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Motions

People v. Maynard, 80 Misc. 2d 279 - NY:  
Supreme Court, New York 1974

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11-1973

## Memo from James Wechsler re: Febles

James Wechsler

~~79-year-old~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
RECEIVED NOV 12 1973

I went out to East Brentwood on Friday, October 19 to interview Frederick Freund. He is the father-in-law of Michael Feebles. His address is 48 Vanderbilt Avenue, East Brentwood, Suffolk County.

You will recall that I first learned about him from a member of our staff as a result of a column published on October 12. She had told me that a friend of hers - Mrs. Cooper, who is Mr. Freund's ~~son~~ daughter by a previous marriage - had seen the column and discussed it with him and that my reference to "a missing witness" somehow suggested that Feebles had vital information that he was withholding. Mrs. Cooper and her husband drove me to Mr. Freund's home and Mr. Cooper took Mrs. Freund shopping while I met with him and Mrs. Cooper for more than an hour. Mr. Freund did not want his present wife to know what the subject of discussion was because she has been suffering from a nervous condition and he felt that she would be upset.

Mr. Freund is a retired businessman who liquidated his factory in Brooklyn a few months ago. He is suffering from very severe arthritis, but he is quite articulate and his mind seems totally functional. He emphasized that he did not want to testify in any proceeding because he feared that Feebles would physically molest him if he even knew that he was talking to me.

I showed him a copy of the appeal briefs so that there would be no misunderstanding about whom we were talking about.

~~nineteen~~ He immediately asked me whether I was aware that Feebles, from the age of nineteen, had been a patient of Rockland State County hospital. He reverted to this point several times and I gather that he learned about it from Feebles' mother whom he had called during some of their difficulties (her name is Mrs. Nash. She lives in Union City. Her phone number is 201-UN 4-1678). He also said he believes that Feebles had a criminal record in the Bronx subsequent to his release from Rockland County. He said Feebles was under the treatment of a neurosurgeon in the Bronx for some time after his release and that he had his name somewhere and would try to find it for me.



He said Feebles lives at 101 Avenue B with his wife (Freund's daughter by his second marriage). Her name is Carolyn and they have two small children.

He said Feebles has been on welfare for years and that his phone has been disconnected because of non-payment of his bills. His picture of Feebles is that of a pathological character with an obsessions for a variety of guns. He said Feebles and his wife lived with him for a couple of years around 1967 and 1968 until he was obliged to have them disposed because he found Feebles so offensive and threatening a character. These are some of Mr. Freund's exact words which I took down as he spoke:

[Feebles]

"To this date he is insane...He is not legally responsible... He is a very vicious person...At the slightest provocation he pulls out a knife...He is totally illiterate...I am an old man and I don't want to be bumped off...His whole life is criminal... He is completely obsessed with guns and hunting knives."

He said he last saw Feebles and his daughter a few months ago after he - Freund - had liquidated his Brooklyn factory. He said Feebles had obviously come in the hope of getting some money from him; when Freund declined to volunteer any gifts, Feebles said: "I will get you."

It was ~~under~~ the context of his discussion of Feebles' character that he expressed horror that Feebles had been used as a witness in a trial. He said he remembered the period of the trial well because Feebles "who usually looks like a bum" suddenly appeared in respectable clothes which he said the police provided him, and that he also began to bathe. It was during that time that he became especially afraid of Feebles because of the weapons he carried and one day, while he was out Mr. Freund went into his closet. He said he found a bloodied Marine uniform there along with a Marine khaki canvass bag which bore a name unknown to him. He said he called the Charles Street station and told the police that he was alarmed, but that the man he spoke to there (he thinks the name was Sheehan or Shea) brushed off the story saying "fellows get into a lot of fist fights around this area." He said Feebles had often boasted of hanging around the Charles Street station and of his friendships with the cops there. He also said that he referred frequently during that time to a prosecutor named Sawyer - which is puzzling, of course, because it was Sawyer who handled the second trial.

Ralph  
Goldman  
says  
there is  
a Det  
Shea  
at the  
6th, who  
has been  
there  
for years



Nevertheless, he was insistent that this was the name Feebles frequently mentioned as his "~~protector~~<sup>benefactor</sup> and godfather."

He said he recalled Feebles telling him that he had been present during a murder in the Village ~~and~~ presumably that was his ~~only~~ explanation of his appearances in court. I asked Freund whether Feebles had ever said anything to him about lying as a witness. He said he could not recollect any such explicit statement. Then he added: "The impression I got was that he was bribed - that they were taking care of him. He was completely engulfed with detectives. I believe that to this date, he still has police connections." He said Feebles has never had regular employment for any length of time, but has always boasted of his ability to do odd jobs and somehow obtained a plumbers license. He said he also liked to boast that he had been in the Marines himself but Freund said that is totally untrue. He said he also believes that Feebles has a steel plate in his head.

Clearly there has been a long period of hostility between Freund and Feebles, and the old man's physical fear of him was repeatedly mentioned.

When I returned to the question of the Maynard case, he again said he had not really believed that Feebles could have been used as a serious witness. He said "when he kept telling me that, I took it with a grain of salt." But he added that "every time he went to the DA's office they always gave him some money." Again he said that they "got him clothes to make him look like a human being, almost like a pet horse. I had never seen him look like that before." He also asserted that he knew that Feebles had been arrested for beating up an 80-year-old woman some time in the last couple of years, but as far as he knew he never was tried. He said there was another occasion when he had called the Fifth Street precinct seeking to have Feebles arrested because he had found a pistol in his room but that "they wouldn't touch him."

He said that Feebles' apartment is one-flight up, that he has police dogs and barred doors. He said that during the period of the Maynard testimony, Feebles was "completely under the care of two detectives." Again he mentioned the name of Sheenan or Shay, which he had also used in connection with his call to the Charles Street station.



I think that is the essence of his story. He repeated frequently his appraisal of Feebles as "a criminal character" and kept urging that we check Rockland County records and also mentioned Letchworth Village, which I think is a subsidiary of Rockland.

Although he continuously referred to Feebles and his daughter as married, Mrs. Cooper told me there was never a wedding ceremony in which the family participated.

Both Mr. Freund and Mrs. Cooper emphasized that Feebles was capable of being very articulate in accounting what they often regarded as fantasies of personal achievement, such as his alleged experience in the Marines.

I told Mr. Freund I would send him copies of my earlier columns on Maynard and that perhaps they ~~were~~ refresh his memory about other things that Feebles may have said to him.

*Jim Wechsley*

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