

Confined to Young

Probe of Marcello Limited--Gravel

By BILL LYNCH
(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE — Camille Gravel, former labor rackets commission attorney, today confirmed that a state investigation of a link between Carlos Marcello and the state government was confined to

former governor's aide Aubrey Young.

Gravel called a news conference after conferring with Gov. John J. McKeithen this morning. The governor had summoned Gravel to the Capitol to reveal the results of an investigation into the Young-Marcello link following disclosures by the States-Item that the probe was dropped when it pointed in other directions.

GRAVEL SAID that his investigative staff, operating as state police officers, made no effort to determine if there were any links between Marcello and other government officials.

He admitted under intense questioning, and reluctantly, that Public Service Commissioner John Hunt had told Gov. McKeithen in his (Gravel's) presence that he received a campaign contribution from Marcello in Shreveport in 1966.

Gravel also admitted that Life magazine, which made the original disclosures of connections between the underworld and state government, had furnished information that there were telephone conversations between other gov-

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ernment officials and someone who used the Marcello phone.

NO ATTEMPT was made by the investigators to determine if there was any influence on state government involving these other individuals.

Last September, when McKeithen ordered the investigation, he said:

"We're just burning up to find out what areas" of government might be influenced by crime.

Life had claimed that there were 50 to 60 phone calls made to Young—on Young's direct line into the governor's office—from the Marcello phone.

HOWEVER, IT WAS learned by the special investigators that the phone (343-6106) could only be answered at that time in the office of the speaker of the House where it was installed for the convenience of C. H. "Sammy" Downs, now an unpaid administrative assistant to the governor.

Gravel said that the governor asked him, as chief counsel of the Labor-Management Commission of Inquiry, to take on the additional investigation and assign his staff as investigators for the state police.

He insisted that he made a "complete" investigation, but again admitted under questioning that he made no report on the findings to the district attorney of East Baton Rouge, who was making his own investigation. Gravel insisted that the district attorney knew all of the information.

HE SAID THAT his investigators went as far as they could go in probing the use of Telephone No. 343-6106 and that both Young and secretaries in the speaker's office denied Young had used that line. The phone was maintained under unusual security precautions, including a metal safe that was locked at night.

Gravel said he understood that East Baton Rouge Dist.

Atty. Sargent Pitcher had subpoenaed records of the telephone company and felt that his investigators could not get them and therefore dropped the matter at this point.

The only other person interviewed to see if he received the completed telephone calls was Downs, who denied having received them either for himself or in the name of Young.

THE QUESTION OF who actually received the phone calls is still unresolved.

Pitcher conducted his own separate investigation of the Marcello-organized crime-influence-on-government issue. The States-Item learned that Pitcher was unaware at the time that the special state investigators were conducting a separate probe several days after he was called into the investigation.

Pitcher was asked by Gov. McKeithen to take charge of the investigation when the governor returned from a conference with Life editors in New York on Sept. 27.

GRAVEL ALSO confirmed that Young had at first denied any relationship with Marcello but that Hunt, who resides in Ruston, said Young had arranged an introduction between him and Marcello in Shreveport.

Gravel at first said he did not feel that questions about a contribution to Hunt were pertinent and didn't want to answer them.

However, he finally said that Hunt told the governor that he had received \$100 or \$200 from Marcello.

Hunt has denied ever having received any money from Marcello.

GRAVEL SAID that Young has admitted to having two telephone conversations with Marcello, one of them on a phone in the governor's office and one at home.

He said that secretaries in the governor's office had told investigators that Young had

been summoned to the speaker's office to answer the phone, but noted this was denied by the secretaries in the office containing phone 343-6106.

This, he said, was unusual but there was still no way to determine that Young received the calls.

INVESTIGATORS WERE attempting to determine who received the calls when they were told to stop the probe, The States-Item learned.

Gravel said at his press conference, "I was never asked to stop any investigation."

He said that although the investigation stopped in October and no report was made to the district attorney he assumed the district attorney knew all that the investigators had found.

He also said that Life magazine declined to supply the governor with the basic telephone information, although the magazine apparently gave some information to him.

Gravel said that "we were not to make a conclusion" on the information.