



Officers (above) rush "the principal" to his car while under fire from mock terrorists (insert). (Staff photos by Art Emanuel)

Protecting the prominent

Cops learn to fight terrorists

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

A flash of light and a burst of gunfire. The attention of an entranced audience is shattered.

Almost instantly the whistle-stop candidate is swept to the safety of a waiting limousine.

That scene could happen almost anywhere in the world these days—not just Italy, West Germany and the Middle East—but Washington, Houston or Detroit.

To improve the odds that the ending will be a happy one, police officers from around the country are coming to the Wayne County Sheriff's Department for special training to foil assassins and kidnapers.

Financed through private corporate donations, the Internal Security Bureau has graduated more than 500 officers since its founding seven years ago.

Oakland County has been well-represented at the training sessions. Among the county's police agencies participating were: the Oakland County Sheriff's Department, the county's airport security force, and police from Farmington, Bloomfield Township, Madison Heights, Royal Oak and Birmingham.

THE FOCUS of the program is "protecting the principal," says its director, Sgt. Raymond Megge.

"A normal police officer is trained to react and to apprehend," he said. "With the special officers that's not so. Their responsibility is to get the man out of the area."

"While others are trained to pursue, these officers are trained to wait and call in for regulation officers."

"We've got to train these officers," Megge continued. "In situations like this, the officer is more likely to get killed than the person they're protecting."

teaching. Italy's a good example."

Five of Aldo Moro's bodyguards were killed when ultraleftists snatched the former Italian premier off a Rome street and held him for 55 days before killing him last week.

"This work," Megge said, "requires a degree of expertise. We don't want to crowd the people we're guarding. We want them to feel safe, not like they're under siege."

THE SLAYING of Moro, other murders and shootings by Italian ultrarightists and leftists and the exploits of West Germany's infamous Baader-Meinhof gang have provoked a new interest in protecting political and corporate leaders in the United States, Megge said.

In recent weeks, the national news media has featured stories on a handful of private firms which train bodyguards for corporate officials. A Wisconsin company even specializes in teaching chauffeurs how to outwit, out-drive and evade kidnapers and assassins.

"America has really been untouched, and this is where the real money is," Megge said.

WHILE THE KIDNAPPING of high-ranking politicians may be alien to modern America, political violence and assassinations are not. "We still have to worry about those people who may have mental problems."

"These people," Megge said, "will blame all their troubles on one person, and by God they'll go after that person."

METROPOLITAN DETROIT may seem like a strange place for assassination attempts or politically-motivated terrorist acts, but the Internal

Security Bureau has already had a few nervous moments.

Megge recalls the time members of the bureau trailed Arthur Bremer, the man who later tried to kill Alabama Gov. George Wallace. Bremer was identified at a Dearborn Wallace campaign rally in 1972.

"He bird-dogged Wallace for a few stops," Megge said. "Dearborn was one of them."

There was also the time the sheriff's office got a tip that a Detroit man was going to try to shoot Vice President Walter Mondale.

As it turned out, Megge explained, the tip came from the man's estranged girlfriend. The man was picked up at the Mondale appearance and was

indeed carrying a stolen, unregistered handgun.

Megge added that the man had no intention of shooting Mondale, but it was an excellent way for his girlfriend to "get even."

"Face it, it sure got him into a lot of hot water. He had local, state and federal charges pending against him," he said.

The sheriff's outfit also provides security to Yugoslav Airlines, which lands its jets at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. The airline, Megge said, has been the target of a number of threats and at least one bombing attempt by rightwing nationalists.

Megge said that in a non-election year the 10-man force handles more than 100 assignments.

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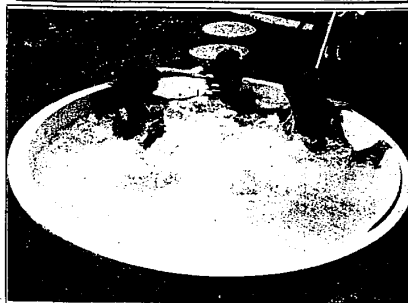
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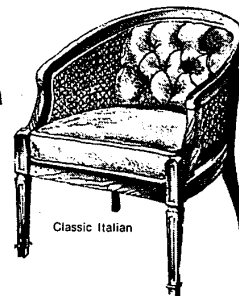
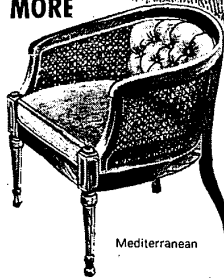
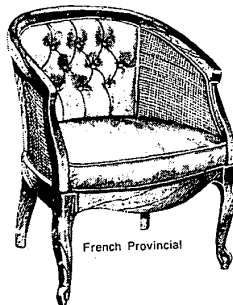
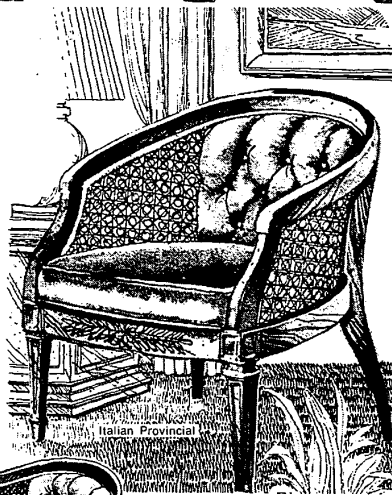
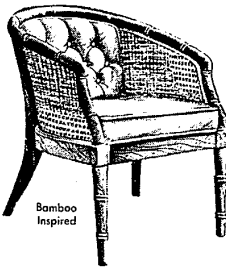
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