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1 TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED INTERVIEW OF
 2 THANE CESAR
 3 RECORDED AT RAMPART DETECTIVE DIVISION
 4 JUNE 5, 1968
 5 QUESTIONED BY: SGT. R. L. CALKINS #7287, HOMICIDE DIVISION
 6 SGT. M. J. MCGANN #10329, HOMICIDE DIVISION
 7 REPORTED BY: JUDY C. HERMANDEZ, INTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

8 (*) INDICATES UNINTELLIGIBLE CONVERSATION.

9
 10 Q Sit down on the other side over there and be
 11 right with you. What is your name?

12 A Cesar.

13 Q Cesar?

14 SGT. MCGANN: He started to fill out a report
 15 and everything and never finished it.

16 Q Okay. What's your first name?

17 A Thane, T-h-a-n-e.

18 Q C-e--

19 A --s-a-r.

20 Q Okay. Mr. Cesar, my name's Calkins and his
 21 name is McGann. We work downtown, central, Homicide.

22 You're a special officer employed by--

23 A Ace Guard Service.

24 Q Ace Guard Service?

25 A Retired after tonight. I like those quiet jobs.

26 Q Where do you work out of?

27 A You mean--

28 Q The office?

29 A Well, see, I don't--I think I might have a card

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1 here.

2 Q Okay.

3 A Actually, I don't work out of a office because,
4 actually, whenever he needs us, he just calls us and tells
5 us where--

6 Q I see. Who's "he?"

7 A Tom Spangler. He's one of the guys that was
8 giving the name and the address.

9 Q That's 8720 Woodley Avenue?

10 A Right.

11 Q In Sepulveda. The phone number is 894-5717?

12 A Right.

13 Q Do you have another job also, Mr. Cesar?

14 A Yes, I do.

15 Q Your boss, your immediate supervisor's name is
16 Tom Spangler?

17 A That's right. That's the only one I've ever
18 dealt with.

19 Q Okay. Real good.

20 A That's his home phone number. If you want his
21 home phone number, that's his home phone.

22 Q Let's see. What's that?

23 A That is his home phone number. That's in Simi.

24 Q 805--

25 A Uh huh (yes).

26 Q --526-9660. What did he do, phone you up tonight

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1 or--and tell you that he wanted you down at the Ambassador
2 Hotel?

3 A I got home from work at 4:30, and he called me
4 about quarter to five, and I wasn't going to work, but I
5 decided to and--

6 Q What is your normal business?

7 A I'm a maintenance plumber at Lockheed.

8 Q You work at Lockheed Aircraft?

9 A Right.

10 Q What department?

11 A 3922 Maintenance, plant B-5.

12 Q You wrk days?

13 A Right, 7:00 to 3:30.

14 Q Seven a.m. to 3:30?

15 A Right.

16 Q And you got home from work there tonight and
17 you got a phone call from Mr. Spangler?

18 A To go to work.

19 Q To go to work at the Ambassador Hotel. What
20 time did he tell you to report there?

21 A I was supposed to be there at 6:00 and I got
22 there five after.

23 Q Who did you report to there?

24 A Let's see. I got the name here. Well, I reported
25 to the security shack-down at the bottom of the stairs?

26 Q Uh huh (yes).

1 A And then they took me up to--paper right here;
2 took me up to this guy, Gardner. He's the head security
3 guy here.

4 Q Mr. Gardner?

5 A At the Ambassador.

6 Q Is that room 724?

7 A That was beeper number. He had a little page
8 boy.

9 Q And what did he tell you to do?

10 A Well, this is his sergeant here, this guy and--

11 Q That's K-a-w-a-l-e-c?

12 A Kawalec, I guess.

13 Q Kawalec?

14 A And he took me down to the Ambassador Room first
15 and stationed me on the front door and then there was three
16 of us on the front door there, the main door, and everybody
17 that wanted to take a tour through the building and check
18 all the exits and make sure there wasn't kids trying to
19 sneak in.

20 Q Uh huh (yes).

21 A And from there, oh, I'd say about 8:30, I went
22 down to the ballroom, which is downstairs--

23 Q Uh huh (yes).

24 A --and was there for a while; I'd say about a half
25 hour.

26 Q Was that the Embassy Ballroom?

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1 A Uh huh (yes). Let's see, this is where I was,
2 right here, at this door.

3 Q Uh huh (yes).

4 A And he took me down to--golly. They called it
5 the ballroom, but I think it was right underneath this.

6 Q Below the Embassy Ballroom?

7 A Uh huh (yes).

8 Q Uh huh (yes).

9 A There's another ballroom. I don't know exactly
10 what they called it, but we went down the stairs and back
11 around. It seemed like it was under there.

12 Q Uh huh (yes).

13 A But I was there for about half an hour, an hour
14 and a half, and then from there I came back up here and
15 right here this is a hallway here leading into the kitchen
16 area and I stood guard right here at this kitchen area
17 because people were trying to sneak in through the press
18 room here and through here to get back into the Embassy
19 Room and the Fire Department at that time didn't want any
20 more people in there. So--

21 Q Uh huh (yes).

22 A --we were covering all the entrances then, so
23 that nobody would come in, and we were only letting the
24 press in at that time, if they had a press card.

25 Q You were standing here?

26 A Yeah. There's a swinging door right here. That's

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1 where I was.

2 Q And they were coming down this way right here?

3 A They were coming in through the press room and
4 through this swinging door to get through here into the
5 Embassy Room.

6 Q Now, the press room, is the Colonial--

7 A Colonial Room.

8 Q That's the same, right?

9 A Right.

10 Q Right. They were just using it as temporary
11 press room?

12 A Right.

13 Q I see.

14 Q They were walking down--did the party, the
15 Kennedy party was supposed to come down this way here?

16 A Yeah. This is where they came down originally,
17 through here, or actually they came through here.

18 Q And from where you were, could you see them
19 coming or anything?

20 A Well, now, this was earlier in the night. Now,
21 around--I would say around eleven o'clock, they transferred
22 me to this door right here--

23 Q Uh huh (yes).

24 A --and I stayed there until Kennedy came through,
25 and when Kennedy came through the first time.

26 Q When he was going to the--

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A To the stage, right.

Q Yeah.

A All I did was hold the people back and, of course, I was stationed here when he came out.

Q Uh huh (yes).

A And at that time I was right behind him all the way down to where the steam table was.

Q Uh huh (yes).

A And then, just as he got to the steam table, I was up to him where I had a hold of his arm here. I was pushing people away from the other arm.

Q You were on--

Q You were on which side of him?

A I was on his right side.

Q His right side?

A Yes.

Q Uh huh (yes).

A And at that moment when we got on the edge of the steam table, he had reached out and sort of turned to shake hands with somebody.

Q Turned to his left?

A Well, he was walking this way and he turned just like this, just his body, because, when he did, my hand broke loose--sort of broke loose, away from his arm, and, of course, I grabbed it again because people were all over the place.

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1 Q People were pressing in pretty close?

2 A Right. Now, at that time, I just happened to
3 look up and that's when I seen--all I could see was an arm
4 and a gun.

5 Q Uh huh (yes).

6 A And I reached for mine, but it was too late.
7 He had done fired five shots and when he did, I ducked
8 because I was as close as Kennedy was, and from what I can
9 remember, from what I did, I grabbed for the center and
10 fell back. When I ducked, I threw myself off balance and
11 fell back and when I hit--there's iceboxes right here;
12 right in this area, there's iceboxes, and I fell against
13 that and then the Senator fell right down in front of me
14 and then I turned around; then seen blood coming down
15 this side of his face.

16 Q Which side is that?

17 A Right. Well, see, he was laying back this way.
18 It would be his right side.

19 Q Right side of his face?

20 A Right. And I reached down to--really, then,
21 I was in pandemonium. I did look up to see that everybody
22 that was in the area had grabbed his gun. There must
23 have been 12 guys and all they were doing was kicking him
24 and beating him and trying to get the gun away from him,
25 because one guy did force his hand up and he did have the gun
26 in the air.

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1 Q Uh huh (yes). Did you get a good look at this
2 guy?

3 A I never seen his face because he was a short
4 man. He was standing behind the camera crews and all I
5 could see was his hand and the gun. His face was immediately
6 hidden from me. That's how short he was.

7 Q Did you get a look at the gun?

8 A I really didn't get a real good look at it.
9 I knew it wasn't a .38 when it went off because I've
10 shot a .39 and a .22, and I can tell the difference.

11 Q What kind of gun did you think it was?

12 A I suspected it was a .22. Now, I mean right
13 or wrong, I can't be an expert at it from just the sound,
14 but it didn't sound like a .38 to me.

15 Q Now, I'll show you a gun here, serial number
16 H53725. Does that appear to be similar to the gun that
17 you saw?

18 A Well, to be honest with you, all I can say that
19 I can remember is looking up and seeing the end of the gun.
20 It appeared to be a .22. It appeared to me to be a .22.

21 Q Was it a revolver?

22 A Yes, it looked like a revolver because as soon
23 as I looked up and spotted it, the shots went off; so it
24 was an instantaneous thing. I mean, I didn't have a second
25 chance, you know, to get a good look at it or him, but I did--
26 I did look up just as I say and to me it looked like he was

1 arching his arm a little bit like he was getting over the
2 group of men in front of him.

3 Q Reaching around somebody or something?

4 A Yeah. This is why I suspected he was short
5 also. I didn't see his face.

6 Q Uh huh (yes).

7 A And, in fact, there was so many guys that jumped
8 on him, I did not see his face afterwards; and then, of
9 course, after I did turn around and saw them jump on him,
10 two or three guys fell back against me again. I don't
11 know where they came from and then Murphy--I think it was
12 Murphy, one of the security guards--grabbed--helped me
13 up and he says, "Let get out in front here and stop the
14 pandemonium," because we knew what was going to happen.
15 And so I got up and went with him. We went out to these
16 swinging doors and held the people back because this corridor
17 was just loaded with people.

18 Q Uh huh (yes).

19 A Because we knew what was going to happen.

20 Q Who was on this door here.

21 A I don't know. You mean after the shooting?

22 Q No, before the shooting?

23 A Well, I was until, I would say, about 9:30,
24 ten o'clock; then they moved me up here to this door
25 because this is where they were heading, so we figured we'd
26 let them--if they finally mingled in here, we'd concentrate,

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1 too, on this point right here and try to--

2 Q In other words, so far as you know, nobody was
3 on this door here then at the time?

4 A No, that was it. When we--when the Senator
5 came out, nobody--no security guard, nobody was in this
6 kitchen here; so this man could have walked in at any
7 time.

8 Q Nobody was here then?

9 A Nobody was here.

10 Q Could have come in as free as anything?

11 A Right. Anybody could have walked in there.

12 Q Which was a bad situation.

13 A Which was a bad situation, but they just didn't
14 have the help. They didn't ask for the help and they
15 should have.

16 Q All-righty. We'll reproduce this. We've got
17 our machine here.

18 A I don't care.

19 Q Do you want this?

20 A No.

21 Q Okay, Cesar. You going into semi-retirement?

22 A I am. I don't know about anybody else down
23 there.

24 Q Okay.

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 6/11/68

THANE EUGENE CESAR, 1852 Morley, Simi, California, was interviewed at his place of employment, Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, Burbank, California.

CESAR advised he is employed on a part-time basis by the Air Guard Service, 0720 Woodley Avenue, Sepulveda, California. CESAR stated in connection with this employment, he was assigned as a guard to the Ambassador Hotel on the evening of June 4, 1968.

CESAR stated he arrived for work at the Ambassador Hotel that evening at 6:05 p.m. and was assigned to the Embassy Room for most of the evening. CESAR stated his main function during the early part of the evening was to patrol the entrance to the Embassy Room, control drunks, break up fights, and to keep young children from sneaking into the Embassy Room.

About 10:50 p.m. the Embassy Room was becoming so crowded that CESAR, at the request of the Los Angeles Fire Department, was assigned to the kitchen area behind the Embassy Room. CESAR stated his function at that point was to restrict people from entering the Embassy Room from the kitchen, allowing admittance only to KENNEDY staff members and members of the working press. CESAR stated that it was nearly impossible to control people entering the room since false press badges and staff buttons were prevalent. CESAR stated he noticed no one in the kitchen who was not wearing a business suit and noticed no one loitering in a suspicious manner.

At 11:50 p.m., CESAR was moved to the exit door leading from the Embassy Room into the kitchen area by FRANK A. MURPHY, Security Guard, Ambassador Hotel. CESAR stated at this time he was informed by MURPHY the plan was for Senator KENNEDY to leave the Embassy Room through this door after making his victory speech and proceed through the kitchen to the Colonial Room where a press conference was scheduled to be held. At approximately 12:10 a.m., Senator KENNEDY emerged from the Embassy Room into the corridor leading to the kitchen.

On 6/11/68 at Burbank, California File # Los Angeles 56-155
by PETER L. REDBURN and JOHN M. CALLAGHAN (PLR:jmk/njc) Date dictated 6/11/68

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