

MAYOR'S BODYGUARD TOOK EVIDENCE OTHER COPS DIDN'T GET GOOD LOOK AT CARD IN SLAYING

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Friday, February 9, 1990

Author: JOE SWICKARD Free Press Staff Writer

Mayor Coleman Young's chief bodyguard removed mayoral security staff identification from a car at an apparent drug assassination scene before the scene was searched by homicide detectives, according to police reports.

Cmdr. Ronald Fleming, head of the mayor's security detail, said in a brief report about the February 1989 incident that he took the card and launched his own investigation, according to persons involved in the case.

They said there is no follow-up report from him in the file prepared for the trial of Raed Jihad, charged in the fatal shooting of reputed cocaine lord **Harry Kalasho** .

David Griem, one of Jihad's defense lawyers, said Fleming's action "most certainly does raise the possibility that other evidence in the case may have been contaminated or lost."

Law enforcement experts said moving evidence at a crime scene violates standard police practice to keep a scene undisturbed until it has been examined by homicide detectives and evidence technicians.

Neither Fleming nor mayoral spokesman Bob Berg could be reached for comment Thursday. On Wednesday, Berg said the card in **Kalasho** 's car was an unauthorized reproduction.

The February 1989 killing of **Kalasho** , 24, was at the center of a major struggle for control of a major share of the Detroit area cocaine market, according to opening statements Thursday.

Assistant prosecutor Kenneth Simon told jurors that Jihad, 20, killed **Kalasho** to avenge the murders of two friends, allegedly ordered by **Kalasho** .

Jihad was "on a holy war" to repay the killings, including one that carried a \$10,000 bounty to behead a victim, Simon said.

But defense lawyer Mark Kriger said Jihad is an informant for the Michigan State Police and U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration who is being framed by **Kalasho** 's organization for trying to gather evidence against it.

"Raed Jihad wanted to get **Harry Kalasho** , yes, but through the court system, not cutting off someone's head," said Kriger, adding that **Kalasho** was more likely killed in a power grab engineered by his own lieutenants.

Outside court, Griem, a former assistant Macomb County prosecutor and former head of the U.S. attorney's drug unit, said that disturbing a crime scene is contrary to police procedures.

Paul Embert, training specialist with the Michigan State University School of Criminal Justice, agreed: "The first duty of an officer at a crime is to preserve the scene . . . to keep everything intact."

U.S. Secret Service spokesman John Britt said: "Absolutely, you do not tamper with anything at a scene until it has been photographed, diagrammed and inventoried. That's flat, routine police work. Police 101, is what we call it."

The long-rumored existence of the credentials was confirmed Wednesday after Griem joked about them in front of Wayne Circuit Judge Richard Hathaway.

Because of the credentials in the windshield of **Kalasho**'s Acura, initial police radio reports said the shooting might involve a security staff member.

While the authenticity of the identification card was not questioned in police reports, Berg said Wednesday that it was a photocopy.

But Griem said, "from reading the reports, it was certainly my impression that it was the real McCoy and not a reproduction."

The card design was changed after the incident, Berg said. It is unknown how **Kalasho** obtained the card.

Caption: Photo

: When **HarryKalasho** was killed, one of the mayor's bodyguards took evidence from the scene. Police Cmdr. Ronald Fleming is the chief of the mayor's security detail.

Memo: SHORTER VERSION IN METRO FINAL EDITION page 1B

CORRECTION RAN February 10, 1990

getting it straight

* In a Friday article about Mayor Young's bodyguard taking evidence from a crime scene, U.S. Secret Service spokesman John Britt's comments about the handling of evidence were based on a hypothetical situation. The word hypothetical should not have been omitted from the article.

Edition: METRO EDITION

Section: NWS

Page: 1B

Index Terms: HENRY KALASHO; RONALD FLEMING ; DRUG ; DEATH ; SHOOTING

Record Number: 9001060187

Copyright (c) 1990 Detroit Free Press