



Morales

Ex-terrorist says he shot key figure in big jewel theft



Gordon

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Shortly before midnight on July 18, 1967, Herman (Hy) Gordon, jewel fence and a key figure in the sensational Star of India sapphire heist, was shot in the head by "two Latin males" in what was alternately described as a robbery and a professional hit. Gordon survived. His assailant never was identified. Until Wednesday.

In a sworn deposition to defense attorneys representing the 41 persons accused of drug smuggling in the state's Tick-Talks narcotics probe, Ricardo (Monkey) Morales, ex-spy, ex-terrorist turned police informant, confessed that he was the man who shot down Gordon on a dark suburban street.

Morales told defense attorney Kirk Munroe that he fired the .22-caliber bullet that crashed into Gordon's head behind an ear and exited through his cheek.

When Gordon was interviewed by detectives in his recovery bed, he told of driving his turquoise Cadillac near NE 10th Avenue and 87th Street. "Two Latin males," Gordon recounted, flashed a badge at him. He thought they were FBI agents. But then, Gordon told police, he heard one say, "This is a stick-up!" Seconds later, he was shot.

In his deposition, Morales related a different story.

He told Munroe that he was with gambler Frank (Lefty) Rosenthal — a man for whom Morales claims he performed numerous bombings during Mi-

ami's bloody 1967 "Bookie Wars" — at a meeting with Gordon. Morales said that after Gordon and Rosenthal began to argue, he pulled out his weapon and shot Gordon.

Still unexplained is the booty police discovered afterward in the trunk of Gordon's car. It was filled with coins, including some of rare vintage. Gordon was left bleeding in the street with about \$1,700 in cash still on him.

Gordon survived the wound, though, blinded by the shot, he would wear a black patch over his right eye.

Gordon once was described by the FBI as the nation's top jewelry fence, the "go-between" who helped return the famed Star of India sapphire to the New York Museum of Natural History.

Gordon died of a heart attack in November 1970 in Atlanta's Grady Memorial Hospital, where he'd been transferred after suffering a seizure in the Atlanta federal prison. He was serving a 10-year term for possession of stolen jewelry. Gordon took to the grave most of his secrets about international jewelry robbery rings.

Morales' credibility is one of the key issues in what is now the seven-week-long effort by defense attorneys to suppress nearly 1,000 hours of wiretap evidence against the 41 Tick-Talks defendants. His information was the basis for police wiretap requests. If defense attorneys can show that it was not credible, Judge Gerald Kogan may keep the evidence from being introduced at trial.