

12 June 68

By THEODORE A. EDIGER

Associated Press Writer

MIAMI, Fla. AP — An exiled former Fidel Castro army officer said Wednesday that Sirhan Sirhan, the accused assassin of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, told him before Kennedy's death,

"what we need in the United States is another Fidel Castro."

Duarte told a news conference the incident occurred about three weeks ago in a house at Hollywood, Calif.

In Hollywood a man identified by Duarte as host on this occasion, Robert Laemmle, denied there was any scuffle. He denied that anyone he could recognize from subsequent news photos as Sirhan was present. He denied also Duarte's claim there was a Castro photo on the wall.

Duarte said he recognized Sirhan as the man he said he scuffled with when Sirhan's picture appeared in newspapers after Kennedy's death.

Duarte said he recognized Sirhan as the man he scuffled with when Sirhan's picture appeared in newspapers after Kennedy's death.

Duarte said the man he fought with told him he was an Arab.

He said what we Cuban exiles are doing is just what the Israelites are doing and that we are getting the same help from the CIA that Israel is getting," Duarte said.

The scuffling began, Duarte said, when he accused me of being an agent of the CIA.

Duarte said: He made some derogatory remarks about Cuba and about me and we came to grips. Somebody separated us. He left."

The exile, who said he has been living in Los Angeles, said pictures of Castro and of the slain communist guerrilla leader Che Guevara and slogans critical of the Vietnam war and the Johnson administration were posted on the walls of the house where he met Sirhan.

Duarte said he and about 15 Cuban companions attended the meeting after seeing leaflets advertising an exhibition of photographic slides taken in Cuba.

Duarte said he objected to some of the descriptions given to the slides and demanded to be heard. He said he was given permission but was interrupted and the scuffling ensued.

JOSE DUARTE

(TIME, 21 JUN 68, P. 24)

MIAMI, Fla. Duarte c37n add
ensued.

In Hollywood Laemmle called the scuffling claim false and said: "There was no scuffling, nobody came to grips, nobody had to separate anybody."

Laemmle, 32, and his father Max, 62, are partners in the operation of four movie theaters and distant relatives, the son said, of the late film producer Carl Laemmle.

He said the occasion was a regular biweekly meeting in his living room of a Peace and Freedom Party neighborhood club of which he is treasurer. About 60 members attended, he said, giving this account:

Duarte showed up outside with 15 or 20 men, all anti-castro Cubans, I assume, like their leader. They were husky and young, some in leather jackets, some well dressed, and well behaved. We invited them to come in. There were absolutely no fight of any kind.

There was verbal discussion which this type of meeting is intended to encourage, followed by coffees and cookies.

The speaker was a young man I understand is with the Students for a Democratic Society, from San Francisco, who had made a trip to Cuba with 60 or 70 others in that group.

He made a presentation of about 20 slides he had taken in Cuba. One Cuban was Duarte attacked one of his comments verbally. Duarte told the Cuban in Spanish to be quiet and let the speaker have his turn.

My impression of Duarte was that he was a hothead. He asked permission to make a rebuttal. A vote was taken, and after the young man showed his slides, Duarte made his rebuttal.

Laemmle called Duarte's description of wall decorations a lie also," and said:

There is a poster of Guevara but none of Castro. There is one poster showing a mother and child with the word 'Peace' and another that says: 'War is not healthy for children; flowers and other living things.' We took down a picture of John F. Kennedy so we could project the slides on the blank wall."

Laemmle said he didn't recall anyone saying the United States needs another Fidel Castro. His father, also present at the meeting, said that like the son he saw no one he later realized was Sirhan.