

LOUISIANA POLITICS

Phone Slip Alibi Rings Phony

By BILL LYNCH
(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE—Local investigators, including the East Baton Rouge Parish district attorney, have found it somewhat unbelievable that the telephone records which the Justice Department obtained in an investigation of organized crime have been destroyed.

After weeks of giving Dist. Atty. Sargent Pitcher the run-around, the Justice Department has now notified him that copies of the original records (toll slips) which it made under subpoena were destroyed by the FBI.

The records sought by Pitcher are those of alleged phone calls between a number purportedly that of underworld figure Carlos Marcello in New Orleans and a number in the Capitol at Baton Rouge.

Efforts to verify the existence of the records have been made over a period of several months, dating back to last October and have been sought both by the district attorney and investigators of the State Labor-Management Commission.



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of the State Labor-Management Commission.

PITCHER, AFTER being shunted about variously by both officials in the department and un-officials with strong connections in the department, finally turned directly to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and Attorney General Ramsey Clark.

From Hoover came the reply that, indeed, the FBI had obtained the records. They had been turned over to the department, Hoover said. He made no mention of having destroyed any of them.

Now the Justice Department claims that only the results of a study of the records were received by it and the FBI destroyed the copies of the entire record.

It now seems that the telephone records may have become a pawn in a struggle between the Justice Department and the state over the fate of Edward Grady Partin, boss of Teamster Local No. 5 in Baton Rouge. Partin is the prime target of an investigation by the Labor-Management

Commission into alleged racketeering in the Baton Rouge industrial area, but denies any wrongdoing.

FURTHERMORE HE claims that efforts to get him are actually attempts to force him to alter his testimony concerning the conviction of International Teamster President James R. Hoffa on a

jury tampering charge in 1964.

Partin was the star informer for the Justice Department which it seems, has bestowed on him strong immunity powers. A variety of charges pending against Partin have evaporated.

In addition, there have been former agents and current agents of the Justice Department interceding on Partin's behalf both at the state government level and in the federal court level.

The Justice Department would not like to see anything

happen that might affect Partin's testimony.

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IT IS KNOWN that Walter Sheridan, former Justice Department agent who worked closely with Partin in 1962, has been involved in the telephone records incident.

Many observers scoffed at the idea of the FBI destroying the records. In what may be a dying gasp, Pitcher has now asked the Justice Department to let him and Attorney General Jack Gremillion see the "results."