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New Orleans Private Eye Says Beckham 'Using' Him

Detective Advised Omaha Evangelist

By Ken Zimmerman

A New Orleans private detective complained Sunday that he is being "used" by Omaha Evangelist Thomas E. Beckham.

"I've helped him out of jams before, and he apparently thinks I'll do it again," said Jack S. Martin, Sr., whom Mr. Beckham has described as a "hatchet man for Jim Garrison."

Mr. Beckham was subpoenaed as a material witness Friday in New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison's investigation into an alleged conspiracy leading to the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963.

When he learned of the court action, one of the first remarks made by Mr. Beckham was: "Why don't they subpoena Jack Martin? He knows all those guys mixed up in the thing."

'Never Met Oswald'

Interviewed by telephone Sunday, Mr. Martin said he has known Mr. Beckham for "about 10 or 15 years" and has advised him on a number of legal matters.

Mr. Beckham claimed he had never met Lee Harvey Oswald, named by the Warren Commission as the assassin of President Kennedy, but Mr. Martin said he has seen pictures of Mr. Beckham in the company of Oswald while passing out anti-Castro leaflets in New Orleans as part of a Cuban exile militant movement.

Mr. Martin said it was "possible" that he had introduced Mr. Beckham to David Ferrie, the former airline pilot who died last February and has been identified by Mr. Garrison as one of the conspirators in the so-called assassination plot.

10-Minute Meeting

He said he had met and talked to Mr. Ferrie on several occasions while representing him on a criminal action filed by New Orleans police. He said Mr. Beckham may have been along on such a visit.

Mr. Beckham told The World-Herald that his only contact with Mr. Ferrie was

during a 10-minute episode with Mr. Martin "in late 1961 or early 1962."

He has denied ever meeting Lee Oswald.

Saw Pictures

Said Mr. Martin: "I can't swear that Beckham ever knew Oswald, but I saw the pictures and I know (District Attorney) Garrison has copies of those now." He said the photos were taken by a New Orleans television station while producing a documentary program on the Cuban movement.

Mr. Martin said he never was employed by the Garrison office but had, on occasion, "helped out," and has received "expense money." He said that so far as he knows Mr. Beckham has never worked with the District Attorney's office as he claimed.

Mr. Beckham's "ordination" as a priest in the Old Orthodox Catholic Church of North America, Mr. Martin said, was obtained by "mail order" from a man in Toronto, Canada.

Exile Haven

"He (Mr. Beckham) opened a mission on Rampart Street and came to me asking if I could get him some religious papers," Mr. Martin said.

"I told him about the guy in Toronto." He described the mission as a haven for Cuban exiles in the predominantly non-white section of New Orleans.

At the time, he said, Mr. Beckham wore black suits with a Roman collar.

Even though he admitted being acquainted with many of the persons linked with the Garrison investigation, Mr. Martin described his role as "insignificant."

"I've talked to them. I've told them everything I know," he said. "Garrison won't subpoena me, and neither will the other side. I don't have that much to offer."

More Than Angry

He said he "can't understand" why Mr. Beckham is reluctant to appear before the Orleans Parish (county) Grand Jury.

"If he doesn't know anything," Mr. Martin said, "why is he afraid to go down there to tell them so?"

He said he was "more than angry" that his name had been brought up by Mr. Beckham.