

CALL TO TV STATION

In the early morning hours of October 22, 1969, the Oakland police department received a phone call from a man claiming to be the Zodiac. The caller said he wanted famous Boston attorney F. Lee Bailey to appear on a local television talk show, but told the operator that he would settle for San Francisco lawyer Melvin Belli in the event Bailey was unable to appear.

Hours later, Belli was the guest on the show with host Jim Dunbar. A man called the KGO television station several times, and, in conversation with Belli, claimed he was the Zodiac and that his name was "Sam." One exchange revealed that Sam had been interested in Belli for some time.

DUNBAR: Talk to us. Just, tell us what's going on, inside you, right now. Please.

CALLER: I have headaches.

DUNBAR: Right.

BELLI: How long have you had those headaches, uh, Sam? Been a long time?

CALLER: Since I killed a kid.

BELLI: Well, was it before December that you had the headaches?

CALLER: (pause) Yes.

BELLI: If, did, were you in service, that you might have had an injury in service, did you ever fall out of a tree or down stairs? Were you ever unconscious?

CALLER: (pause) I don't know.

BELLI: You don't remember. Does aspirin do you any good?

CALLER: No.

BELLI: Doesn't do you any good?

CALLER: No.

DUNBAR: Sam –

BELLI: Damn stuff never did me any good either.

DUNBAR: - Sam, let me ask you a question. Did you, um, did you attempt to call this program one other time when Mr. Belli was with us? And, you called -

CALLER: What?

DUNBAR: Did you try to call us one other time about, oh, two or three weeks ago when Mel Belli was with us?

CALLER: Yes.

DUNBAR: And you, uh, well –

BELLI: You couldn't get through, and we were talking?

DUNBAR: And you couldn't get through, the phones were tied up, is that it?

CALLER: Yes.

BELLI: Sam, let me ask you this – There's some reason why you go to a particular doctor or a particular priest, and some reason why apparently you wanted to talk to me, or Lee? Is it that you feel we have compassion for people who get in trouble? Or, is that you feel that we can do something for you? Or is that you feel we're, we're, have enough integrity that if we promise you something, that we're gonna stick to it?

DUNBAR: Well, let's find out why he wanted to talk to – Why did you want to talk to Mr. Belli, Sam?

CALLER: I don't want to be hurt.

At one point during the exchange, the caller threatened, *"I'm gonna kill those kids!"* Belli persuaded Sam to meet with him in person, but, due to the media circus surrounding the secret meeting, no one was surprised when Sam failed to appear at the agreed upon location. Efforts to trace Sam's calls to the KGO switchboard were unsuccessful. A surviving victim and two police dispatchers had all spoken with the real Zodiac and, after listening to audio tapes of the caller's voice, all agreed "Sam" was an imposter.