

## Three persons plead innocent to Kennedy murder conspiracy

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SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP) — Three persons pleaded innocent Monday to charges they conspired to murder Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. Investigators, meanwhile, tried to determine whether the trio actually intended to carry out the alleged plot.

The three, in Springfield District Court for arraignment, were assigned lawyers and the case was continued until Sept. 20.

After the hearing, two of the defendants — Sandra R. Rondeau, 37, of Westfield, and David J. King, 31, of Springfield — were released on personal recognizance. Robert E. White, 42, of Springfield, who authorities say was behind the alleged scheme, was held on bail of \$25,000, reduced from \$50,000.

Kennedy had no immediate comment, though a spokesman for the senator has said of the alleged plot, "It didn't seem like any big thing." A police official who asked not to be named said the incident might be "idle, drunken talk."

King told reporters Sunday he had been offered \$30,000 to help kill Kennedy when the senator appeared Saturday at a fund-raising breakfast at a Springfield hotel. King went to police with his story of the alleged plot.

"We believe they believed it," said Detective Lt. Walter Rooke. "King and White believed it." But the officer said police had no evidence or witnesses to support King's story.

King told reporters White asked him to join the plot and said the payoff would come from sources in New York. Under the plan, he said, he would disable elevators at the hotel and White would shoot Kennedy.

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