

Craig J. Spence

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Craig J. Spence (1941 – November 10, 1989) was a Republican lobbyist who was found dead in a Ritz-Carlton hotel room in 1989.^{[1][2]}

Contents

- 1 Background
- 2 Washington Call-Boy Scandal
- 3 Death
- 4 External links
- 5 References

Background

Spence attended Syracuse University before becoming a correspondent for ABC News. During the Vietnam War, he covered Southeast Asia, but eventually left the network due to ideological differences. ^[*citation needed*]

In January 1985, Spence registered with the U.S. State Department as a foreign agent for Japan and began lobbying for Japanese interests. Throughout the 1980s, Spence built a reputation as an influential lobbyist who represented many Japanese concerns and established close friendships with a number of leading Japanese politicians, including Motoo Shiina, considered by Tokyo analysts to be an inside favorite to replace scandal-plagued Sōsuke Uno as prime minister.^[3]

Spence and Mr. Shiina were embroiled in a real estate deal involving the house in Kalorama, a two-story Victorian showpiece valued by real estate agents at \$1.15 million. Spence had told friends that he obtained the money to buy the house by blackmailing Mr. Shiina. Mr. Shiina denied he was blackmailed by Mr. Spence.

Washington Call-Boy Scandal

Spence's name came to national prominence in the aftermath of a June 28, 1989 article in the *Washington Times* identifying Spence as a customer of a homosexual escort service being investigated by the Secret Service, the District of Columbia Police and the United States Attorney's Office for suspected credit card fraud. The newspaper said he spent as much as \$20,000 a month on the service. He had also been linked to a White House guard who has said he accepted an expensive watch from Mr. Spence and allowed him and friends to take late-night White House tours.^[4]

Spence entered a downward spiral after in the wake of the *Washington Times* exposee, increasingly involving himself with call boys and crack,^[5] and culminating in his July 31, 1989 arrest at the Barbizon Hotel on East 63rd St in Manhattan for criminal possession of a firearm and criminal possession of cocaine.^[6]

Months after the scandal had died down, and a few weeks before Spence was found in a room of Ritz-Carlton Hotel, in Boston, he was asked who had given him the "key" to the White House. Michael Hedges and Jerry Seper of *The Washington Times* reported that "Mr. Spence hinted the tours were arranged by 'top level' persons", including Donald Gregg, national security adviser to Vice President George H. W. Bush at the time of the tours were given.^[5]

When pressed to identify who it was who got him inside the White House, Spence asked "Who was it who got [long-term CIA operative] Félix Rodríguez in to see Bush?", agreeing that he was alluding to Mr. Gregg.^[5]

Gregg himself dismissed the allegation as "absolute bull", according to Hedges and Seper. "It disturbs me that he can reach a slimy hand out of the sewer to grab me by the ankle like this," he told the reporters. "The allegations are totally false."^[5]

Death

On November 10, 1989 Spence was found dead dressed in a tuxedo in Room 429 the Boston Ritz Carlton, the city's most expensive hotel with three dollars in his pocket. When found by hotel employees 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", with a telephone cradled in his ear and a Walkman headset containing a cassette tape of Mozart's "A Little Night Music".^[7]

Found hidden in a false ceiling in the bathroom were seven small packets of Xanax, a mildly^[citation needed]-addictive anti-anxiety prescription drug, with one pill removed. In black felt-tip marker he had written on a mirror of his room:

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."^[7]

During a lengthy interview at a Manhattan apartment a few months before his death, Spence alluded to more intricate involvements. "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."^[7]

External links

- Craig Spence (<http://www.namebase.org/main1/Craig-Spence.html>) at NameBase

References

1. ^ Margaret Carlson. Washington's Man From Nowhere. (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,958213,00.html>) *Time (magazine)*, 24 July 1989, retrieved 19 January 2008
2. ^ Associated Press. Lobbyist Linked to Sex Case Is Found Dead. (<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=950DE4D6173BF931A25752C1A96F948260>) *The New York Times*, 12 November 1989, retrieved 18 January 2008
3. ^ Jerry Seper and Michael Hedges, "Spence was target before raid on ring" *The Washington Times* Part A; Pg. A1 July 10, 1989
4. ^ *Washington Times*, June 29 1989
5. ^ ^a ^b ^c ^d Michael Hedges and Jerry Seper, "Spence arrested in N.Y., released; Once-host to powerful reduced to begging, sleeping in park" *The Washington Times* August 9, 1989
6. ^ Lobbyist Is Arrested in New York (<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=950DEEDA113CF933A2575BC0A96F948260&scp=1&sq=craig%20spence&st=cse>)
7. ^ ^a ^b ^c Michael Hedges and Jerry Seper, "In Death, Spence stayed true to form" *The Washington Times* Monday, November 13, 1989

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Craig_J._Spence"

Categories: 1941 births | 1989 deaths | American lobbyists

- This page was last modified on 20 August 2010 at 06:00.
 - Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. See Terms of Use for details.
- Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.