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An
Oral History
Interview
with
Christopher Phipps
1998

Las Vegas Gay Archives

Oral History Project Interview

with

Christopher Phipps

conducted by

Dennis McBride

November 6, 1998

Today is Friday, November 6, 1998, about eight in the morning. I'm with attorney Christopher Phipps in his office at 3900 South Paradise Road and we're going to be talking a little bit about the Apollo Spa and Health Club and its association with the Cunanan spree killing case, and Torsten Reineck who was the manager of the club.¹

First, Chris, if you could just give me very briefly a bit of your background: when you were born, where you were born, where you got your law degree and when you came to Las Vegas.

OK, I was born November 1, 1959 in Honolulu, Hawaii. My father was in the foreign trade business so I grew up traveling throughout southeast Asia. I went to British schools overseas. I was tutored privately by my mother and through the State Department educational system until 1971 when I went to boarding school in New England. Eaglebrook School and Hotchkiss. The time I was at Eaglebrook King Hussein's two sons, the crown princes of Jordan, were in attendance, so, I mean, that's why I remember that. And Hotchkiss Let's see, I graduated in '77, then I moved to California, went to junior college and then basically that's when I

came out [as gay], discovered what was going on, discovered LA, stopped going to school for a few years and got my social life caught up. I was kind of behind the times. And ended up getting my bachelor's degree from the University of Utah in 1986.

In what?

In political science. Only because I was in the ten-year undergraduate program [laughs] and my classes were getting old. Most of my training was in physics and biology. I worked for Carl Sagan for awhile as a research assistant during the project SETI^B—extraterrestrial was big in the late '70s. I worked for Sagan—I'd met him at the hotel in Hawaii where I worked on vacations. And so I'm really more knowledgeable in physics and the sciences than I am political science, but that was the least structured degree. And our professor convinced me to stay on for law school. And I was recruited to Las Vegas by a law firm in 19... . It was snowing Christmas Day when I moved here so that would have been 1988. Christmas Day '88.

What law firm was it?

Vargas and Bartlett. Which is now Kummer, Kaempfer, Bonner and Renshaw. There was a major split a few years afterwards. I was brought down to do the Pepcon disaster case.³

Specifically?

Um,hm. I did nothing but that one case for about three years. Our firm represented the insurance companies as plaintiffs who were trying to get the money to pay out in home owners' claims and I worked against Morton Thiokol. When the Challenger blew up, the space shuttle flights stopped, yet all the contracts to make the rocket fuel were still ongoing. So they didn't know what to do with the stuff and they just stuck it out at the plant and there was a fire and then it ignited and it basically blew up.

You were associated with Kevin Kelly's⁴ firm briefly about 1993?

Yeah. What happened is Kevin and I had come to know each other. When I was working for Vargas and Bartlett I was not at all in the social scene. And I forget how I first met Kevin. But once [my lover] Tod got sick—Tod passed away—I wanted to be able to spend more time with him. And so I decided to leave the firm I was then working at and open up my own firm so I could work around hours and schedules. When I did that I was given an office space by a prominent Vegas attorney who had lost a partner and I needed to make other arrangements. And I thought with my defense background and Kevin's criminal background we could come together and make a well-rounded firm. But we were never able to put together something financially feasible for both of us. So I ended up renting office space from him for awhile and then when Toddy got really sick I started working out of the house and basically stopped practicing for awhile.

And then you came to work here?

Actually, then after Tod died I worked for two small firms doing construction defect litigation. Then I went in with partners of a law student friend of mine—I worked for Scottsdale Insurance Company, I was their lead defense counsel. Then, because of my health, I had to basically stop practicing for awhile. I actually got disenchanted with law and I was looking to go work for an insurance company as a claims manager, something like that. And I was unemployed, or I wasn't working, for about a year and half while I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do. And then a consulting group that does medical malpractice cases brought me in. And I basically do a majority of their medical malpractice cases. I'm a separate company but they help me and assist me and bankroll my cases and I work exclusively for plaintiffs, patients injured or killed as a result of medical malpractice.

Give a little bit of background on what the Apollo Spa and Health Club is.

OK. The concept came from the people who first put the club together. [They] were German. There was a group—a consortium's probably the best way of describing it—of, as I recall, three or four German individuals. I can't mention the names because of the attorney/client privilege. Although there are some court files which, with research, you could discover them. They were running brothels in Germany—which is a legal enterprise there. Doc⁵ claimed credit for Doc was sort of the next level down under these guys. He ran some of the operations

[in Germany]. He came to Miami and he wanted to work something in the U. S. And what his concept was was to have a chain of gay men's health spas in different major cities—I think we were looking at Seattle next and then Houston and San Francisco—where it wasn't a bath house, but yet it was a place where men could go and Let's say a step between a bath house and just a regular old workout gym that has gay clientele. We were trying to find an upscale in-between. That was the concept. And to make it work well, instead of building the club from scratch which was very expensive, we would search cities for clubs that were going under in bankruptcy and buy at the bankruptcy sale. The pool's already installed, the jacuzzi's there, and basically just run it and market it. And it's actually a very good concept and someday someone'll pick up the ball and run with that and be very wealthy.

Well, that was the concept. The Apollo here was the first one and we were getting ready to look at a second one in Seattle about when all the shit hit the fan.

Were you involved, then, from the beginning?

No. I came in after the club had been open for about a year. This was during the period I was technically not practicing. I believe Kevin [Kelly] had referred the club to me. I came in and was basically told the concept by Doc. And he saw that he'd need a lawyer to do things and the concept was I would become part of the corporation. The corporation was incorporated in Florida. It's actually a Florida corporation, I believe. And the records I think show Torsten Reineck as the actual president.

For the sake of chronology, the Apollo opened September 9, 1996.

And they were in possession of [the building] for about four months prior to that doing the build-out, doing the modifications. It had been the Venus Club, I believe, before that. It was a women's spa.

Originally the Golden Venus in the '60s.

So the pool was in and all that. They had to do the rooms. There was space to the left of the main entrance of the club which had formerly been a breezeway which had now been enclosed and the concept was that was gonna be a restaurant-slash-

bar. So you could go to the Apollo, you could work out, you could sit by the pool, you could get a suntan, you could relax in the rooms, or you could have a bite to eat. And, actually, Doc's concept was to have it be sort of interactive entertainment. It would be a night club sort of thing with, you know, the hoity-toity waiters. Something like what Free Zone⁶ is doing now [but] with a spa connected to it.

That didn't happen, though.

I was brought in when there started to be a falling out between the landlord and the club. The landlord, for whether it be money reasons or whether he really cared—I believe the landlord knew it was gay club when he signed the lease. I think Doc had been pretty open about that. But the landlord tried to evict the club. And so I was brought in to try and keep the doors open and the concept was if we put the club into bankruptcy the automatic stay of the bankruptcy code would halt the eviction. And [the landlord was] doing a lockout. Basically they had already gotten the three-day notice [and] we had twenty-four hours to keep the club open. If it closed, potentially it'd be much harder to get it re-opened with the landlord than if we could just keep the landlord away.

What period was that?

Right in the fall [of 1996], I think. Around October, November if memory serves me right. If you search the Apollo down at the bankruptcy court on the system it'll give you the date of the filing.

Do you know anything about an attempted raid on the Apollo on November 14, 1996?

Sort of. It wasn't really a raid. I was called in on that. I'd just become connected with the club. We had young guys working the front desk and depending on the interpretation of the county codes—and I wasn't involved [in] or responsible for this part of the legal operations of the club. I was basically brought in originally just to keep the landlord from evicting 'em. Adult movies were being shown. We had a closed-circuit television system which showed a promotional channel for adult films which at one point the club was gonna be like Video West⁷ and [you'd]

be able to rent video tapes. A one-stop place. Unfortunately the zoning and licensing for that didn't permit it. But the TVs had already been put in and the problem is, depending on how you look at the statutes, even though you're showing regular television in addition to promotional channels, if you're showing adult stuff you need to be zoned in a light industrial area. So the word got out. A disgruntled employee told Metro, "They're showing dirty movies there. And there's sex going on, public sex." Which were violations of the Nevada code. So, actually there were two occasions. But this one you're referring to were two officers [doing] business license checks. What had happened is because of the bankruptcy the fee for the business license renewal had not been paid. Because the club was in bankruptcy and wasn't allowed to write checks without the trustee's permission. At two minutes after midnight upon expiration of the business license Metro knocked on the front door [and] wanted to see the business license. And, of course, it was invalid. So at that point they said, "Now we're going to make an inspection to see if the club is in compliance with its licensing. Let us in." And the kid at the front door panicked. He said, "I can't do that." And so there was a big scene at the front door and the cop said, "You don't let us in, we'll shut the place down and I take you to jail." And the kid didn't know what to do. Basically, I was called and I got the officers on the phone—I think I knew them from other work—and I only lived a few blocks away. They explained what they wanted to do and I said, "You know, we have a scared kid here." Then when I got down there we made a walk through the club. It wasn't a raid as such. It was a business license check. They were cited for not having a valid business license. We showed the payments had been sent but were being held by the bankruptcy trustee so they didn't lock us out or shut us up. No one was arrested. There were two citations, I think, for the business license.

Was there another incident close to that time where Torsten Reineck faced Metro down at the door?

The time I'd been there I think [Metro'd] come by once before but I think they didn't actually get in. They came back a few days later and we still hadn't gotten the receipt for the paid business license yet. And [Reineck] was panicking. So he just didn't know what to do. He didn't want to let 'em in till I got there and they basically said, "We can come in at any time." The police, I think, were concerned that stuff they weren't supposed to see was going on and this was a stalling tactic.

And really, I mean, Doc was just panicking. Nothing was being done while the cops were being held, but that was the showdown. [Reineck] has a hot temper and he pissed the cops off. But he wasn't arrested or cited or anything.

An interesting aside about that—when Metro was questioned—not by me but by someone in the media who I turned on to the incidents—they denied ever even having heard of the Apollo or what goes on there.

The club is licensed as a health spa. And given the activities If someone were to just walk in and walk through the club—and there was a time when the front door was not closed at night. The outer door was closed but there's an inner door from the desk to the back and there were times in the middle of the week when only one person would be there. People, before we improved the security, could literally walk in sometimes, follow someone else through the door and if the guy [at the desk] wasn't paying attention You wouldn't see anything unusual except people wearing towels, walking around in towels. It was all men so people'd swim nude in the pool like you'd see in any other club. If people engaged in some sort of sexual activity they would be told by the staff, "You can't do that here. You need to do it somewhere else." And the signs were all posted, only one person in a room. They were not cabañas, they were *changing* rooms. And some of 'em had televisions for people who wanted to watch the news or watch the promotional channels.

How, then, did the Apollo become involved in the Cunanan/Versace case initially?

Depending on who you talk to. And I have been unable to determine whether [Andrew] Cunanan was ever in the club. I made a search of records because the media wanted to know and the police wanted to know if Cunanan had a membership. We made a diligent search of all the records and there was no membership under the name Cunanan. There was a lady who was making curtains for the club when it first opened, prior to opening, who claims that she saw Cunanan at the club. There is a Las Vegas resident, a Filipino man, who looks very much like Cunanan. I forget his name. He had been stopped so many times during the search for Cunanan that he actually carried [a] letter from Metro saying, "I am not Cunanan." Because he'd go into restaurants and it's, "*Cunanan's here!*" and the cops'd pull up and he was taken downtown like five or six times. So he had this

letter and they all knew who he was. He was Filipino and, of course, Cunanan was part Filipino. So whether he was actually the one or whether the lady was seeing this other Las Vegas person, I don't know. I wasn't around for that. As far as we can tell Cunanan was never in the club. Doc claims to never have known Cunanan and I don't know if that's true or not. I never saw Cunanan at the club although I think the Western bar across the lot

*Badlands?*⁸

At the Badlands. I think it's Jeff, the head bartender, said Cunanan had come in there a long time ago back when the Apollo first opened, about that period, and he had served him drinks. Again, now, is it really Cunanan or is it this other Las Vegas guy? Jeff seems to know the Las Vegas guy and he was pretty sure that it was the real Cunanan. So we really don't know. I never saw 'im there.

What was the connection that brought the Apollo into the spotlight over the Cunanan case?

What happened was someone tips off Miami Beach police that someone resembling Cunanan is residing on this houseboat—and I forget what the address is. It's a famous area in Miami. The houseboats there cannot be moved. They're grandfathered in along that road but the idea is getting rid of 'em. So it's a permanent houseboat. It was Doc's houseboat. That was Doc's residence—he was working, I think, in North Beach or Miami Beach—before coming to Las Vegas to do the Apollo. The German business people, one of their members maintains a permanent office in Miami Beach for whatever their American business was. And that's where Doc kind of got into the bar circuit and Doc Whoever Torsten is. And Cunanan was found on his houseboat. When I learned of it I was under the impression from Doc and everyone else that [Cunanan's presence on the houseboat] was a complete surprise. When Doc saw his houseboat on TV and saw everyone storming in his question is, "They're ruining my houseboat! Who's gonna pay for the tear gas and the blood and all the other stuff?"

The associate who maintained an office in Miami, was that Frank Mathias Ruehl?

That I can't comment on because when we did the bankruptcy I didn't actually represent the club. I represented the creditors to the club because that way I controlled the Chapter 11. And so the backers of the club were my clients and so I can't confirm or deny clients' identities. But it was someone other than Doc, the person who I *knew* as Doc. The houseboat was a separate residence from the other business person. They didn't share the houseboat.

What was the confusion over Reineck's name when he came to Las Vegas?

I knew Doc as Doc Ruehl. And everyone called 'im Doc. I'd once asked him, "What kind of doctor are you?" And he said, "Ear, nose, and throat. An ontolaryngologist." In later discussions he had told other people—and in case anyone listens to this tape these were discussions *outside* of the attorney/client privilege. These were over dinners and other people around, so it's nothing confidential. He had told other people he had a doctor's degree in economics and all that. I'd been unable to confirm whether he really has a doctorate degree at all, or what we would consider an accredited degree. Doc's identity I never really thought much, and I was a little lax, probably, in the beginning—he appeared to be who he said he was. I had seen a driver's license on one occasion—but I did not photocopy it—that identified him

He had several [aliases]. Torsten Mathias "Doc" Ruehl, Torsten Reineck.

One of the names he used It turns out officially in the U. S. he was Torsten Reineck. There is a different gentleman who I have met who is actually Doc Ruehl. And I believe he has a doctorate in engineering. I met him on two separate occasions. There was confusion a long time ago as to which one was what and people called Doc "Doc," and he never bothered to clear it up. I came to find later from the reporter at the *Miami Herald* who was covering the Cunanan case, that Doc had two different driver's licenses with the same photo with both names. One under Torsten Reineck and one under Ruehl. Which is a Class E felony, I think, in Florida. And why that was of import was when Doc was in hiding there were no pending American charges against him. He was kind of in hiding because of the media blitz. But he had committed no crime. I mean, he didn't shoot Cunanan. Cunanan happened to be on his houseboat. I think they were fearful that Doc may I know that the FBI wanted to chat with him to see exactly what his role was in

it. And he was obviously wary to do that and now I understand it probably was because [of] the identity question. I come to find later—and it's, I think, a matter of public record—that he was very good at manufacturing German passports. I had heard a rumor, I have not been able to confirm it, that he made West German passports for East Germans during the Cold War. And that he had all those implements necessary for doing that present with him in Las Vegas. It has been speculated that he was making papers for Cunanan—if you believe he knew him in advance and it [wasn't] just circumstance. One of the theories—and, again, I can't confirm or deny—[is that] Cunanan, after the Versace incident—and there's a version of it where Versace is a mafia hit, essentially. He's backed by German money and if you look, we have German backers for the [Apollo] club, it certainly looks that way and all of a sudden Cunanan shows up on the houseboat of a German counterfeiter who makes passports it would appear that maybe papers were being prepared so that Cunanan could leave under a different identity. That's *speculation*, a theory that may work.

There was only one article that I ran across that actually got into the [German mob connection].

Someone from 20/20 interviewed me about that. I'd mentioned that that was one of the theories I'd heard.

Actually [the article was from] a tabloid, the National Examiner, September 2, 1997. The only story that actually spoke about the whole situation as a mob hit.

There are two German papers who were offering people a thousand dollars for an interview. *Springer*, which is a German tabloid magazine, and I think *Der Spiegel* or *Stern* was here. They actually had three people scouring basically anyone who'd talk to 'em—they'd give a thousand dollars to. And which was tempting to some of the employees, I think.

I have doubts whether Doc is even Torsten Reineck. That may be yet another alias for who he *really* is. He had discussed—and it wasn't said in confidence so I don't think it hurts to mention it—he had mentioned that during World War II he'd been draft age. He made it sound like he came from a very privileged background, family. From what I see he put on the appearance of being wealthy, well-to-do, and having assets. What I think comes to be revealed is a lot of that is

show. He is very much an *operator*. He would set up business deals very astutely—I think he's an astute businessman. He'd buy an interest in something, already have it pre-sold to you at a higher price and basically it never costs him anything out of pocket. *Your* money pays off the original thing and he gets a cut. So, I mean, he had a way of never having his money on the line. And things like that. So he had the appearance of being wealthy and having a lot of money and the Versace shirts and all that, but I think a lot of that is image. He claims he never met Versace, did not know 'im, only [knew] Versace's press secretary.

Why would he have known Versace's press secretary?

From Miami.

Just socially?

Yeah. Going out to the clubs. I think at one point Doc did work for one of the hotels in [Las Vegas]. Under which identity I don't know 'cause he would need a sheriff's card and I don't know if there's a sheriff's card under either name. There was an occasion when I visited his home when he wasn't staying around at the Rio [Hotel] or at the club. He had friends who spoke German there but they were friends Apparently his first job [in Las Vegas] was working at one of the casinos. So if he was really well-to-do he wouldn't be working in the casino.

I went to the grand opening night and I think I told you about the three German men I saw there.

Was one very overweight?

*There were three of them. Two of them were tall, very large. A third one a little bit younger, but also rather stout.*⁹

I've only ever met one of the other ones in person. I've had notarized correspondence from the others which was necessary to represent them in the case. It was so long ago I'd probably recognize 'em but I couldn't describe 'em. But I know that they were curious to see how their investment was going. I think they

all came for the grand opening. As far as I know only one—the one who lived in Miami—was the only one who came back out on a regular basis and still does.

All the months before the Cunanan case broke that you were involved with the Apollo and with Torsten Reineck

Doc.

Doc. Had you been aware at all of any of his background as it came out afterwards?

The only thing that gave me pause was his car and the license plates. He was known to drive a Zephyr, I think it's called. It looks like the Excalibur but it's a little nicer. It's not a kit car. And he had Principality of Sealand license plates. And he had a diplomatic UNCC sticker—U. N. Counselor Corps. He also had Counselor Corps identification which he would show you very quickly and kind of You would never get it out of his hand. I'm told by members of the police department that he claimed diplomatic immunity for traffic tickets, parking citations and all that. And that basically he had been successful prior to me coming on the scene of pulling that. I can't say whether it's genuine or not. I don't know where the Principality of Sealand is. I am told it's an oil platform in the English Channel. So whether the U. N. stuff was authentic or not, I don't know. But if he made passports I imagine he can make U. N. papers as well.

What was your personal assessment of Doc?

Doc had an astute business sense. He could smell a dollar everywhere. He could structure deals. There was a time when he was going to do the Kenny Kerr show, *Boylesque*.¹⁰ And there were negotiations about possibly doing that. I think Kenny may have some idea—and, again, I represented Kenny at one point, too, so I need to be careful. I'm not divulging anything It was relatively common knowledge in those circles that Doc wanted to produce a show. Doc also wanted to do *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, which I know Bruce Taylor's now doing, or trying to do with Onstage. Doc admitted that he did not have the rights to it. He wanted to do something There's a club in Paris where the waiters come down on roller skates. He claimed to have operated that nightclub in Paris for three or four years and he wanted to do a similar thing with the Apollo and the space next door. He

wanted to make his name in production. Kenny [Kerr] was in a difficult time at Debbie Reynolds' [Hollywood Museum and Hotel] and he needed a producer. And Doc was going to basically There was a corporation called Boylesque of Las Vegas. And the idea was that people would Just to have a stock certificate that says, "Look! I own part of a Las Vegas show!" Boylesque of Las Vegas. They'd probably pay \$50 to have that framed. So we can actually make money on It was a little bit like when the Chicken Ranch¹¹ was going public and they were gonna sell the certificates. This way people could come in and buy for \$50 a share that's probably worth only \$10. Get outside money. There'd be a chunk of money which Kenny needed to make a bigger production—and yet the control would stay with a few major investors. But Doc would have sold his interest out already, collecting a fee. And that was gonna start money. That feed of money would then fund the *Rocky Horror Show*.

Is that the point at which Kenny lost the rights to the name Boylesque?

No. Kenny had—and this is public record again so I'm not violating confidences—if you run Kenny's name through the bankruptcy court records he had had three prior filings of bankruptcies under three different production companies. The bankruptcies were not completed in the proper fashion. Kenny was again facing financial trouble and asked me—bankruptcy was my speciality at that point. And since I'd kept the Apollo open Kenny thought, "Maybe he can help me out." And I did yet one more bankruptcy. My bankruptcy was completed properly. In one of the prior bankruptcies Kenny had listed the named *Boylesque* as an asset of the bankruptcy estate. So, the trustee then sells all the assets for money. Kenny didn't have money to buy his name back at the bankruptcy sale so it was sold to somebody else. And the court records reveal who that was. I think Kenny holds some animosity towards me thinking that I filed bankruptcy and he lost the name. That was actually because of actions of previous lawyers. But shortly after that point I think is when Doc was gonna come in and it didn't work out. So basically we parted ways because I wasn't making money on the matter. The bankruptcy part had finished and I don't do entertainment. But, so he didn't lose it Kenny will tell it differently. But a look at the bankruptcy record would show that. A friend of [Kenny's] actually owned—I think his name was Roger Caldwell—actually owned the rights to the trademark, *Boylesque*. Trademark and the name. Roger had assigned those to Kenny, but Kenny loses that in bankruptcy.

After the Cunanan thing was done the Apollo published a newsletter called Boylesque of Las Vegas.

Remember I told you Doc was gonna have that entertainment company? Here's the interesting thing. When a bankruptcy court sells an asset they sell it free and clear of all liens. However, it's like a quitclaim deed, not a warranty deed. We're selling you whatever it is but we don't warrant that it's still good. Essentially the bankruptcy court sold to the purchasers—I think the price was \$30,000—the name and good will of *Boylesque*. Kenny's production company at one point was called Boylesque, Inc. That's a *corporate* name. The *trade* name *Boylesque* and the logo were separately registered service marks and trademarks by Roger Caldwell. Anyway, those have to be renewed every five years. He had one registered in Nevada and one in New Jersey. There's no renewal of the filing at the time the bankruptcy sells them. So Doc thought, "If no one's renewed it, it's up for grabs!" So he goes and forms a corporation—I didn't do it for 'im—called Boylesque of Las Vegas, Inc. The Secretary of State did not kick it out as a deceptively similar name because Boylesque was now a defunct corporation. So his thing was it's *Boylesque*—written big—*of Las Vegas*—written small. Kenny never challenged that because Kenny didn't own the name to challenge it. Actually, during his bankruptcy case he kept introducing and using things from Boylesque in the show and the bankruptcy trustee basically said, "You're using my name and if you do that anymore I'll shut you down." And so Kenny then became the *Kenny Kerr Show*. And he's gotten around it by, like, "Formerly of *Boylesque*," or "Formerly the Star of *Boylesque*." He's starting to creep back using the name a little bit more and more. It was *Star of Boylesque* written big, the *Kenny Kerr Show* written small. I don't do intellectual property. I don't know if that's proper or not. That's why you have [Doc's] *Boylesque of Las Vegas, Inc.* And since he had the corporation and the name, the newsletter, he wanted to have it be a separate company from the Apollo. But kind of a subsidiary. So I think Doc held all that stock but the idea was that the holders of the Apollo ... The Apollo would buy that out as a corporation.

Was this association of Doc with the Boylesque thing going on before the Cunanan case?

Yes.

Not long before?

Not long before. The idea was the club was starting Jack Barker came in as Doc's right-hand man during most of this. Jack had started kind of on the periphery. And Doc was getting involved in so many other things and Doc liked going on and doing the party [thing]. He wanted a day-to-day manager. So Doc basically ran the theory and handled the money and Jack Barker started running the club and became the club's general manager. Doc was president of the corporation but Jack was around there practically twenty hours a day in the beginning, the first few months. That's how I got to know Jack. I had fallings in and out with Doc. Either instructions to me were changed or I was promised payment for things I didn't get paid for. And so ultimately I ended up venting with Jack and Jack and I became rather close.

After the Cunanan thing hit Doc basically leaves this area so everything about the Apollo that involves Doc was all prior to Cunanan. From the time the Versace thing hits I never noticed any change in Doc. He didn't disappear or anything else. But the morning that Cunanan was found dead I saw Doc maybe only for a few minutes and then I saw him only on one other occasion before he disappeared.

They found Cunanan on July 23, 1997. And the news broke locally about the connection between the houseboat and Doc Reineck and the Apollo within the next day, July 24.

If that's the morning following I remember I'd been home and my pager started going off at one a. m., the first page. I'll never forget it as long as I live. Her name was Penny, she was a producer for *Good Morning, America*. "Please call Penny at *Good Morning, America*." I thought, oh, these guys were out drinking, it was a weird night, I thought some friends of mine are being funny. So I put the pager on silent but leave it on. When I finally woke up at eight o'clock there were about ten pages. *Good Morning, America*, the *Today Show*, all this and I thought, "What the hell is going on?" I'd turned the ringers off on my phone. I finally turn 'em on because I'm awake and Jack calls me from the club. He says, "Get down here! There's media all over the place."

"What's going on?"

"Just get *down* here."

I get down there, he pulls me inside and basically tells me Cunanan's been found on Doc's houseboat. I knew that Doc had a houseboat but I didn't know anything about it. He'd had a worker who'd been injured on the houseboat doing some repairs for him and that had come up once and that's the only reason I even knew he had a houseboat. Then it was explained to me that Cunanan had been found on this houseboat. And everyone here wants to know, "Did you know Cunanan?" They were trying to get to Doc to find out Now, Doc had a caretaker who took care of the houseboat. That's the guy who found Cunanan. Now, depending who you listen to or who you understand, some people say they saw Cunanan a few boats down earlier in the week. And I heard one rumor—the caretaker is an elderly gentleman—where the caretaker's son was bringing food to Cunanan in the boat. Now, whether Doc knew about *that* or not, I don't know. He claims not to have known about it. Or whether it's even *true* or not. My understanding from the police is it looked like Cunanan had been there two or three days, though, which would be consistent. Most people knew the boat. All the storm shutters were down and all that. No one noticed any activity in there.

So that's the first I hear about it—all these calls from my pager. I'd actually called [*Good Morning, America*] back thinking it was a joke. And then I learned—actually before Jack really told me, she [Penny from *Good Morning, America*] said, "We're calling on Cunanan. We understand you represent the owner of the houseboat."

"What houseboat?"

"The guy who owns the Apollo." Because [the houseboat] was under the name Reineck. That's the first time I understand Reineck is *Doc*. Because the articles of incorporation, which I looked at once [because] I didn't do corporations, all show Reineck as the president and all that.

Torsten Reineck.

Torsten Reineck. And we have *Doc Ruehl* out here [in Las Vegas], so I thought it was a different person. Now it's becoming aware to me that when he came out here he claims people mistook him for his German friend and he just let it go because he liked being called Doc. Up to that point he'd represented himself to me as Torsten Reineck.

So the aliases weren't deliberate, according to what he said.

Depending on how you look at it. He was signing business documents in the name of Ruehl when he was here. He had identification in the name of Ruehl, remember? He had two driver's licenses we find out later. I never did anything Even in the bankruptcy I never had to have his signature notarized because I didn't represent him. I represented the creditorts, so I never really had an occasion to actually have to prove Doc's identity.

Did he ever explain why he was using different names?

The only discussion we had about it—I need to be careful here—was about day two of the Cunanan thing. The FBI is looking for [Reineck]. And I advise him, I said, "You know, right now it looks bad that you're not making a statement." I wanted to make a statement. Doc didn't want any statements made. And I said, "You know, the American way, if you don't say somethin', then it's like taking the Fifth Amendment. You don't have to take it unless you're guilty." So I said, "Doc, allow me to make a statement for you." He didn't want his picture all over television. I think now I understand why. People were hunting for a photograph of Doc. At one point Channel 8—Tony Thomas I think it is—basically broke down my apartment door. My mother was there. She was having a field day talking to all the networks. Some local show called [and she] said, "I'm sorry, he's only dealing with *national* networks." You know? My mom's just eatin' this up! And they saw Tod's picture on my desk and they were running the camera and so there's one broadcast where they show Tod's picture thinking that's Torsten Reineck. No one knew who he was. At this point I didn't know there was a problem. The guy I dealt with was *Ruehl*. My biggest fear was someone was gonna ask me, "Who is your client?"

And you couldn't say.

I represented the man I knew as Doc. And I represented him as Ruehl because that's the way he represented himself here until the very end—and then he says, I forget how he stated it, but he says, "*I'm Reineck.*"

Your pager started going off at one o'clock in the morning as soon as the case broke. How soon after that did you first talk to Doc?

Late that morning.

And you had arranged for him to be interviewed by the FBI?

No, that was about a day later. I chatted with Doc a little bit. And I have to admit I was enjoying a little of the spotlight. I had all the major morning shows. I got an offer they'd give me ten minutes on their show, *ten minutes* national air, I can go on in place of [Doc] so I can get my picture plastered all over if I'd talk about the case. I asked Doc for permission, he said no. So I honored my client's wishes and made no statement. The FBI now is trying to find out how Cunanan got into the houseboat. Did he break in? Was he a burglar? Or was he let in? So in order to make those determinations they wanted to interview Doc. The special agent in charge [Bobby Siller] got ahold of me—I can't remember his name right now—and indicated he wanted to interview Doc. I said I had obvious concerns about that. I didn't know where Doc was. I had not seen him yet. And I asked [the FBI] if there were any charges and what their intentions were—once they saw him were they intending to arrest him? Or whatever. They indicated no. They just merely wanted to find out what his connection was to Cunanan and how he [Cunanan] got on the houseboat. The special agent guaranteed me that no move would be made to apprehend [Doc] or anything else. I'm fully aware, of course, that if they wanted to tail 'im they would probably do that. I got ahold of Doc and [we] met at a location, [I] picked 'im up, and drove 'im over to the FBI building in my car. And he was interviewed by the FBI. I can't go into the details of the interview because that's privileged and confidential and I think the actual notes of the interview, the actual questions The substance of it was [that] Doc, as he maintained [also] publicly, did *not* know Cunanan. The first he knew Cunanan was on his houseboat was when he saw his houseboat on the news. He maintained that to me privately and publicly and he said that to other people.

And then he claimed that he had sold the houseboat and that at the time it didn't really belong to him.

Before we go there we need to clear up one thing. At the point of the FBI interview Doc now indicates that he may also be *confused* for Torsten Reineck. Of course, the *Miami Herald* discovers there are two driver's licenses with the same

picture. Who he really is, if he's either one of those or someone else, I do not know. That's a matter of public record, that he held two identities. Since that's a Class E felony in Florida he was able to be held. That discovery was made by the reporter at the *Miami Herald* after he had already gone to ground. I was informed of that about three hours after the last time I ever saw [Doc]. News crews and law enforcement authorities were staking out his apartment at the Desert Club. They were staking out the Apollo itself. I dropped him off after the FBI interview and drove around a little bit before going back to my apartment. That was my office at the time. And I don't know if they tailed 'im or not. But at some point they lose track of him. And I'm called by the FBI. They wanted to see if he was still in the jurisdiction. I said, "Yes, he is. I talked to him."

"Well, how do you *know* that?"

"I am convinced he's still in the jurisdiction."

"Well, we want to see 'im to make sure he's still here." And what they're doing is trying to locate 'im so they can tail 'im 'cause now they were trying to go get charges filed so they can arrest 'im.

Charges filed for what?

For having two driver's licenses.

Now, what happens during this time is it becomes apparent from the German news authorities that there are pending charges against *Torsten Reineck* in Germany for tax evasion. This may explain why he doesn't go through the name *Torsten Reineck* after he's in Miami and seems to use another identity. They were trying to get extradition papers going but the German district attorney [says] it's not a severe enough crime to extradite. But now if it looks like he may be involved with the Versace murder, I think the State Department was trying to get them to [file charges against Doc]. So Doc was getting nervous and he was gonna leave town. He approaches me to manage the club with Jack in his absence [because] he now decides he 's gonna leave.

Assumes that his absence is only gonna be temporary?

I got the idea it would be for a few months. He was gonna go check out the houseboat, he had to go back to Florida. But till all this settled down now he was gonna go back to Germany. My understanding of it—and I don't know where I

heard it—he did not take a standard route [back to Germany]. He went through, I think, Peru to get out. Which to me, again, is indicative I mean, I'm sure there are other identities used, but that's kind of the old, like, you know, Third Reich trick. You go to the Vatican, get new papers, new name, and then go out through someone else's identity.

When did you first hear about the charges in Germany against Torsten Reineck?

The FBI made me aware of that.

How soon after their initial interview with him?

Well, I said, "Are there any charges anywhere else?"

He said, "Well, it appears there may be warrants out for him in Germany so he better not be going back to Germany." That's what the FBI clued me in on.

Well, then, they must have known he was using Torsten Reineck as an alias.

The question during the FBI... . And I have to be careful here. But the FBI interview addressed the issue of who [Doc] really was. And at that point he proffers the explanation which I had been told that he was confused for this friend of his and he just never bothered to clear it up. During the interview the FBI never asked to see any identification. We were videotaped during the interview but no one ever fingerprinted him or asked for any picture identification from Doc. So it was strictly an interview, very polite, very cordial. They weren't aggressive at all and when the interview was finished we left. As we pull out *America's Most Wanted* van pulls in the parking lot. And I only saw [Doc] for about two minutes after and that was the last time I ever saw 'im. Everything else was phone calls.

Aside from the FBI where did the other local law enforcement authorities fit into the case?

At this point they're starting to suspect I remember the FBI was sitting outside my apartment and Metro was now getting involved more The club was being portrayed in the local media as a bath house. And, of course, a bath house is illegal in Nevada. In the traditional sense of the California, San Francisco bath

house, open public sex. And so now the club is coming under scrutiny for its licensing. If it's really a sex club then it's to be shut down and the district attorney was now having to investigate. Is the club operating within its licensing? The night after the Cunanan thing broke the club was essentially empty except for about ten people with white knuckles on their towels. They were all *reporters*. They were in the club, they signed the waiver and are basically asking everyone, "Do you know the owner? Do you know the owner?" And we're all laughing because it's all different media. And one of the German reporters was in there and since he had an accent they all thought [he was] a friend of Doc's. And so he gave 'em a run around, a bad story so they'd look stupid and then he was the one trying to get the right story. So, I mean, it was kind of comical. Business slowed down a little while for the club. It's awfully hard to walk in with CNN sitting out front. Metro was watching it to try and see where Doc was going. But also now, *Is it a bath house?* And ultimately it was determined we were operating within the licensing. It was a clothing-optional gay men's health spa. And the clothing optional's in private areas, in the swimming pool and all that. They looked. It wasn't a raid but there was an inspection made with the landlord and with authorities during the Cunanan thing. Originally they also thought there might be stuff of Cunanan's in the club that might help link to Versace and all that and they wanted to search the place. As far as I know they never got a search warrant but we did voluntarily let them walk through the club to see it. And someone snuck a camera in, one of the reporters Apparently there were some shots of some of the rooms. The landlord had taken pictures of the facility for the bankruptcy hearing. The rooms make it a hotel. You can only stay eight hours or you fall under the hotel zoning and requirements. That's why you had only pads and no sheets [on the cots]. That makes it a changing room, it's not a hotel. You can't sleep there. The landlord, in trying to evict 'em, had taken photographs. He now made those [available], or someone got those to the press. Then we had some disgruntled employees who said that hustlers were working out of the club, drugs were being sold there, to try and get back at Doc because he fired them. So there was some scrutiny but it passed muster. The club never closed a day.

Doc had a reputation for being very contentious and confrontational.

Yes.

Was he, in fact?

With me as well, yes.

In what ways?

He would come on as very impressive. "Boy, this guy's one of the operators!" I mean, he looked like that. He'd sit here [*imitates Doc*], he'd say, "Here, we do a deal. We do it like this." He'll wine and dine you and you'll think you're on the level [*with 'im*]. You also find out that he doesn't quite tell you everything. And if you confront him about that he would put you on the defensive, become very aggressive. "OK, *deal's off!*"

"Wait, I just want"

"No, no! I'm not going to do business with people like you."

And you'd get something along those lines. You know, a good defense is a good offense. Doc's technique, I think, is basically find out what your skeleton [*in the closet*] is and if you push him too hard he'll pull your skeleton out. And so it's the hint of blackmail. There was an instance when It wasn't anything improper but I was starting to get "Where's the money I've been promised? I've been promised all this money for all the work. I'm working full time for the club." I was supposed to be given a percentage, all this. And he basically at one point threatened to report me to the bar. He was going to make up some charge. Or tell them that I was a member of the club and I would frequent the club, too, thinking that would But just the fact that he would consider that tactic. That's what people got nervous with him [*about*].

Would you call him a typical Vegas hustler?

I don't know what a typical Vegas hustler is. I don't think he's typical because he was *distinctive*. He was *different*. He was out here doing business and, you know, if you're in Vegas and you're not getting laid or getting stoned, then you're working the other people [*who*] are. And he was workin' the other people [*who*] are. But that can be good business as much as it's hustling. But he always had a project going [*snaps fingers*] and they [*moved*] very quickly. And often many did not come to completion. He'd get 'em started, he'd participate and then hand it

over to other people who now had to put money up or had vested interests in it who had to see it through. And he would just ride on all those.

Just prior to Cunanan's death and before its connection with the Apollo broke, how closely did the local authorities work with the gay community in trying to track down Cunanan himself?

I was a little angry that the FBI was taking a hit for not doing a good job. I think, from what I saw, the FBI had gone to great lengths to work with the gay community on trying to find Cunanan. Before he was found I think there was a concern that he had been in Vegas or that this was one of his cities. I remember seeing the posters, I remember seeing video of agents manning the lines. Certainly in my contact with the FBI—and it's no secret that *I'm* gay—and the way they treated Doc and myself was courteous, polite. They were professional. There was never a slur, a slant about being gay. And I think they really were trying to catch [Cunanan]. I know there was one rumor, you know, "Just let 'im keep killing the fags." I think there was a concerted effort to bring closure to the case. The FBI, in my dealings with 'em, I know they contacted ... *[raps the table]* From the *Bugle*

*Rob Schlegel.*¹²

Rob. And asked him for insights as to Rob told me on one occasion that the FBI had asked him to coordinate their contacts with I know they talked with Kevin Kelly. "What can we do to get the word out, go get his picture out?" I mean, they were really trying to capture him as far as I could see.

Was that cooperative relationship unprecedented between the local gay community and law enforcement authorities?

I'm a civil lawyer so I haven't had that much contact with law enforcement in Las Vegas. I used to be a police officer myself in California, a reserve, just before Prop[osition] 13 cut the reserve program. But I went through the academy so I know a little bit what it's like to be in law enforcement. I hope it wasn't unprecedented but it might have been. It certainly was a national case, bringing Vegas in. I know there's a lot of things with Metro and everything else thinking that they're anti-gay. My experience with some of the senior officers I know at

Metro has been very courteous, very kind and the FBI I think were working very closely with Metro. And you didn't see FBI agents running all over. They were kind of backing up Metro and letting Metro do their thing. And even at the times when the two officers came for the—quote—raid in November [1996] they were polite and courteous to me. Now, I don't think it's 'cause I was a lawyer. I think the reason they got a little hot earlier is they thought that they were being snowed and Doc tended to come unglued very quickly with the authorities. So they were, "Well, why is he so excited?" I got down there, I chatted with 'em for a few minutes and actually ended up taking a quick walk through there and [they were] gone in five minutes. You just pay a little respect and be kind and courteous and they'll do the same thing back. But yelling at the cops, "You're not coming in *my* club!" is not really a good idea. And I'm not sure if he actually did that but there was a scene at the door. That's not where you do it. "Come into the office."

Who were Capitol Documents Services?

Capitol Documents Services I believe is a registered agent service. Some companies exist like that in every state for corporations. They serve as the registered agent for service and process.

Registered local agent.

Yeah. Every corporation has to have a registered agent in every state to serve legal process on. So if you're Von's supermarket and you have six states you don't have a Von's headquarters in every state so you hire companies that will keep up your [corporate] articles, your corporate books. And when you serve a complaint then they accept service and then contact the principals to get it handled.

It's just a service?

It's just a service. It's no way affiliated other than they're a vendor to the corporation.

What's your take on the actual death of Cunanan? It was called a suicide but there were questions—there still are questions.

There was another attorney in this who I can't disclose. When the Cunanan thing broke very shortly I realized that I was out of my depth. I realized after the first interview with the FBI that I was out of my depth. I'm not a criminal lawyer. And except for my police academy training have no formal legal training in criminal matters. I've been a civil lawyer all my life. I advised Doc to retain—and I recommended—a prominent criminal lawyer in town to handle negotiations with the FBI as far as if there were further interviews. 'Cause I thought at some point something's gonna be charged against 'im and I don't even know how to post bail.

You hadn't known yet about the charges against Reineck in Germany?

I had heard something about that. And my basic concern was something's gonna come sometime and I don't know how to handle it. [I said], "So rather than wait till the last minute I'm suggesting that you retain" I gave 'im two or three different names and I actually went and talked to each of the lawyers first 'cause he didn't want to be driving around. And we selected one that he liked and that was affordable. And after that I basically stopped representing Doc individually and I was starting to only be concerned for the Apollo Spa and Health Club, Inc. So Doc ceased to be my personal client and I became the *corporate* attorney. At this point Doc was making preparations to do something else so Jack Barker and I were to manage the club and report to one of the other German investors. Which we did for a short time afterwards and then it wasn't economically rewarding for me so I started to take other work than running the club. I was gonna look at trying to follow Doc's dream through, buy other clubs and it was to be quite a thing. It was clear that after all this the money wasn't flowing the way it used to from the investors and they weren't willing to pay me what I thought I was worth so I said, "I'm gonna do something else." And then Jack took over at that point and ran the club as the general manager himself. He was always general manager after Doc left but we wanted to have a check-and-balance system so no one person One did the books, one did the reporting. There were concerns that money might have been missing or things like that. We thought two people makes that a lot less tempting. So then after I left Jack brought in someone else so Jack actually started having a regular management staff and the place was starting to really click along and it was very profitable from the start. The club was *always* profitable.

Did the same German investors own it as opened it?

I don't know. I know that during the time I was associated with the club the primary investors—at least, those I *knew* of—remained unchanged. I don't know who really put up the money in the beginning and I don't know what happened after I left. When I finally left the Apollo I didn't even go back in the doors for a long time.

Were there any more Apollo health clubs opened up anywhere else in the country as had been originally planned?

Not to my knowledge. I know at one point someone came and appraised the club to be sold and I don't know if the idea was to appraise so that we could do a marketing analysis to try and then go public with the corporation. Make Boylesque of Las Vegas own it, basically be a way of paying the investors. They'd keep a share. But ultimately Doc left before any of that finished. We were talking about doing, I think, another club in Seattle. We basically were waiting for a health club to go under somewhere and go buy their plant, take over their lease.

Back to Cunanan. Suicide or murder? Or accident?

I don't think it's an accident. I tried to piece together my own version of the story and this is completely conjecture and speculation from my own deductions and observations. It's strictly a *personal* opinion, not in my capacity as a lawyer or anything else. And I think every element I rely on for coming to this [conclusion] somewhere is public information.

I believe—I don't know why I feel this way—that Versace was backed by German investors. I have no idea if they're the same ones [who own the Apollo] or whatever. I don't know. Generally, to my knowledge designers and people like that who have large backing from investors, the money comes not from businesses and corporations but from other individuals. People with *adjectives* before their first name. You know, Big So-and-So, that kind of thing. It didn't surprise me—and obviously Versace, to my knowledge, was gay. Cunanan was supposed to I don't know. From someone who had told me—I think it was one of the German reporters—Versace wasn't being as profitable as he [should have been] to the investors and they wanted to find out what was going on. Originally Cunanan was supposed to get romantically involved [with Versace], kind of get into the place

and find out what the hell's going on with Versace. He was unsuccessful in doing that because Versace had somebody else. Cunanan then is getting a little desperate and there's a showdown and he doesn't know what to do because he's scared of the people who have hired him to do this and he panics and shoots [Versace]. I think the Versace shooting was an accident. It wasn't intentional that he be *killed*, I don't believe. I believe Cunanan was sent there to do one thing and he blew it. Now the fear is, he's on the run. He's going, "Help me or I'll tell 'em who hired me [and] what I was *supposed* to do and expose" *Blah-blah-blah*. Generally a kid like that sleeping around with those people gets to know all their inside knowledge. This is again all my conjecture. So he's running and then finally they [say], "Stick 'im on the houseboat." And they figure out what to do with 'im. And I think maybe one of the concepts was, "The heat's not gonna go away. Let's get 'im outta here. Maybe he needs to change his appearance, we give 'im some other papers." And, of course, Doc would be a good choice for that. And then he'd be taken over the border into Mexico, fly from Mexico to somewhere else, and then, you know, "Here's some money, go away."

My understanding of Cunanan's mannerisms was that he was very cocky and basically whatever the arrangement was he wanted more money because now he can't go anywhere, everyone in the country's looking for 'im, and basically he started to up the ante [*raps the table*]. And they saw where this was going and they said, "You're too dangerous." And I think he was murdered.

Again, pure conjecture.

It would make a good movie and screenplay. But to me, I think that's what happened. I was told by parties who had seen an autopsy report. Now, I'm not gonna say *the* autopsy report because I have my doubts as to whether the one you would find if you went to the official files *is*, in fact, the true and accurate one. The autopsy report that is publicly available does not accurately reflect Cunanan's physical condition.

Which was what?

That the gunshot wound could *not* be self-inflicted. If that was true this would pose a Because when they storm the place Cunanan's already dead. I mean, the police don't kill 'im on storming the place. That's my understanding from the time line. It'd been done in a short period, but, I mean, I think rigor [*mortis*] was already setting in. That he had basically been shot because that was the best way

of taking care of it. Now, obviously he's hard to move and transport since he's such a public figure, especially on that main boulevard. Who did it? I have my suspicions who did it. But because those people are still around and this may be printed it could be slanderous [if I name them]. I think [Cunanan] was getting support while he was on the houseboat. Someone had to bring him food and things like that. Whoever that person was, either *they* did it or somebody else Obviously his employers knew where he was and so he's *done* there. I don't think the actual investment group [i. e., investors in Versace and/or the Apollo] would have liked to have done it on someone so closely tied to them because it would draw attention to everything. I think the idea was more to get 'im to go somewhere but if you can't drag 'im out the door without making a scene you do it and move the body later sort of thing. I don't think it was intended he be discovered there.

Can you describe the wound that leads you to believe it wasn't a suicide?

What I am told is that the actual head wound that he gets from the gunshot is one that in order to be self-inflicted you would need two elbows and a four-foot-long arm. That the wound was more a forehead down to the back of the neck shot [*indicates the bullet's path*], more like the execution style than a bottom of the chin up through the head shot [*indicates the bullet's path*]. That the damage to the skull as he's first found indicates more a bridge of the nose shot.

Straight on.

Straight on. And basically I think from his position it would look like he might even have been kneeling in front of 'em or standing directly in front. It was a point-blank shot. It's very difficult. Try and hold your index finger to the bridge of your nose. Now put a gun in it which is gonna pull it back four or five more inches, it's almost impossible to pull the trigger. [*motions*] It's just not right.¹³

He had a stomach wound, too. Were you aware of that?

I had heard about that and I haven't really paid a lot of attention to that. My guess is probably that when whoever was there drew the gun I mean, if you're gonna commit suicide why injure yourself in the stomach first? I think there was an altercation first. Maybe someone tried to stab 'im or something. When that's

not working, he's making a lot of noise, they just quietly shoot 'im. Then he's left and I think the intentions were that he would be disposed of later. Of course, then, someone calls Miami PD, they storm in and find 'im dead. You know, if you were gonna shoot Cunanan, even though no jury, probably, in the country would convict you for doing it It seems to me if you were gonna do that, perform a public service for the country, and then just walk out? NO. There's something else going on there. And if you put it in the framework that he was working for someone trying to send a message to Versace, that message gets screwed up, and he's trying to take out It makes perfect sense.

That all begs another question. Not wanting to draw attention to what he's doing, why would Cunanan have gone on the spree killing all the way from San Diego to Miami and killed three people along the way?

I tried to reconcile that with my theory and I think he was panicking. I think what happened is when he blew the Versace thing he is more fearful of his employers than anybody else. Now he's on the run from them and he's panicking.

He killed these people before Versace.

I know. But I think what happens is Remember, under my made-up theory he's supposed to get close to Versace and he's unsuccessful. The word gets back, "This kid's not doing it right." So they come after him Of course, he's panicking and he's in fear for his life anyway—"I'm goin' anyway, I might as well have a good time." There's an ego thing there, too. Everyone knows who Cunanan is. I think there's a part of that. He's panicking and in his immature thinking killing the people behind him means they can't tell where he went. Even though he's driving their cars and crap like that. So I think it's an amateur attempt at trying to cover his path.

His path to [Versace], not away from.

Yeah, see, and again, I haven't thought about it for a long time. Then, basically, he You know, I don't know how it would work out, but for some reason he comes back to Versace. And he either tries to save face now, or take him [out]. Maybe the instructions are—I don't know—having done that—if that *is*, in fact, a

hired hit Now he has something to go to the German guys and go [*snaps his fingers*], "Look. I'll tell 'em you told me to do it. Take care of me. Pay me and get me out." Until he hits Versace, no one really cares. So maybe it's a stroke of genius or it's another stupid blunder. And if you believe my theory, this *fairy tale*, it would be consistent with him then waiting in Doc's boat to have passports made and [new] identity papers. And now he's getting cocky. Can't go anywhere, he's panicking. His life's destroyed. He wants money and he wants out and he wants it now. And I think the other guys say, "This kid's nuts. Look at the havoc he's wreaked. We can't take [him] anywhere. We don't want to be involved with 'im. Get rid of 'im." [*raps the table*] I think he was supposed to end up in the canal behind the houseboat. That's why they put 'im on a houseboat instead of putting him in a hotel room or some other place inland. I think the idea was he'd be put into a boat and thrown into the ocean.

What happened to that houseboat?

The houseboat ultimately—and here's another issue. Who actually owned it? Doc certainly claimed ownership to the authorities because he had belongings in it. It had been subleased while he was in Vegas. They [the sublessees] had been out and the storm shutters [were up]. Most people knew the boat. It wasn't far from the bar area. The boat was in ill repair. You can't move the boat to make repairs because then you can't bring it back to that pier. The boat must stay there. And it had leaks in the bilge. And then after all the excitement and all that the boat had to constantly be That's why [Doc] had a caretaker—he constantly had to pump the bilge and everything else. Frankly, I think someone went up and damaged the hull to make it sink to get rid of it because it's a reminder. I was told, and I heard it's hearsay, that the boat was sold to an Italian film company.¹⁴ They were gonna use it as a residence and then use it in making a movie about the whole thing. And then somewhere thereafter the boat sinks. And, of course, you can't replace it or rebuild [because] it's against port law.

Where's Torsten Reineck today?

The gentleman I know as Doc I am told is in prison in Leipzig, Germany. I am told that a plea bargain was arranged with the German authorities on the tax issues. That he only had to serve in custody for a limited period like one or two

years, then he'd be allowed day releases and go back at night, something like that. But he couldn't leave the country for awhile.

As far as you know he has no further stake in the Apollo?

I no longer counsel for it. I don't know if the articles of incorporation have been amended to show And I don't know who the [current] officers and directors are for the club. I know that Jack [Barker] no longer works there and I no longer work [there]. I don't know. There was a string of people that were acting as administrators for the German investors. I don't even know if it's been sold. I really don't know what the status of the club is today. At the time I left it the original investors were still trying to get their money back out of the club so they were trying to put management in that would work.

I am of the belief that Doc's pretty smart at what he does, that he probably has another set of identities stashed somewhere and once he's on day release he will once again disappear and reappear, I think, *locally*, at some point. He'll come back here.

You think so? Back to Vegas?

Yeah, I think so. I think so. Maybe not here but he'll come back to the United States. Because he's an *item* here. He's just one of the crowd in Europe. And he'll have a new name and a new identity. I think he sort of planted that idea in my mind. "I'm going, but you'll see me again someday."

END

Notes

1. Andrew Cunanan was a spree killer who traveled across the United States between April and July 1997 committing five murders before he was found shot to death in a Miami houseboat owned by Torsten Reineck who managed the Apollo Spa and Health Club, a gay gym and bath house in Las Vegas. It was his murder of fashion designer Gianni Versace on July 15, 1997 that secured Cunanan's place in history. At least four books have been written about Andrew Cunanan and his killing spree: *Death at Every Stop* by Wensley Clarkson [New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1997]; *Andrew Cunanan: His Behavior Revealed/Answers to the WHY of WHAT He Did!* by James Marvin Varner [Lawrenceville, GA: Creative Publishing Company, 1997]; *Vulgar Favors: Andrew Cunanan, Gianni Versace, and the Largest Failed Manhunt in U. S. History* by Maureen Orth [New York, NY: Delacorte Press, 1999]; and *Three Month Fever: The Andrew Cunanan Story* by Gary Indiana [New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1999].
2. SETI is the acronym for Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence.
3. The Pepcon plant in Henderson, Nevada produced the highly volatile rocket fuel component ammonium perchlorate. On May 4, 1988 the plant exploded, leveling the Kidd Company marshmallow factory next door, killing two people, injuring dozens, and causing tens of millions of dollars in damage throughout the Las Vegas Valley. It was a major industrial accident that drew international attention. Pepcon moved its operations to Cedar City, Utah blaming everyone but itself for the disaster.
4. Attorney Kevin Kelly is one of the Las Vegas gay community's most active and influential members. He was a member and officer of Nevadans for Human Rights, Nevada's first gay rights organization; a founding member of the Community Action Committee [1983; publisher of *Desert Gaze*]; associated with Nevadans for Constitutional Equality who were in large part responsible for the repeal of Nevada's sodomy statute on June 16, 1993; and a founder of the Log Cabin Club for gay Republicans [1993]. Kelly was the defense attorney for Philip Bruce Cline, the young gay man accused in 1981 of torching the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel and Casino. Kelly has been a contributing feature writer for the *Bohemian Bugle* [known now as the *Las Vegas Bugle*], and he was among the four community leaders honored by the Gay and Lesbian Community Center's first annual Honorarium on January 23, 1994. On December 31, 1996, Kelly opened a gay bar called Inferno.
5. "Doc" is Doc Ruehl, one of Apollo manager Torsten Reineck's aliases.
6. The Free Zone gay nightclub, owned by Gipsy nightclub manager Kaye Taylor, opened on April 10, 1998 at 610 East Naples Drive.
7. The Video West video stores in Las Vegas cater particularly to gay men and women. The first location opened at 5785 West Tropicana Avenue in 1995,

- and a second shop opened in 1997 next door to the Angles bar at 4637 South Paradise Road.
8. The Badlands Saloon opened in January 1991 in Commercial Center at 953 East Sahara Avenue.
 9. Refer to Dennis McBride's journal entry for September 11, 1996.
 10. Kenny Kerr's *Boylesque* opened at the Silver Slipper Casino on May 13, 1977. His show has become a Las Vegas institution, moving several times to other hotels in the last 22 years. Now known as the *Kenny Kerr Show*, in November 1995 the production settled into the Debbie Reynolds Hotel at 305 Convention Center Drive, and then moved to the Union Plaza at 1 Main Street in 1997. Kenny himself is a great supporter of Las Vegas's gay community and was presented with a lifetime achievement award at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center's 4th Annual Honorarium in 1997.
 11. The Chicken Ranch is a world-famous brothel operating in Nye County, Nevada. For a first-hand account of the Chicken Ranch see *Whoremaster: A Biography* by Wendy Cole [Las Vegas, NV: Abacus & Quill Books, 1997].
 12. Rob Schlegel, publisher of the *Las Vegas Bugle* from 1985 to 1998, is one of the Las Vegas gay community's most important leaders. He has helped found—or played an integral part in the development of—most of the community's principal organizations and activities. In recognition of his service to the community, Schlegel was presented an award at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center's Honorarium on February 25, 1995.
 13. In Gary Indiana's *Three Month Fever* there is a photograph of Cunanan's body laid out on a bed in Reineck's houseboat with no indication of a gunshot wound to the bridge of his nose.
 14. Italian documentary filmmaker Enrico "Kico" Forti, whose credentials are dubious, claimed that he was the new owner of Reineck's houseboat as of June 8, 1997. His planned book and documentary never materialized and an El Niño storm destroyed the houseboat in February 1998. See *Vulgar Favors*, pp. 421-423 and 426-428.

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