

# Probe of Marcello's Capitol Link Halted

By **BILL LYNCH**

(States-Item Bureau)

**BATON ROUGE** — An investigation into a telephone link between rackets figure Carlos Marcello and former governor's aide Aubrey Young by special state investigators was suddenly dropped when it began pointing in other directions, the States-Item has learned.

This, in short, is the story of telephone No. 343-6106 at the state capitol.

The question remains:

Who received the calls to that number from the private telephone of Marcello?

The state probe was being conducted by the investigative staff of the state Labor-Management Commission at the direction of Gov. John J. McKeithen.

**IT WAS ORDERED** after a Life magazine article in September said Marcello called Young frequently on Young's "direct line" in the governor's

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office in 1966 and 1967.

McKeithen asked the East Baton Rouge district attorney also to investigate—specifically to prosecute Marcello, if he could.

The special investigative staff of the Labor-Management Commission discovered that the "direct line" to Young, in fact, was not in Young's office at all.

**IT WAS A LINE** to a phone that was maintained under unusual security precautions in the office of the speaker of the House at the request of C. H. "Sammy" Downs.

After the special investigators began checking this aspect, the investigation was ordered ended and left to the district attorney to check the relationship between Marcello and Young for any law violations.

The Life story said: "Many times, from June, 1966, until March, 1967, Carlos Marcello placed telephone calls to Aubrey Young's direct line (343-6106) at the governor's offices in the state Capitol at Baton Rouge."

During this period the number 343-6106 was paid for by the governor's office but could only be answered in the speaker's office, which was down the hall from the governor's office which was then on the first floor of the Capitol.

**YOUNG, WHO** admits to a relationship with Marcello and having talked with him by telephone, insists that he did not use the telephone in the speaker's office for that purpose.

Marilyn Regan, a secretary in the speaker's office, who also is a personal secretary to Downs, says that she never received a call for Young on that telephone.

Downs, who is now an unpaid administrative assistant to Gov. McKeithen, says that he never received a call from Marcello on that phone either in his own name or in the name of Young.

Mrs. Regan had charge of that telephone, which had at times been locked in a specially built metal cabinet.

**GOV. M'KEITHEN** was convinced last September, after conferring with editors of Life magazine, that Young had a relationship with Marcello.

Life said there had been possibly 50 to 60 calls to a "Mr. Young" or an "A. Young" at 343-6106 from Marcello's private telephone in a Jefferson Parish motel between May 1966 and March, 1967.

The governor was provided with a list of dates on which Young allegedly was called on that telephone. Those dates are May 17, May 24, June 6, June 15, June 29 (two calls), July 15, July 19, July 26, Aug. 25, Sept. 7, Sept. 15, and Sept. 16, all in 1966.

When Young was confronted by the governor with the Life allegations, he at first denied any relationship with Marcello.

**HOWEVER, PUBLIC** Service Commissioner John Hunt of Ruston had already informed McKeithen that he and Downs had been introduced to Marcello in a Shreveport restaurant in 1966 by Young. Hunt said he received a contribution for his own campaign from Marcello at that time.

Downs told the States-Item that he had met Marcello only once and that was a casual introduction in 1964 in a Lafayette restaurant. The transcript of a closed hearing of the state Labor-Management Commission in November reveals a claim that Marcello bragged about influence with Young, Downs and Theo Cangelosi, another close associate of the governor.

Young admitted the Shreveport meeting with Marcello and also to conversations with him on the phone. However, he refused to admit that he had talked with Marcello 50 or 60 times. He also told the governor that the number was Downs' number and Downs later told the governor that he had not received any calls on that line from Marcello.

**YOUNG HAS ADMITTED** only two telephone conversations with Marcello. One occurred, he said, while he was sitting at his regular desk in the executive suite, when he says Marcello called to inquire about the domed stadium. The other was at his home on the state police grounds.

When McKeithen returned from New York, he summoned East Baton Rouge Dist. Atty. Sargent Pitcher to the mansion and told him "I want you to prosecute Marcello."

Young was brought to the mansion from Southeast Louisiana Hospital at Mandeville,

where he had been confined, and was turned over to the district attorney for questioning.

Cangelosi was called to the mansion, on the assumption that he was Young's attorney. However, after being apprised of the situation he pleaded that he was not a criminal lawyer and did not want to become involved. Young said he did not need a lawyer

and submitted to hours of questioning.

**THE INFORMATION** supplied to Gov. McKeithen by Life on phone calls from Marcello's office, which was turned over to the district attorney, included calls to a number of other individuals as well as to Young.

Among them were calls listed to Rep. James Beeson of Jefferson Parish at Wiggins, Miss., and at Baton Rouge; and to Sen. E. W. Gravolet of Pointe a La Hache at Baton Rouge.

The East Baton Rouge Parish district attorney has been attempting to get records on the telephone calls but has been unsuccessful. Those suspended for presentation to the grand jury date back only to July, 1967.

The number 343-6106 during the period of May-September, 1966, the specific dates furnished the governor, could only be answered on a call directory telephone instrument. Such a phone has a large number of lines feeding into it (a number of extensions) and this one in the speaker's office was identical to those in the governor's office.

**A PERSON USING** the call directory in the speaker's office could have heard calls in the governor's office. They also could have buzzed the governor directly on this instrument. Mrs. Regan said this was the reason the phone was locked up in the metal cabinet for a period.

The number 343-6106 came into being as the private telephone of Downs in 1964 when he was on the payroll of the governor as an administrative assistant and had an office adjacent to the governor in the executive suite.

At that time, the number could be answered in Downs' office, on a call directory instrument at the front reception desk and on a call directory in the speaker's office.

Mrs. Regan acted as Downs' secretary, and secretaries in the governor's office were instructed not to answer his private line.



**DOWNS LEFT** state government, in December, 1965, and his office was taken over by Leon Gary, who had the num-

ber 343-6106 removed from that particular call directory. It could still be answered at the reception desk and in the speaker's office. Downs had the number maintained so he could be contacted through it even though he no longer was officially a member of the government family.

The arrangement where the phone could be answered at two locations remained until one day in early 1966, when a secretary in the governor's office inadvertently picked up on 343-6106. This brought Mrs. Regan to the governor's office where an emotional scene occurred.

After that the number 343-6106 was discontinued (in April, 1966) at the reception desk and then could be answered only on the call directory in the speaker's office.

**THE SPEAKER'S** office also had its own set of telephones connected to the Capitol switchboard and with private lines. The speaker's office paid for its phones, but the number 343-6106 continued to be paid out of the governor's office.

It was at this time that Mrs. Regan had a maintenance employe at the Capitol fashion a safe out of a metal cabinet. A hole was cut in the cabinet for the call directory cable and a lock was installed.

The phone was kept locked up at night and answered only by Mrs. Regan in the daytime.

The governor's office paid a flat fee of \$26.50 a month for the phone and there were no outgoing long distance charges against it.

**IN NOVEMBER,** 1966, after the governor's office was moved to the fourth floor, the call directory — on which calls could be heard in the governor's office—was changed to a single line instrument and the rate was reduced to \$13.65 a month.

Mrs. Regan said that Young may have used the telephone on occasion but that he had not received any calls during the time she was there. She said that he had complained of a lack of privacy and once asked for a key to the speaker's office so he could use the telephone. She said she did not give him one.

Much of this information about use of Telephone No. 343-6106 — the number on which Life linked Young to Marcello and on which McKeithen based his belief that Young had betrayed him — came into the hands of the

special investigators assigned to probe it.

**HOWEVER,** THE special investigators' probe was ended, and no report has been made on it.

Young, an alcoholic, has been in and out of the mental hospital at Mandeville. He has carried the brunt of the adverse publicity that followed the Life stories on organized crime. He had involved himself with Marcello and with an effort to free International Teamster Boss James Hoffa from prison.

District Attorney Pitcher is scheduled to make a report—possibly this week—to Gov. McKeithen on the results of his investigation.

It will show that Aubrey Young admitted to two telephone conversations with Car-

los Marcello and that neither he nor the East Baton Rouge Parish Grand Jury could find any violations of the law in

that relationship.

But the question of who answered the calls on 343-6106 is still unresolved.