

Tape Called JFK a 'Marked Man'

Miami Herald 3-11-67

By FRED BRETNING

Herald Staff Writer

Miami Police made public Thursday a tape recording taken two weeks before the death of President John F. Kennedy in which an unidentified man said the president was "a marked man."

The tape was played for newsmen after an account of what the recording was supposed to have contained appeared in the local press.

Any relation between information on the tape and the Kennedy assassination on Nov. 22, 1963 was discounted by Assistant State Attorney Arthur Hutto.

Hutto said the recording was made during an investigation into the activities of convicted bomber Donald Branch and others "who used to sit around and threaten to kill a lot of people."

He said the subject on the tape was a member of the Branch group and "in our opinion there is no connection between the death of President Kennedy and this group."

Branch, a Hialeah man and former Miami Water Dept. meter reader, was sentenced to 20 years in prison in 1963 for bombing the home of Herald editor, Don Shoemaker. In 1962, Branch received two six-year terms for possessing and transporting explosives. The six-year sentences are running concurrently with the 20-year stretch.

Police would answer no questions regarding the circumstances under which the recording was made. They said a copy of the transcription was turned over to the federal government prior to the assassination.

A spokesman for the Secret Service said in Washington his office would have no comment on the recording.

The comments on Kennedy came after some 15 minutes of conversation between a police informer and the subject. Authorities said the informer wore "a bug" to record the conversation.

At one point, the person being questioned said the best way to kill the president would be "from an office building with a high-powered rifle."

He added, in a low voice that remained calm through the exchange "He (Kennedy) knows he is a marked man." "They're really going to kill him?" asked the police informer.

"They got something working," said the subject. No group or individual was

ever linked conclusively to the assassination plan by the subject nor was Dallas mentioned.

When the undercover man commented that it would be most difficult to kill the president of the U.S., the subject said: "If they have suspicions of course it would."

But, he added: "In Washington there — during the plane and weather — he comes out on the veranda. You could be in the hotel across the way and pick him off. Then you'd disassemble the gun and get on out of there."

Apparently posing as a man who knew the workings of extremist groups, the informer said: "Goy, if that Kennedy gets shot, we better know where we're at."

The subject said: "They'll pick up someone within hours to throw the public off." He made the comment in the most offhand of manners, as if he were engaged in polite conversation about the weather.

Talk centered for a short time about President Kennedy's mid-November visit to Miami.

"You can bet your bottom dollar he'll be talking about the Cubans," the subject said. "There are so many here."