

How ITT Spied on Dita Beard

By Tim Findley

Had the chief of security for International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. not died suddenly two days after Christmas last year, the world might never have heard of Kenneth Lazzarini and how he was hired to spy on Dita Beard.

Lazzarini, a long-haired and flamboyant Denver private eye, told The Chronicle exclusively this week how he was hired to keep tabs on the hard-drinking Washington lobbyist who was the alleged author of a memo implying a \$400,000 payoff from ITT to the Nixon administration.

"It may even freak Dita out, but my job was to report who she talked to and what she talked about," Lazzarini said.

"No matter what she thinks, ITT never wants to see her in Washington again. She's out of it now, she's through for the company."

Spokesmen for ITT in New York City confirmed that Lazzarini was indeed employed by the corporation's late director of security, Richard J. Lavoie.

Lavoie was found dead of an apparent heart attack Dec. 27, 1972. The company spokesman admitted that Lazzarini worked for ITT as an agent in contact with Mrs. Beard until March of this year when, according to ITT, he was paid a final lump sum of \$7000 in return for an agreement not to involve the huge conglomerate in any litigation.

ITT spokesman David Kiernan was unable to say

*'Like a knife
in the middle
of my gut'*

what Lazzarini's exact job was.

"That's only really known to him (Lazzarini) and Dick Lavoie, who has since died," Kiernan told The Chronicle.

"We've looked through his (Lavoie's) files and haven't found anything specific on Lazzarini, but it seems reasonable that Lavoie would have somebody in Denver to see if when she was reported sick that she really was and that no harm fell to her."

"It was as though one of my own children had just suddenly turned a knife in the middle of my gut," Mrs. Beard told a Denver reporter after learning that young Lazzarini was an agent of ITT. The company still pays her over \$37,000 a year to keep track of "investment properties" in Colorado.

The strange tale of 26-year-old Denver gumshoe, Kenneth Lazzarini begins in October, 1972, months after the sensational Beard memo was published, and only a few days before the presidential election.

Denver is something of an amateur sleuth's dream-world, which at times makes



Lazzarini, former ITT "associate"

it a law enforcement nightmare. Until recently, there was confusion over just what kind of license was required to be a private investigator in Denver, and Sam Spade types were about as common as dandelions.

Lazzarini, whose own political philosophy is that he had "no politics", was an unusual man, to say the least.

He drives a gold-colored \$14,000 Cadillac "El Classico", wears white Edwardian suits, has long brown hair and looks more like a rock 'n' roll promoter than a detective.

Lazzarini landed in Denver after being discharged from the Air Force in 1969. By last fall he was a security chief for a Denver department store and he ran his own detective agency on the side.

His fluffy maroon velour business cards identified him as head of "Office 3, Private Investigation." He took on anything except divorces.

Then in late October he got a telephone call from ITT security chief Lavoie.

"I don't know why or where he got my name," Lazzarini said. "Anyway, he just called me for an interview, so I assume he talked to other private detectives,

too."

They met in a dimly lighted bar of Denver's Brown Palace hotel — Lazzarini in his usual flamboyant costume, Lavoie the archetype corporate security chief in a bland suit and close-cropped hair.

Lavoie knew of Dita Beard's penchant for knowing what was "in" and chic; apparently Lazzarini fit the bill almost perfectly.

Lazzarini says Lavoie laid out the general details of Dita Beard's association with ITT and the firm's interest in keeping an eye on whom she talked to and what she was saying.

"I knew exactly what he wanted me to do — he wanted me to be a spy or an agent for his company," Lazzarini said.

Lazzarini first met Mrs. Beard later that same night. Lavoie arranged drinks and dinner and introduced Lazzarini as the son of an old Air Force buddy.

"After we had dinner, Lavoie left us," Lazzarini said. "I was supposed to talk to her and then call him later and tell him if I'd take the job."

Lazzarini did so well in his first encounter with her that Mrs. Beard even invited him

to stop by sometime for dinner with her family.

Lazzarini called Lavoie to say he would take the job.

On Nov. 9, 1972, Lazzarini saw Lavoie for the last time. Lazzarini says Lavoie gave him a list of instructions written in longhand on Brown Palace Hotel stationery.

The note listed three "objectives."

"1. Ingratiate yourself on a friendly basis so that you have access to her home and friends.

"2. Do not accept the offer to assist her on a consultant

basis as I now have doubts whether these expenses will be approved." (This was a reference to Mrs. Beard's job as a locator of investment properties for ITT.)

"3. I am interested in both her health and her emotions — drinking; drugs; associations with questionable persons; her stated intentions for the future, especially returning to Washington D.C.; complaints about maltreatment by the New York (ITT) hqs."

For the next four months, Lazzarini worked at becoming a close friend of Dita Beard.

"Sometimes we'd go out to dinner — always to the same restaurants," Lazzarini said, "or sometimes we'd have dinner in the apartment."

Often the sessions would begin in the evening and go on to early morning. Mrs. Beard pouring stiff shots for herself out of a half gallon bottle of Old Crow bourbon.

"She did all the talking mostly," Lazzarini said. "I did the listening and tried to stay sober."

Mrs. Beard, he says, was "a dynamic person. I mean, when she talked, you listened. I wouldn't call her the sweet, motherly type; she's loud, boisterous even, and she gets her point across."

Lazzarini had become not only a friend of Mrs. Beard, but of her daughter, Lundy, and her sons, David and Cameron Duncan (Bull) Beard, and Mrs. Beard apparently felt the young man who frequently came over around dinner time was a good friend for her children.

Like Lazzarini, Mrs. Beard's children are all in their 20s.

What Dita Beard didn't know was that Lazzarini was making detailed reports to Lavoie about everything from the contents of conversations to the style of Mrs. Beard's visitors, one of whom Lazzarini described in a report as "overweight and a very poor dresser."

Lazzarini says he charged ITT \$200 per visit with the Beards — plus expenses.

Usually, he said, he was paid in cash which arrived by registered mail. After Lavoie's death, however, the ITT computer apparently got hold of Lazzarini's name, and one check to him for \$800 in "professional services" is on record. Lazzarini has the stub.

If he overheard anything important to the U.S. Government or to ITT, Lazzarini is so far keeping it to himself.

He makes it clear that items he knows, or heard, "that could cause problems" for ITT will not be offered free of charge.

But most of what he heard was gossip and the wide ranging ramblings of a woman who for years had mingled with people on the highest levels of government. When she talked about those days, even Lazzarini says that at times he was shocked.

"They'd (the Beard family and friends) talk about arranging anything in those days," Lazzarini said. "If a guy wanted money, they'd get him money. If he wanted a girl, they'd get him a girl. If he was a homosexual, they'd fix him up with that."

To his surprise, Lazzarini found that Mrs. Beard and her family still had sufficient contacts with ITT and with politicians to be an insider to the workings of government.

"I was awed at their power," he said. "They knew everything before it hap-

'I listened and tried to stay sober'

pened. about what the grand

jury was talking about, about what the FBI was doing, everything.

"I began to think that if they said it was going to rain Tuesday, it had better rain on Tuesday."

There were times, however, when even the Beards felt uneasy. Lazzarini recalled them telling him of a strange man in an obvious wig who had tried to visit Dita while she was in the hospital following her celebrated heart attack.

"Lundy and Dave felt there was good reason to believe somebody was going to do Dita in," he said, "and

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... from Page 13 ... they felt that this guy might be a threat to her."

The "guy" was later revealed in congressional testimony to have been White House "plumber" H. Howard Hunt.

At first, Lazzarini said he was asked by Mrs. Beard's lawyer, but later he learned she came to him directly.

... from Page 13 ... Mrs. Beard's lawyer ... he was going to be paid ...

A spokesman for the FBI ... he had earned a ... Mrs. Beard's ...

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Using a special number Lavoie had given him, Lazzarini managed to contact ITT Deputy Director of Security Russell Tagliarini. Lazzarini said Tagliarini was ...

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