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Multi-Degreed Beckham 'Gets 'Phony' Tag, 30 Days

"You're a phony," Municipal Judge Walter Cropper said Wednesday as he sentenced T. Edward Beckham to 30 days in jail.

Mr. Beckham, 27, evangelist and country-western singer, pleaded no contest to a charge that he operated an unlicensed private correspondence school called the American Academy of Professional Arts.

Earlier Wednesday, Mr. Beckham forfeited a one-thousand-dollar bond when he failed to appear to answer the charge. Judge Cropper issued a bench warrant for Mr. Beckham's arrest.

About 1:30 p. m., Mr. Beckham came to the Central Police Station with attorney James Abboud and entered the no contest plea.

Deputy County Attorney J. William Gallup, told Judge Cropper that Beckham was charged after the California Attorney General complained to Nebraska authorities that Mr. Beckham sold a degree to a California man who was illiterate.

The man, in turn, began selling degrees, Mr. Gallup said. Some of the degrees claimed that the recipient was a "doctor of Metaphysics" able to perform "drugless therapy," Mr. Gallup

said.

Mr. Beckham testified that the degrees were of a type which required no prior education. He said they were similar to honorary degrees.

After Mr. Beckham talked for a few minutes, Mr. Abboud told him to "shut up."

Judge Cropper then called Mr. Beckham a phony.