of one of the men. The note makes a reference to dynamite as a response to your justice."

Police said the bomb in Cambridge, the seat of Dorchester County, exploded at 12:10 a.m. yesterday in a women's restroom on the second floor of the locked courthouse. It tore a gaping, 20-foot hole in the building's northwest corner minutes after a town policeman had checked the doors. No one was injured.

Smith, in charge of police on the scene yesterday, said the walls of the 118-year-old courthouse were built "like the Alamo" and that the bomb must have been exceptionally

powerful.

He said police have "a definite lead . . . a very good description and a possible name. We believe we're looking for a white person," probably not from Cambridge. The explosion, he said, "might involve a person observed in the courthouse before closing" on Tuesday.

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BOMBING, From A1

The unnamed woman suspect, said state police Capt. Thomas E. Veditz, has "never been in custody and has never been questioned." He said there is no evidence at this time to link the Cambridge explosion with that in Bel Air.

Earlier in the day, Gov. Marvin Mandel's press secretary, Frank DeFilippo, announced that police had a suspect in custody. This report was later retracted and attributed to a misunderstanding.

Federal Assistance

After touring Cambridge yesterday with U.S. Sen. Charles McC. Mathias (R-Md.), Rep. Rogers C. B. Morton (R-Md.) spoke by telephone with Deputy Attorney General Richard Kleindienst in Washington and reported that Kleindienst promised all necessary federal assistance in finding the person who planted the bomb.

Gov. Mandel, who also visited Cambridge yesterday, said it was "a tragic situation when this can happen in any community in the country" and said elected officials should "try to make sure . . . that this kind of thing (bombing) doesn't continue."

Late yesterday, several questions in both the Bel Air and Cambridge cases remained unanswered. They included:

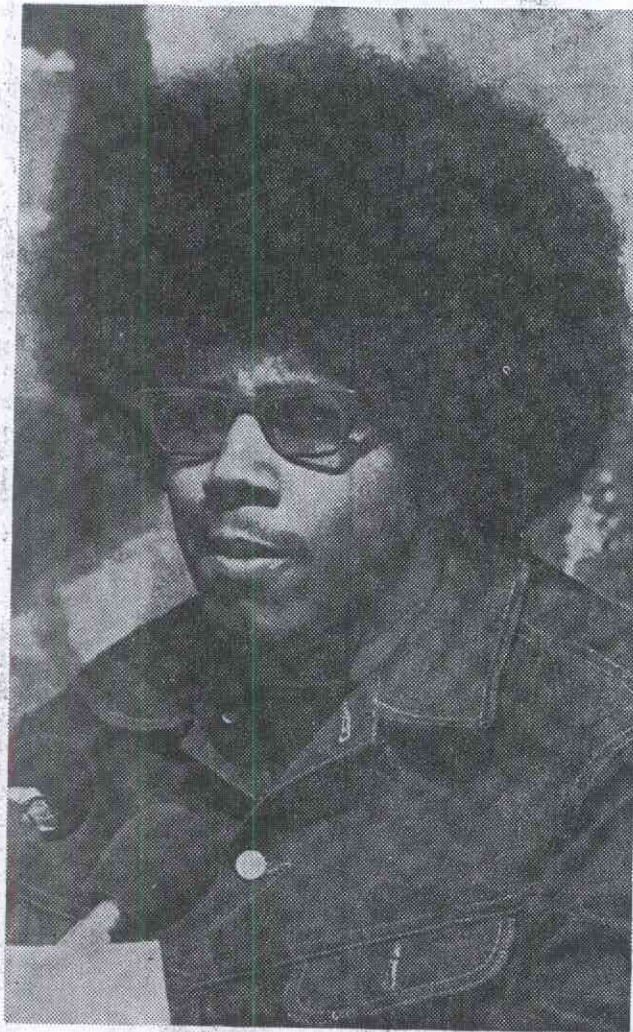
- Brown's whereabouts. The 26-year-old black leader has not been accounted for since Sunday, when his wife said he left his New York home to drive to his trial in Bel Air. Brown's attorney, William M. Kunstler, has said he is "extremely worried" about his client. Some of Brown's friends said he is in hiding, and will remain in seclusion until the trial resumes.

- What Featherstone and Payne were doing in Bel Air, driving away from the town towards Washington, when the explosion took their lives just before midnight on Monday.

Police were alerted to watch for Brown, but noted that al-

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By Steve Szabo—The Washington Post

Tony Cox, Black United Front official, talks to newsmen.

though he has posted \$10,000 in bond to insure his appearance at trial his disappearance does not constitute a violation of law unless he fails to appear in court when required.

State police, Army and FBI experts continued to search the wreckage of the car in which Featherstone and Payne died, seeking clues to establish the specific explosive used.

Experts have reassembled the shattered car and police say that its windows were

closed, eliminating the possibility that a bomb could have been tossed in it from outside.

They would not comment on a suggestion that a short wave signal from a police radio touched off the explosives.

A police cruiser, on what officials said was routine patrol, was 300 yards ahead of the car when it exploded. (First reports had put the distance at 200 yards.)

Also unexplained were skid marks found on the road at the scene of the explosion, giving credence to the hypothe-

sis of some black activists that Featherstone was being followed closely. Police said they were not following the car.

An autopsy on Payne yesterday revealed that a small battery, similar to one used in a camera, was driven up into his skull from below by the explosion. They said they had not established that the battery was part of the explosive device.

In Washington yesterday Black United Front field chairman Tony Cox said he thought the bomb was meant for Brown. Featherstone, Cox said, "died in an attempted assassination on Rap Brown."

The bomb, Cox suggested, was planted in Featherstone's car in the belief that Brown would be riding in it.

College Demonstration

Later, about 200 students walked out of several Federal City College buildings. A sign was placed on the main classroom building, informally renaming it in honor of Featherstone.

In the afternoon, the City College students walked to Howard University and D.C. Teachers College seeking to gather strength for the demonstration. Few students from the other colleges joined the procession, although some nonstudents did.

Kunstler, who returned to New York, said yesterday the charges against Brown should be dropped because the defendant could not receive a fair trial.

"I feel a pattern has developed and there may be more and more incidents" of violence, he said.

Mandel called Kunstler's comments "somewhat in the nature of blackmail," and declared that "we're not going to subscribe to this sort of tactic." He did not elaborate.

This story incorporates reports filed by Washington Post staff writers David W. Hardy, Jim Mann, Ivan C. Brandon and Philip D. Carter.