

Three charged in conspiracy to murder Sen. Edward Kennedy

FPost 9-13-76

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP) — One of three persons charged with conspiring to murder Sen. Edward M. Kennedy said Sunday he was offered \$30,000 to kill the sole surviving Kennedy brother.

An official police spokesman said, meanwhile, that it was unclear whether the alleged plot was "idle boasting or really serious." A top police official who asked not to be identified warned that it might all be "idle, drunken talk."

Robert E. White, 42, listed as a resident of the Salvation Army's Rehabilitation Center here, was held in lieu of \$50,000 bail at the city jail.

Sandra R. Rondeau, 37, of Westfield, and David J. King, 31, of Springfield,

were released on personal recognizance Saturday by a District Court clerk. Earlier, their bail had been set at \$50,000 each.

All three were to appear in Springfield District Court on Monday.

King was staying at a small white frame house with his former wife. Describing himself in a telephone interview as a self-employed radio and television repairman, King said he met White on Aug. 8 at the Salvation Army center and two days later was offered a chance by White to make "big money."

King quoted White as saying, "You can make \$30,000 altogether. All you have to do is kill U.S. Sen. Kennedy ...

You get \$5,000 down and after the job you get \$25,000."

Mrs. Rondeau, who had worked as a waitress at a hotel where Kennedy appeared, "was supposed to serve breakfast and Mr. White was supposed to walk in right behind her. He was going to shoot Kennedy while he had breakfast," King said.

"I wasn't to do the killing. He was to do the killing. All I was supposed to do was to keep the freight elevator ready for him and make sure all the other elevators were not working," King said.

Kennedy appeared at a fundraising

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breakfast Saturday at the Oaks Inn. Mrs. Rondeau had been a waitress there but stopped coming to work about a week ago, according to a spokeswoman for the hotel.

The spokeswoman said Mrs. Rondeau had worked there about six months and was a good employe.

King said White showed him two shotguns and two revolvers Friday: "I assume he got them out of New York. That's where the money was coming from."

King said he called police Friday night after White did not keep a subsequent rendezvous, a rendezvous he did not explain.

He also said he feared for his life.

King, a dark-haired man of medium build who appeared not to have shaved in two days or so, interrupted the interview to listen to a news broadcast.

He cut short the interview, saying, "I'm sick of talking to all these reporters."

After receiving King's tip, said Detective David Minor, "We checked out the story and information we received implicated all three persons. Whether this was a prank or a serious threat is still under investigation."

What police were told, according to detective Donald Ladue, was that someone would go into the hotel and shoot Kennedy with a sawed-off shotgun, and that substantial amounts of money from out of state were involved.

The money report was still being checked, the high police official said. King had refused to say in the interview where the money was coming from.

Police said they seized no weapons, money or other evidence. They refused to say whether they had obtained search warrants.

In Boston, Secret Service Agent-in-Charge Thomas Smith said agents interviewed White in Milwaukee in 1975.

"He made derogatory comments about political candidates, although not about anyone in particular. He made drunk, incoherent and rambling statements.

"We got citizen inquiries that said he

might be worth our interest," Smith said.

Kennedy's Boston press aide, Ann Speakman, said the senator was told by state police of the alleged plot Saturday afternoon.

"It didn't seem like any big thing," she said.

Kennedy's brother, President John F. Kennedy, was assassinated in Dallas in 1963. His other brother, Robert, was assassinated in Los Angeles in 1968 while campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Campaigning for re-election to the U.S. Senate in the Boston suburb of Everett on Sunday, Kennedy was asked if the incident would change his plans in any way.

"I don't expect so," he said. "I have no further comment."