

IN DEATH, SPENCE STAYED TRUE TO FORM

Michael Hedges, and Jerry Seper The Washington Times; Final Section: A, Page: A1 Monday, November 13, 1989

BOSTON -

Craig J. Spence, the once-powerful lobbyist who entertained and influenced Washington's elite, died Friday much as he had lived: dressed in a tuxedo in Boston's most expensive hotel, listening to Mozart with three dollars in his pocket.

Now, many questions may never be answered about the man who was a focus of a federal grand jury investigation for spending \$20,000 a month on male prostitutes, orchestrating unauthorized late-night tours of the White House and possibly bribing a Secret Service officer and a member of the Army's Delta Force.

On a mirror in Room 429 of the Ritz Carlton Hotel, Mr. Spence on Friday left his final enigma in the form of a suicide note.

With a black felt-tip marker he had written, "Chief, consider this my resignation, effective immediately. As you always said, you can't ask others to make a sacrifice if you are not ready to do the same. Life is duty. God bless America."

As a postscript, he wrote, "To the Ritz, please forgive this inconvenience."

Mr. Spence was found by hotel employees Friday afternoon lying on his bed, fully clothed, with a telephone cradled in his ear and a Walkman headset containing a cassette tape of Mozart's "A Little Night Music" around his neck, police detectives and other sources said.

Boston's medical examiner had made no official finding on the cause of death yesterday. "That may take as long a couple weeks," said a spokesman for the office. Mr. Spence's body was being held by the medical examiner, who had performed an autopsy, while police tried to contact his survivors.

Found hidden in a false ceiling in the bathroom were seven small packets of Xanax, a prescription anti-depressant, with one pill removed, Detective Sgt. James McDonald said. Also found were Mr. Spence's will and birth certificate.

Mr. Spence was attired in the style he affected at his lavish dinner parties, according to the police report: "black Tux with white shirt, bow tie, white suspenders, black socks and shoes."

"There was no sign of foul play whatsoever, no marks on the body," said Boston Police Detective Robert Harrington. "It was as if he had fallen asleep talking on the telephone."

The door of the hotel had been barricaded with the room's other double bed and a chair, according to a police report. Hotel maintenance workers had to saw through the door to enter the room. The only other way into the room was through a fourth-floor window facing a busy street.

Mr. Spence may have attempted to save himself after taking an intentional overdose, according to police investigators.

"Someone from Washington called the hotel that day and said a Craig Spence had called the caller and may be sick," said a police detective. "But the hotel couldn't find a Mr. Spence registered. It turned out he had

checked in under an alias, C.S. Kane." Friends theorized the alias was an ironic takeoff on Orson Welles' fictional hero Citizen Kane, whom Mr. Spence often said he admired.

In an interview with The Washington Times in August, **Mr. Spence made frequent allusions to his work with the Central Intelligence Agency, a connection CIA sources deny.**

But on the bed near him when he died, according to two Boston detectives who handled the investigation, was a newspaper clipping detailing efforts by CIA Director William Webster to initiate legislation giving protection to CIA agents called upon to testify before government bodies.

Mr. Spence had been subpoenaed to appear before a federal grand jury in Washington probing his connections to a call-boy network suspected of committing credit-card violations, to late-night White House tours he arranged and the gift of a Rolex watch to a Secret Service officer who allegedly gave Mr. Spence pieces of the Truman china collection in return.

He had boasted to reporters for The Times that - if he testified - he would provide a wealth of damaging information into the workings of the call-boy ring, bribery of Japanese and U.S. officials and other sordid matters.

But, despite the subpoena, Mr. Spence apparently never appeared before a grand jury.

During the past few weeks, Mr. Spence told several friends that **the call-boy operation was being investigated by the U.S. Attorney's Office and other federal authorities as a possible CIA front. He told the friends that the CIA used the service to compromise other federal intelligence officials and foreign diplomats.**

One friend quoted him as saying, **"Casey's boys are out to get me,"** an apparent reference to former CIA Director William Casey, now deceased. Mr. Casey and Mr. Spence were friends, and the former CIA director attended parties hosted by the former lobbyist.

Mr. Spence had come to Boston several days before his death with frequent companion former Air Force Sgt. Ron Paganelli and his dog, Winston, according to police investigators.

During his stay at the elegant Ritz Carlton, just off the Boston Common, he entertained as many as six or seven guests in his \$285-a-night room, according to hotel employees.

He had arrived at the hotel Nov. 4. Mr. Spence told a hotel worker with whom he had become friendly that he was in town to meet with a former boss, one-time Massachusetts Speaker of the House John Davoren, police said. But that meeting never occurred, they said.

Hotel employees said he was an eccentric guest, making frequent demands of the staff for chocolate truffles, fresh flowers and other appointments but then somewhat arbitrarily tipping \$200 or \$300 at a time. He spent much of his stay traveling in limousines to meet friends, police said.

During a lengthy interview at a Manhattan apartment in August, **Mr. Spence frequently alluded to deep mysteries. "All this stuff you've uncovered (involving call boys, bribery and the White House tours), to be honest with you, is insignificant compared to other things I've done. But I'm not going to tell you those things, and somehow the world will carry on."**

He also talked frequently of suicide, saying repeatedly, "My life is over." He reserved deep bitterness for high-powered friends he said had forsaken him. "I've had the world at my house, and now they don't know who I am," he said. "But they did come, didn't they?"

Photo, Craig J. Spence, who once said he was "looking forward" to death, was found dead Friday in his room at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Boston.,

By Peter Kolk/Special to The Washington Times