

Home Left Unwatched

By Joel D. Weisman

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CHICAGO, June 21 — Undercover law enforcement officers watched visitors — and perhaps the killer — of Sam Giancana arrive at his suburban Oak Park home Thursday night, but they apparently were not on the scene when the Chicago mob leader was killed.

Oak Park Deputy Police Chief Harold Fitzsimmons said the surveillance of Giancana's home by Chicago police and FBI agents lasted most of the afternoon and evening until about 10:30 p.m. "when it appeared" his relatives and associates had departed.

Giancana, slain by seven bullet wounds to his head and neck from a .22-caliber pistol, was discovered by his caretaker at 11:53 p.m. in the basement kitchen.

The surveillance unit on duty at 10:30 p.m., apparently thinking that the mob chieftain had secretly left with his guests, followed the guests' car to a rendezvous with another underworld figure in a nearby suburb, leaving the Giancana home unwatched.

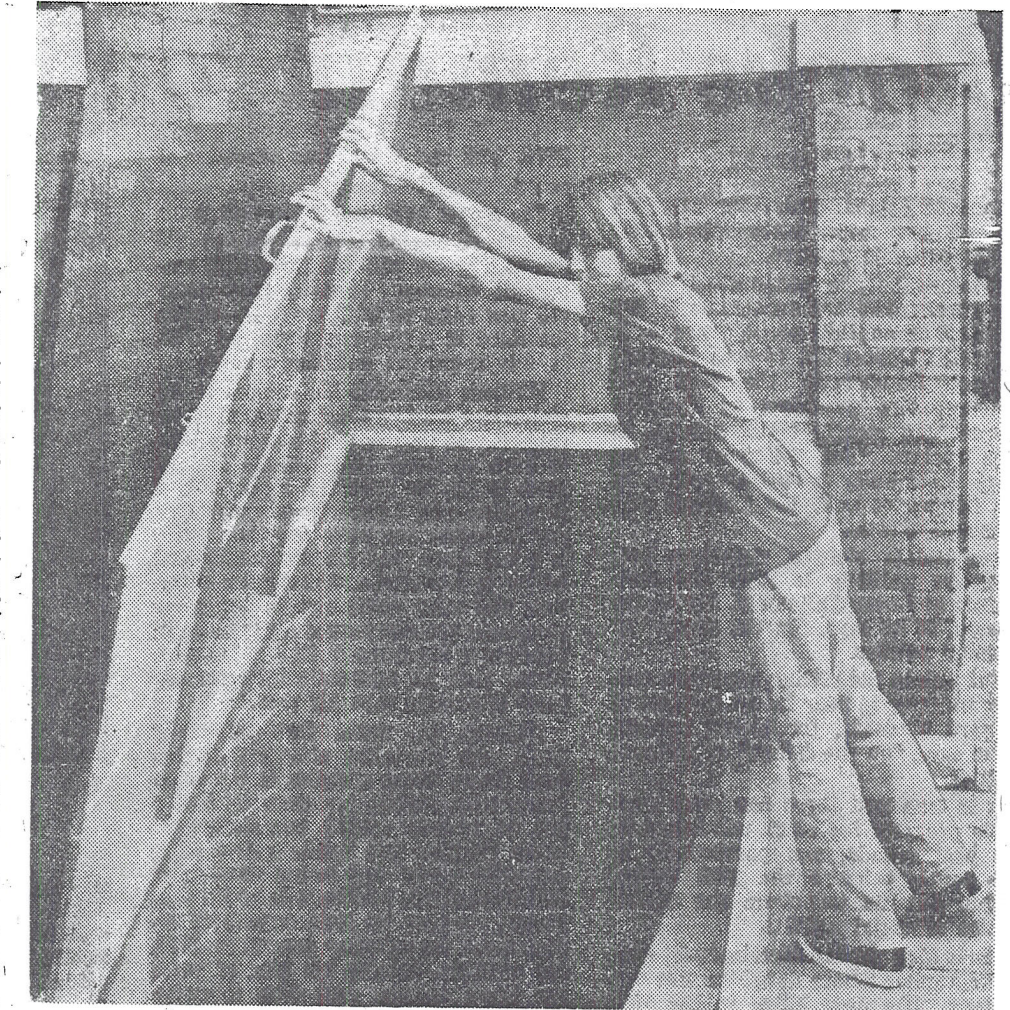
Although the FBI has denied conducting any surveillance that night, Oak Park Deputy Police Chief Fitzsimmons said that either an FBI or Chicago police unit was at the scene until 10:30.

Because of the surveillance, authorities know that at least two top syndicate figures, Charles English and Dominic Blasi, once Giancana's bodyguard, were at his home Thursday evening.

They joined Giancana's two daughters, two sons-in-law and a 6-year-old granddaughter, who dined on chicken cacciatore at a welcome home dinner, Fitzsimmons said. Giancana had returned to his home earlier in the day from Houston, where he had undergone treatment for a gall bladder condition.

Cook County State's Attorney Bernard Terry said today that subpoenas to appear before a grand jury investigating the murder would be issued for English, Blasi, and Anthony (Big Tuna) Accardo, the Chicago mob's "elder statesman." Investigators said that any mob-ordered killing would have to have been cleared through Accardo.

There is still uncertainty whether Giancana's death was ordered or whether it was the result of the killer's personal grudge. Most local police—in-



Associated Press

A youngster opens a stormdoor leading in Oak Park, Ill. Police theorize Giancana's killer may have entered this way.

cluding the Oak Park and Chicago police departments—lean toward the theory that Giancana had become an underworld liability.

Chicago underworld leaders were unprepared for the torrent of publicity linking Giancana to an alleged CIA-backed plot to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro. It is also believed that they feared Giancana might eventually disclose syndicate secrets before a federal grand jury here investigating the mob's international investments.

Peter Vaira, chief of the Chicago federal crime strike force, said prosecutors had been preparing to indict Giancana for perjury because of "clear inconsistencies" in stories he told the grand jury about mob investments.

Investigators espousing the "liability theory" said that because of health problems and his age, 65, Giancana must have decided that he would not go to jail for the mob.

But Vaira and other investigators do not rule out the theory that Giancana's death may have been the result of a private grudge. "Remember he was a hot-tempered guy, thought nothing of chasing other guys' wives, ordering

murders and vicious beatings, and was not exactly trying to acquire new friends," said Vaira.

There is also uncertainty among authorities as to whether Giancana's killer entered the home after the surveillance ended or remained behind in the house. Under either theory, Giancana "definitely knew his killer," said Fitzsimmons, who leans toward the theory that the killer was admitted by Giancana — perhaps through a basement trapdoor — after family members and syndicate associates left.

The day that ended in death started ordinarily enough for Giancana, according to Fitzsimmons:

"He arose about 9 a.m. and spent much of the morning tinkering around his garden, weeding geranium plants. Later he practiced putting on his own private backyard golf-club."

Fitzsimmons said that during the afternoon, Giancana did a little more putting and returned to his house. About 4 p.m. he took a walk in the neighborhood with his caretaker, Joseph DiPersio, 82.

About 5:30 p.m., Giancana had dinner with his relatives, and then, Fitzsimmons said,

Giancana and his son-in-law went to the basement to repair a leaking pipe. Shortly thereafter, English and Blasi arrived at the house, staying until about 10 p.m.

After all the guests left, Giancana went to the kitchen in his basement to prepare a late-night snack of spinach and sausage.

About 10:30 p.m. DePersio asked Giancana if there was anything he wanted and then retired to his attic quarters to watch television.

It was apparently shortly after this that the killer confronted Giancana. Police said the snack consisted of only enough food for one person and only one can of soda was opened. "There's no question he hadn't planned on entertaining the uninvited guest," said Fitzsimmons.

In making a final check before retiring, Di Persio discovered Giancana's body.

Rather than calling police, Di Persio telephoned Giancana's daughter, Bonnie DePalma, who told him to send for an ambulance, thinking from Di Persio's description that her father had suffered a heart attack. When the ambulance arrived police were summoned.