

Craig Spence, Figure in D.C. Sex Case, Found Dead in Boston

By Martin Weil
Washington Post Staff Writer

Craig J. Spence, 49, a Washington lobbyist, party-giver and shadowy central figure in a District sex scandal last summer, was found dead under unexplained circumstances Friday in a Boston hotel room.

Boston police said Spence was found fully dressed on his bed after officers forced their way into his room at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

The cause of death was not immediately known. A police spokesman said last night that there seemed to be no visible sign of injury. Spence's body was taken to the Medical Examiner's Office, and the cause of death is under investigation, the spokesman said.

Spence, a former radio and television journalist, was widely publicized last summer as the sometimes eccentric host of parties and seminars that drew famous—or at least near famous—names and faces to his imposing stone house in the Kalorama area.

Attention was focused on him after reports that he was frequenting a male escort service run out of a house in upper Northwest Washington, which came under the scrutiny of authorities.

It also was disclosed that he and friends had been allowed last year to take midnight tours of public areas of the White House.

One friend said last summer that Spence had been making "constant references to death" and told her "he was checking out."

In a report of an interview with Spence published in August, the Washington Times said he had discovered that he had AIDS and had alluded frequently to an impending suicide.

In its editions today, the Boston Globe said a king-sized bed and a chair had been arranged in Spence's room in the Ritz-Carlton to keep the door from opening.

He had checked into the hotel Nov. 4 under an alias and was scheduled to check out Friday, but when members of the cleaning staff went to prepare the room for new guests, they could not get in, the Globe said.

After police were called, the door was sawed in half, the newspaper reported.

Boston police said last night that Spence was found in a black tuxedo, with white bow tie, white suspenders, black socks and shoes. He was wearing glasses and was carrying personal papers, jewelry and money.

In August, the Secret Service said Spence had been served with a subpoena to appear before a federal grand jury here.

The Secret Service was interested in his connection to a uniformed Secret Service officer who admitted receiving a Rolex watch from him.

The agency also was seeking Spence's testimony about the Washington escort service whose operators said he patronized often.

The service, which catered primarily to gay men, was being investigated by the Secret Service and the D.C. police for possible credit fraud.

The subpoena was served Aug. 7 in New York, the Secret Service said. On July 31, Spence had been arrested in a Manhattan hotel on charges of possessing cocaine and a .32-caliber pistol. He was subsequently freed on his own recognition.

The Washington Times reported

Aug. 9 that Spence told the newspaper of spending a night on a bench in Central Park after running out of money while in New York. The newspaper quoted him as saying he left Washington early in July after learning—through news accounts—of the Secret Service investigation.

In an interview last night, Mark L. Shaffer, Spence's attorney here, said a hearing had been scheduled for Nov. 9 in the New York case, and that Spence had intended to appear.

He said he had hoped the charges against Spence would be dropped at the hearing, asserting that Spence "was never in possession" of the items in question and that there was apparently no case against him.

Shaffer said he did not know why Spence was in Boston.

A pipe-smoking figure who had a driver on call and wore stylish, English-cut suits, Mr. Spence traded deftly on the names of acquaintances to attract policy-makers to seminars with foreign visitors.

A man with a penchant for the theatrical, he sometimes appeared at parties in a red-lined cape, hinted at CIA connections or suggested that his house was bugged.

In recent years, coinciding with what friends said was a growing eccentricity, he surrounded himself with increasing numbers of bodyguards.

A self-created air of mystery and intrigue swirled about him. Many

facts about his background were not readily available.

According to the Boston police, he was born Oct. 25, 1940, and friends said they believed he was born in Upstate New York. After transferring from Syracuse University, he received a degree in communications and broadcasting in 1963 from Boston University.

After a period as a news secretary for the speaker of the Massachusetts state house of representatives, he worked in New York for WCBS and then became a Vietnam correspondent for ABC in 1969 and 1970.

In the 1970s, he lived in Tokyo, working as a stringer for radio stations and making contacts that would later help him as a lobbyist.

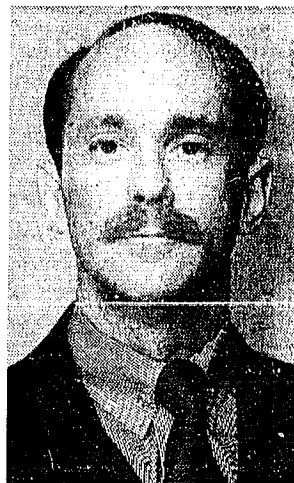
After coming to Washington in

1979, he was a representative of the Policy Study Group, a Tokyo-based nonprofit organization. Its president lent him \$345,000 of his own money to buy the Wyoming Avenue house that was the group's headquarters and that also became Spence's residence and the stage for his parties.

He also represented a Japanese external trade organization and Becton-Dickinson & Co., a health-care products concern with a plant in Japan.

Shaffer, Spence's Washington attorney, called the death "a tragic end to what . . . had been until recently a very productive and interesting life."

"I liked him very much," the lawyer said. "He was a good man . . ."



CRAIG SPENCE
... eccentric host of celebrity parties

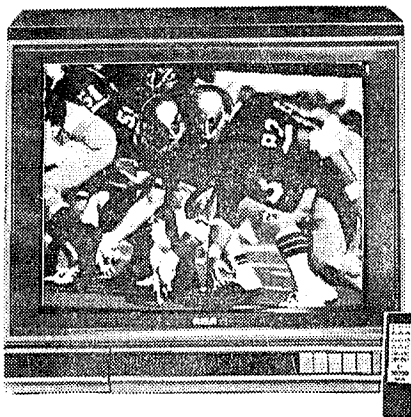
\$ SHARP 25" REMOTE COLOR TV

329

IT'S OUR LOWEST PRICED 25" REMOTE TV

Sharp TV with automatic color system and 22-key direct access remote

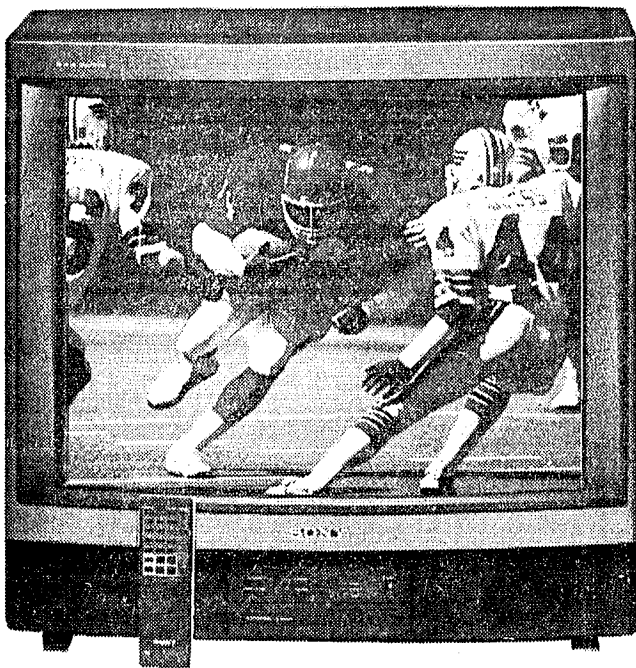
- Cable-capable** for 139 total channels
- 90-minute sleep timer; channel flashback
- Tinted high-contrast picture tube
- One year in-home service
- Pay an average of \$17 a month*
- Model 2558. (D.223) Reg. \$399



\$269 RCA 20" REMOTE

Incredible low price for a TV with advanced features like 18-key direct access remote control

- Cable-capable** for 147 total channels
- Hi-Con square corner picture tube
- On-screen channel number display
- Model 515. (D.223) Reg. \$349



\$299 CLOSEOUT! 4-HEAD ON-SCREEN

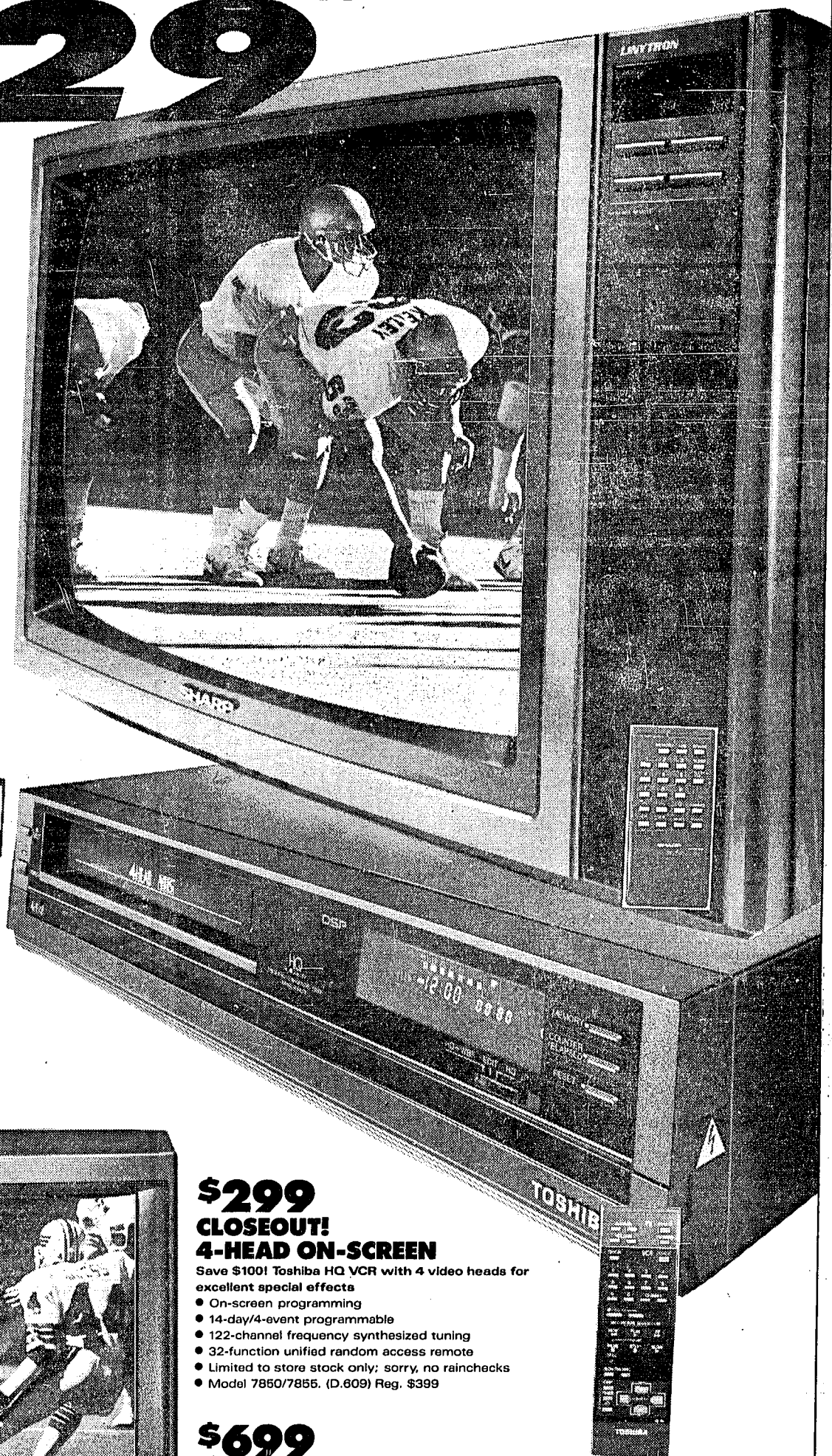
Save \$100! Toshiba HQ VCR with 4 video heads for excellent special effects

- On-screen programming
- 14-day/4-event programmable
- 122-channel frequency synthesized tuning
- 32-function unified random access remote
- Limited to store stock only; sorry, no rainchecks
- Model 7850/7855. (D.609) Reg. \$399

\$699 SONY 27" STEREO MONITOR/RECEIVER

450-line resolution for a clear, detailed image

- Built-in MTS tuner for full-stereo sound
- Cable-capable** for 181 total channels
- Audio/video inputs; audio output
- On-screen displays; auto programming
- 24-key direct access remote
- Pay an average of \$37 a month*
- Model 27TS22. (D.223) Value priced



NEW IN
The Post



Personal Finance Page

Albert B. Crenshaw,
Jane Bryant Quinn and
John Crudele with
information and expertise
to help you make
personal-finance decisions.
In the Sunday
Business section.

macy's
WE'RE A PART OF YOUR LIFE

*With a TOP (Time Option Plan), you can extend your payments on major purchases of \$300 or more in designated departments and subject to credit approval. Ask your sales consultant for details. Phone orders accepted anytime: 1-800-44-MACYS. Add \$25 for delivery of TVs; \$20 for VCRs. Sent within delivery area only. **When you subscribe to an unscrambled cable service. Screen size measured diagonally; simulated reception. Electronics not available at Quaker Bridge. Paramus and Newark NJ, closed Sunday. Sale ends 11/18.