

Guest Trapped on Balcony

'Tried to Make Myself Part of Concrete'

"I just laid down and tried to make myself a part of the concrete," muttered Ed Frashier, a hotel guest trapped on his balcony an entire afternoon by sniper fire.

Frashier, in his late 20s, described Monday how smoke from sniper-set fires inside the Downtown Howard Johnson's hotel forced him out onto the balcony of his room as gunfire rained down Sunday from the roof directly above him, killing six persons and injuring 17 others.

Frashier, assistant manager of a hotel in Baton Rouge, La., was visiting in New Orleans where he once managed two other hotels. He said his ordeal began shortly before 11 a. m. Sunday in his 18th floor room when he was preparing

to dress.

"I heard a woman screaming, and I went to the door and looked out and saw two men fighting in the hall and a woman trying to break up the fight," he said. "I went back into my room to try to call the operator to tell her there was trouble. But there was no answer.

"I heard the screaming again and I went back out and I saw the smoke and a man's arm protruding from a door with a rifle in it. So I went back in my room, closed the door, finished getting dressed, and saw smoke coming through the door. I went out on my balcony."

Minutes later the sniper fire began. Frashier said it came from the room where he had seen the fight and was aimed

at a fireman on a ladder truck. The fireman was hit in the arm.

Soon the gunfire seemed to be coming from more than one place on the rooftop above him, he said.

"I just feel there had to be more than one of them (snipers) because of the gunfire . . . at one point it seemed like it was coming from both sides and down to my left and above me."

Frashier said one rifle sounded like a cannon.

"I guess I jumped about a foot every time it went off."

He said he wondered if he'd ever get down again. "When the bullets were hitting all around I just knew one of them had to hit me sooner or later," Frashier said. "It was wild."

He said he waved several times from the balcony.

"I wanted to let someone know that I was still there and that I was okay. I had a feeling that if I didn't make a move every once in a while, police officers wouldn't know that I was alive and perhaps not be so careful about their shooting. Plus I wanted to show I was a friend."

Shortly before 7 p. m., Frashier heard someone kicking in the door to his room. He said he thought it was one of the snipers.

"I just laid down and tried to make myself a part of the concrete out there," he said.

He could see a figure with a rifle crouched in the doorway.

"He shouted 'police officer' and I just collapsed. They had to help me down the stairs."

Hint of Patrolman's Death Came to Widow Via TV

By LANNY THOMAS

The widow of New Orleans police Patrolman Paul A. "Butch" Persigo got the first hint he had been killed by a sniper at the Downtown Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge through a television broadcast.

A neighbor and relative of Mrs. Persigo said she called police when she thought she heard her husband's name but got no cooperation from officers.

They said Mrs. Persigo could not verify if her husband had been killed until she ran frantically into the emergency room of Charity Hospital. The Rev. Peter Rogers, O.M.I., police chaplain, verified that Persigo was dead.

ANOTHER TRAGIC aspect of the story is that Mrs. Persigo and her children were grouped around the television set early Sunday afternoon and saw their husband and father in the line of duty.

Mrs. Betty Dufour, a neighbor and close friend of the Persigo family, said Mrs. Persigo took a photograph of her husband on TV.

"He was standing by a fire engine holding his rifle toward the building," said Mrs. Dufour. Mrs. Dufour said it is believed that Persigo was dead at the time the family saw him on TV. The telecast was not live.

The family is disturbed that Mrs. Persigo "had to learn about this on TV," said Charles Persigo, a brother of the patrolman.

"I'm not blaming anyone," said Mrs. Dufour. "I'm just bitter that my friend had to find out about her husband over TV."

Mrs. Dufour said Mrs. Per-

sigo heard the name of a police victim mentioned on television that had a pronunciation similar to that of Persigo and became worried. "Everyone mispronounces their name," said Mrs. Dufour.

Mrs. Dufour said Mrs. Persigo called the police department and was told by someone, "I'm sorry, but we can't give out any information." She said the television station also was unable to assist Mrs. Persigo.

Mrs. Persigo kept watching the television and several minutes later heard the name again—this time sounding more like Persigo.

Mrs. Dufour quoted Mrs. Persigo as saying: "That's too close for comfort." The policeman's wife, along with relatives, then drove to Charity Hospital, where they were given the grim news.

Mrs. Dufour said the family is upset because apparently no one tried to telephone Mrs. Persigo. She said the telephone was not in use all afternoon.

It is police policy to notify the next of kin in any death before releasing the name to the news media.

Bring Comfort During Crisis

No Drama for Volunteers

By JOAN KENT

Manning a City Hall telephone is not especially dramatic.

Nor is serving coffee from a Red Cross canteen.

But humdrum volunteer work such as that brought mental and physical comfort to those people involved in New Orleans' Bloody Sunday and to people all over the country who were concerned about friends and relatives.

Between repeated evacuations from a 10th floor office on the Loyola Avenue side of City Hall, City Desk Answer Desk volunteers answered calls to an emergency number that rang off the hook night and day.

Most callers wanted to know about guests and employees of the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge, reports Margie Stich, Answer Desk director. Working with people in the mayor's office, volunteers tracked down those who had been in the hotel and relayed information to callers.

They also listened to the many callers who wanted to give suggestions for getting the snipers. And they answered hundreds of questions — "Which downtown offices will be open?" "What expressways are safe?" "What routes leading out of town are open?"

In the mayor's office, volunteers coordinated efforts with the Salvation Army and local department stores to get clothing for hotel evacuees. According to Janice Deagan, who worked that detail, the Salvation Army underwrote the cost of coats, sleepwear and other essentials from stores. Department store managers cooperated — one kept his back door open all night. Another had clothing delivered to a family housed in an uptown hotel.

Volunteers took care of a myriad of details, such as prescriptions for medicines left in the hotel and money for those who left all their cash.

At three Red Cross canteens situated in the area of the tragedy, volunteers served 12 gallons of coffee, 32 dozen doughnuts, 2,000 sandwiches and 48 gallons of hot chocolate. And they provided blankets for law officers.

Humdrum work. But, said Mrs. Stich, "these efforts to help were heartening in the sadness of these two days."

Orleans, Roanoke Rites

Sniper Victims' Services Slated



MRS. ELIZABETH STEAGALL



DR. ROBERT V. STEAGALL

Funeral services are scheduled here and in Roanoke, Va., today and tomorrow for the three New Orleans policemen, a motel assistant manager and a young doctor and his wife killed Sunday by a sniper at the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge downtown.

The Rev. Peter Rogers, O.M.I., chaplain for the police and fire department, said of the times of the funerals for the policemen have been staggered to allow as many of their colleagues as possible to attend. He said he will officiate at at least two of the services.

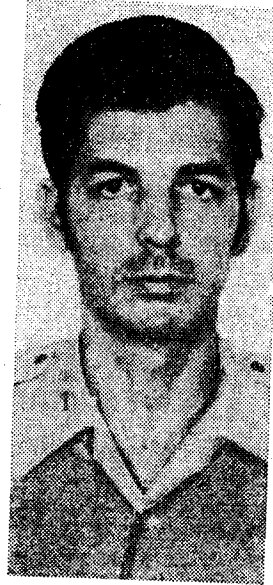
Funeral services for Patrolman Paul Persigo were to be held at 2 p.m. today at Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Inc., 1600 N. Causeway Blvd., followed by a Requiem Mass at St. Edward the Confessor Church. Interment was to be in Garden of Memories.

Persigo, 33, was a native Orleanian. He was a 1958 graduate of St. Aloysius High School and a 1967 graduate of the police academy. He had been a president and vice president of the New Orleans Rose Society and was the youngest a c c r e d i t e d rose judge in the United States.

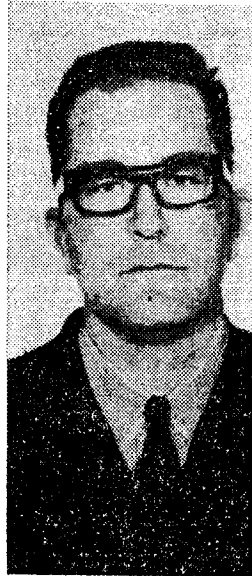
He leaves his widow, the former Judith Lynn Becker; two sons, Mark A. and Steven W. Persigo; a daughter, Holly A. Persigo; a brother, Charles A. Persigo; a sister, Mrs. Gayle Freeman of Sarepta, La.; and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Earl A. Persigo.

SERVICES FOR Deputy Police Supt. Louis J. Sirgo will be held at 10:30 a.m. tomorrow at Jacob Schoen and Son Inc. Funeral Homes, 3827 Canal St., followed by a Requiem Mass at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Interment will be in Greenwood Cemetery.

Sirgo, 48, a native of New Orleans, leaves his widow, the former Joyce Gervais; two daughters, Lisa Joyce Sirgo and Mrs. Sheila S. Fernandez; his mother, Mrs. Elvina Leonard; a sister, Mrs. Elaine Hamilton; and a brother,



PTN. PHILLIP COLEMAN



PTN. PAUL A. PERSIGO

Stanley J. Sirgo.

Funeral services will be conducted at 2 p.m. tomorrow for Patrolman Phil Coleman at Tharp-Sontheimer-Laudumiey Inc. Funeral Home, 1225 N. Rampart, followed by a Requiem Mass at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. Interment will be in Greenwood Cemetery.

Coleman leaves his widow, the former Patricia Franz; a son, Philip J. Coleman Jr.; his mother, Mrs. Irene Dendinger Coleman; his stepmother, Mrs. Helen Coleman; his father, Joseph L. Coleman; two sisters, JoAnne M. Coleman and Mrs. Harry E. Armand; and his maternal grandmother, Mrs. Irene Dendinger.

FUNERAL SERVICES for Dr. Robert Steagall, 27, and his wife, Elizabeth, 26, motel guests from Roanoke whose bodies were found locked in an embrace in a hallway of the hotel, will be held in the Virginia city tomorrow.

Funeral services for Frank Schenider, the hotel assistant manager, will be held in New Orleans tomorrow. Arrangements are incomplete.

Schenider was a native of Boston. He had resided in New Orleans for 30 years. He leaves his widow, the former Marjorie Grant; a son, Edward James Schneider; three brothers, William, Walter and John Schneider; and a sister, Mrs. Harriet Crook.



**Officers view
slain sniper**

An assault team of New Orleans police marksmen look at body of sniper killed in gun battle on roof of Downtown Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge Sunday night. (States-Item photo by Pat Patterson.)

Eastland Sees Plot in Police Killing

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Sen. James O. Eastland, D-Miss., said on Monday that the New Orleans sniper incident which began Sunday and resulted in the deaths of seven persons was "ample evidence that a nationwide conspiracy exists to kill policemen."

He was expected to introduce a bill making it a federal crime to assault law-enforcement officers and firemen.

"This bill would place the full force of the federal government into this war against policemen. The evidence is unmistakable that this is a war on policemen. We face a crisis in law enforcement unless we act immediately,"

Eastland said in a statement released here Monday.

Eastland said he possibly could introduce one or two other bills providing financial support for wounded or killed public servants and their families.

The other bills, Eastland said, would call for a federal payment of \$50,000 to the families of law-enforcement offi-

cers and firemen killed in the line of duty and provide up to \$50,000 in government-backed life and injury insurance for officers.

"These men are putting their lives on the line day after day. This nation owes them a debt of gratitude. We must take whatever steps are necessary to protect them from these attacks," he said.

Man Wounded By Policeman

A man was shot and wounded by police at the intersection of Canal and LaSalle Streets about 3:30 p.m. yesterday, but police said the incident was not related to the gun battle at the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge a few

blocks away.

The wounded man, identified only as James Parker, was shot in the thigh. He was reported to be in good condition at Charity Hospital.

According to police, Parker attacked the policeman who shot him.

'Heinous Crimes' Target

Edwards to Press For Death Penalty

By RAY LINCOLN

Gov. Edwin Edwards says he would favor special legislation providing capital punishment for "heinous or social crimes" in the wake of the Howard Johnson Hotel sniper attack.

The governor, in a brief press conference yesterday at Charity Hospital, where most of the victims were treated, said he will ask a panel of legal experts to examine the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling on the death penalty. He said he believes legislation might be drafted which would not conflict with that ruling.

Edwards said he had received no specific information about a nationwide conspiracy as described by state Atty. Gen. William J. Guste, but said he believes the arson-sniper attack had to be either "a conspiracy or the product of a diseased and criminal mind."

Neither Guste nor U.S. Atty. Gen. William Kleindienst, the governor said, have advised him what information they may have about a national terrorist group which Guste believes may have carried out the killings.

GUSTE SAID Sunday night he will ask Kleindienst to investigate because "I am now convinced that there is an underground national suicidal group bent on creating terror in America."

Speculation about such an organization also centers around the shooting death of Police Cadet Alfred Harrell and the wounding of two other policemen on New Year's Eve.

Edwards announced yesterday the state will add \$10,000 to the rewards already offered locally for information about the sniper attack on Harrell and the other officers.

The governor also revealed, in answering a newsman's question, that he has received two threatening phone calls since the Howard Johnson's incident began. He said he does not consider the calls significant "at this time," but indicated extra security measures had been taken.

EDWARDS SAID he does not believe there is any connection between the events of the last two days and the

unrest at Southern University in Baton Rouge which left two students dead late last year.

The governor said he is not proposing a "blanket" return to the death penalty for capital crimes, but only for those acts so heinous they constitute "an attack on the whole fabric of society." The shootings here, Edwards said, "may serve as a catalyst for that kind of thinking."

After the news conference, the governor attempted to donate blood at the hospital only to find that he did not qualify as a donor because he once suffered from hepatitis.

2nd Rooftop Sniper Or Merely a Ghost?

By ANGUS LIND

Weary police eyes chased a shadowy sniper on a hotel rooftop yesterday—while the city's central business district was turned into a ghost town, costing thousands of people thousands more dollars. The officers wound up with nothing but a ghost.

A second sniper was never found on the roof of the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge after a brave but futile police charge on three cubicles.

Indications were that the last 15 or so hours that the building remained under siege by officers were for naught after one sniper was killed Monday night.

HOWEVER, REPORTS continued to conflict, and some even suspected that somehow the ephemeral sniper, if there was one, somehow eluded the grasp of police.

Even after ripping apart air-conditioning units where late in the day it was reported that an officer saw a black male "eyeball to eyeball," hiding in a duct, nothing was uncovered.

The mysterious ending to the bizarre episode left almost everyone, police and newsmen alike, dumbfounded. Many are still wondering how one sniper could account for so many fires, six deaths, and innumerable wounding and injuries.

Even operating under the police assumption that the fallen sniper was a "professional," the episode seemed closer to science fiction than the top news of the day.

DAVE HUBER, a police sharpshooter who spent Monday night and all day yesterday on the chilly rooftop, was convinced there was only one sniper and that nobody escaped.

Huber, one of the first to come off the roof after charging the three cubicles, said: "There's no way he (a second sniper) could have gotten off

the same stairwell, as caused by ricochets or fire from the helicopter passing over the roof at the time.

"It could have been ricochets or any one of many other things," Huber said. "All I know is that I was never fired on the whole time I was up

there."

O'Sullivan, however, is convinced he was shot by a sniper. The hole in his ear now held together by stitches is proof enough for him, he said.

The question now is: Where's the ghost that pulled an even ghostlier trigger?

the roof. All three exits were blocked and the 18th floor was completely sealed off."

However, earlier yesterday an official police spokesman said that there was "strong reason to believe" that there was not only a second sniper, but a third one.

Sgt. Frederick O'Sullivan, who, along with two other officers, was wounded by either a direct shot or a ricochet early yesterday, said a sniper "popped at us and we popped back" in the stairwell between the 18th floor and the roof.

HOWEVER, HUBER said he was convinced "it's all over" and that there was only one sniper, killed by police bullets Sunday.

Huber accounted for the wounding of O'Sullivan, Sgt. Robert Buras and Patrolman Wayne Galjour, all struck in

The City, Monday, High Noon: More Like 'Deserted Village'

By BRUCE EGGLE

"It was like a science-fiction movie."

"Eerie."

"Weird."

Those were the most frequent comments of the people who were in downtown New Orleans yesterday during the final hours of the bloody confrontation at the Howard Johnson's.

It was not just that the streets were almost deserted, though that was spooky enough, conjuring up thoughts of end-of-the-world movies like "On the Beach" that portray the lifeless concrete canyons of large cities after some sort of deadly radiation has ended it all.

It was also the presence of scores of police, the small knots of worried-looking people, the way they scurried from one "safe" spot to another, the echo of gunshots ringing out from time to time.

More than one disbelieving visitor echoed the same thought as a radio newsman who said, "I just got back from Vietnam. That's where sniping is supposed to go on."

The Central Business District from Canal to St. Joseph and Camp to Claiborne was closed to the public early Monday morning, but even unaffected areas like the French Quarter were strangely deserted.

Some stores bore handwritten signs announcing they were closed for the day. Even the owners of some others had not managed to reach them.

A pile of unopened mail and uncollected books lay inside the front door of the main public library, just a block from Howard Johnson's.

About 11:30 a.m. a rash of reports began that an additional sniper or snipers had been seen at several locations, and heavily armed police — followed cautiously by unarmed newsmen — crisscrossed downtown New Orleans checking each one out.

Rifle-carrying policemen crouched behind their cars from time to time as other officers checked out each new report, but no new sniper was found. Perhaps most disconcerting of all, the police department's baby-blue armored personnel carrier occasionally rumbled down a street that normally at that hour would

be thronged with lunch-hour workers and shoppers.

It was not a sight one ever expected to see in downtown New Orleans.

Yet through it all a little "normal" life continued. A few people, mostly black, still wandered along the streets. And a few businesses tried to continue operating.

One Gravier Street restaurant that often has long lines for lunch was still open but held fewer than a dozen customers at lunch time. Many of them arrived at something like a dead run, and once inside, their eyes and ears were quickly attuned to the TV set in the corner providing live coverage of the whole bizarre story.