

# Mid-Ocean News



Millions lost says BFA boss: Page 11

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## Meens calls for investigation into botched Commission

by **JESSIE MONIZ**

A **CONTROVERSIAL** missing drug trafficking submission to last year's Serious Crimes Commission Inquiry only emphasises that body's incompetence, said the local who hosted Canadian teenager Rebecca Middleton in Bermuda before she was brutally murdered.

It was the botched Middleton murder trial which sparked the inquiry held in September 2000. The inquiry has come under heavy fire because it did not focus on the Middleton case, but on serious crimes generally.

The missing submission - which has since been verified by Crown Counsel Richard Hector - was made by a former high-ranking police officer who does not wish to be named. He wanted the Commission to investigate the collapse of the Bermuda side of an investigation into a now disbarred Bermudian lawyer's alleged involve-

ment in an international money laundering and drug trafficking ring.

The Bahamas-based Commission chairman, Stanley Moore, a judge, has vehemently denied knowledge of this submission. But Rick Meens, Rebecca Middleton's host, said of the drug trafficking submission: "I am appalled at what I have read in the *Mid-Ocean News* in reference to the file that an ex-police officer had submitted to the Commission.

"It disappeared. And then nobody wants to own up to the fact that it was submitted. I was there and I know it was submitted. Why the denial?"

Mr. Meens said he couldn't believe that a Supreme Court judge could misplace something as important as the submission in question. "It was an important case," said Mr. Meens. "That would have been something to take note of.

"It would be like putting a million dollars in your brief-

case and forgetting about it. It wouldn't happen. That was a very important file that needed to be looked at. Why wasn't it researched?"

He said America was now cracking down on money launderers in an effort to stop the flow of money to terrorist Osama bin Laden who is thought to have been behind the recent attacks in the United States.

"Therefore, this is an important issue," he said. "If you want to start getting those money-laundering cells, then people in this country have to participate in getting rid of these people and cutting off their source of money.

"When you look at other aspects of this particular case discussed by the submission, you know there were murders. A young pregnant woman was murdered and her brother was fed to the sharks in the US by the Cuban-American end of the drug and money-laundering gang.

"The terms of reference for the Serious Crimes Com-



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# Barritt demands public explanation of botched Middleton inquiry

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mission Inquiry said they wanted to look at cases which could jail someone for more than ten years. What could be more fitting than this case?" United Bermuda Party MP John Barritt, who brought the missing submission to the attention of the House of Assembly earlier this summer, demanded an explanation from the Police Commissioner and Government House.

"It requires a statement - an explanation from the Police Commissioner and the Government to say what their position is," said Mr. Barritt.

"I was astounded to hear that the Governor was considering setting up another Commission, unless of course, they know nothing is going to happen. We need a public explanation."

Both the police and Government House continue to say they are "look-

ing into" the matter.

Mr. Barritt said there were two issues at stake - the first, what happened to the submission, and the second, why the Bermuda Police investigation collapsed in the first place.

"I guess we will have to accept that this submission went walkabouts," said Mr. Barritt. "People can draw their own conclusions as to whether that is believable."

In previous *Mid-Ocean News* articles Stanley Moore said such a submission would have been taken very seriously by the Commission. Later he made a U-turn and said a drug trafficking case would have nothing to do with the Commission's Terms of Reference.

"The only word that comes to mind is 'incredible,'" said Mr. Barritt.

"I heard what the chairman of the Commission had to say as to why it would not have been pursued. I have

two comments to that.

"One: When this Commission started they were begging for submissions. Secondly: If you look at the official notice which appeared in the newspaper you will see there are no such limitations. As far as the public is concerned they were given the widest possible arena."

Mr. Barritt said the former police officer who made the submission was "perfectly entitled" to assume his submission would be welcome.

"I personally think this investigation is still one that could be and should be on going," he said. "What is required now is not another Commission which has been suggested by the editor of *The Royal Gazette*.

"There needs to be a statement."

He said he would hate to see details come out which would compromise the case.

"That is one of the reasons I have been reluctant to get into details," he said. "The longer the authorities ig-

nore it, then the impression is given that Bermuda doesn't take these things seriously. We like to find cocaine on a plane with a street value of a \$11 million.

"It looks good. This is where skill, resources and resolve are required if there is going to be a dent in drug trafficking and the money laundering connected to it."

But Mr. Meens said he would like to see another inquiry, this time solely on the botched Rebecca Middleton murder case. Rebecca, 17, from Belleville, Ontario, was found murdered at Ferry Reach in the summer of 1996 while on holiday here.

"I don't believe they got into the heart of the issue," he said. "The people responsible for bungling this case were never brought to justice."

"No one was ever held accountable for the major screw-ups. It comes down to former Attorney General Elliott Mottley. He was in charge of the Attorney General's office at the time.

He made it explicitly clear to Dave Middleton and I that Kirk Mundy and Justice Smith would be charged together. Why at the eleventh hour did he decide to charge them separately?"

Mr. Meens said during the trial the Commission never asked Mr. Mottley, who has since returned to his native Barbados, any difficult questions.

"He was never asked the pertinent questions he should have been asked," said Mr. Meens.

"He tiptoed around the real issues because they were never presented to him. It achieved its objectives when it came to recommendations, but then again we have a little girl that was brutally murdered and no one held accountable.

"We have one guy doing five years and another guy walking the streets. All of the people involved in the case have never been held accountable for screwing things up. It stinks."