

Words inscribed on bullets used in UnitedHealthcare CEO killing

NEW YORK (AP) The masked gunman who stalked and killed the leader of one of the largest U.S. health insurance companies outside a Manhattan hotel used ammunition emblazoned with the words “deny,” “defend” and “depose,” two law enforcement officials said Thursday.

The words were written in permanent marker, according to one of the officials, who were not authorized to publicly discuss details of the ongoing investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity. Police also released photos of a person they said was wanted for questioning in connection with the shooting.

UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, 50, died in a dawn ambush Wednesday as he walked to the company’s annual investor conference at a Hilton hotel in Midtown, blocks from tourist draws like Radio City Music Hall and the Museum of Modern Art. The reason behind the killing remained unknown, but investigators believe it was a targeted attack.

The message left on the ammunition echoes the phrase “delay, deny, defend,” which is commonly used by attorneys and insurance industry critics to describe tactics used to avoid paying claims. It refers to insurers delaying payment, denying a claim and then defending their actions. Health



Bullets lie on the sidewalk at the scene outside the Hilton Hotel in midtown Manhattan where Brian Thompson, the CEO of UnitedHealthcare, was fatally shot in New York, on Wednesday.

insurers like UnitedHealthcare have become frequent targets of criticism from doctors and patients for complicating access to care.

Investigators recovered several 9 mm shell casings from outside the hotel and a cellphone from the alleyway through which the shooter fled.

The killing and the shooter’s movements in the minutes before and afterward were captured on some of the multitudes of security cameras present in that part of the city.

The hunt for the shooter brought New York City police Thursday morning to at least two hostels on Manhattan’s

Upper West Side, based on a tip that the suspected shooter may have stayed at one of the residences, according to one of the law enforcement officials briefed on the investigation.

The photos police released Thursday of a man wanted for questioning appeared to have been taken in the lobby of the HI New York City hotel, according to images of the lobby available online. The man is smiling in one of the photos.

“We are fully cooperating with the NYPD and, as this is an active investigation, can not comment at this time,” Danielle Brumfitt, a spokesperson for the hostel said in

an emailed statement.

Investigators believe, judging from surveillance video and evidence collected from the scene, that the shooter had at least some prior firearms training and experience with guns and the weapon was equipped with a silencer, said one of the law enforcement officials who spoke with the AP.

Investigators also were looking into whether the suspect had pre-positioned a bike as part of an escape plan, the official said. The shooter fled on a bike and was last seen riding into Central Park.

Security camera video showed the killer approach Thompson from behind, level his pistol and fire several shots, barely pausing to clear a gun jam while the health executive tumbled to the pavement.

Cameras showed him fleeing the block across a pedestrian plaza, then escaping on the bicycle. Police issued several surveillance images of the man wearing a hooded jacket and a mask that concealed most of his face, which wouldn’t have attracted attention on a frigid day. Authorities also used drones, helicopters and dogs in an intensive search, but the killer’s whereabouts remained unknown.

Thompson, a father of two sons, had been with UnitedHealthcare since 2004 and

served as CEO for more than three years.

The insurer’s Minnetonka, Minnesota-based parent company, UnitedHealth Group Inc., was holding its annual meeting with investors in New York to update Wall Street on the company’s direction and expectations for the coming year. The company ended the conference early in the wake of Thompson’s death.

“Brian was a highly respected colleague and friend to all who worked with him,” UnitedHealth Group said in a statement. “We are working closely with the New York Police Department and ask for your patience and understanding during this difficult time.”

Thompson’s wife, Paulette Thompson, told NBC News that he told her “there were some people that had been threatening him.” She didn’t have details but suggested the threats may have involved issues with insurance coverage.

Eric Werner, the police chief in the Minneapolis suburb where Thompson lived, said his department had not received any reports of threats against the executive.

UnitedHealthcare is the largest provider of Medicare Advantage plans in the U.S. and manages health insurance coverage for employers and state and federally funded Medicaid programs.

Experts believe study of 700-year-old handwriting unveils leading Byzantine painter’s true identity

THESSALONIKI, Greece (AP) Crime-solving techniques applied to a medieval illuminated manuscript in Paris may have solved a centuries-old puzzle — the true identity of a leading Byzantine painter who injected humanity into the rigid sanctity of Orthodox religious art.

A contemporary of Giotto, considered the father of Western painting, the artist conventionally known as Manuel Panselinos was equally influential in a totally different tradition that’s largely overlooked in the West.

But nothing is known of his life, and scholars now believe Panselinos was just a nickname that eventually supplanted the real name of the man for whom it was coined — likely Ioannis Astrapas, from the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki.

The art of Byzantium, that decorates churches across Greece, Serbia and other Orthodox countries, stands out for

the stark formalism of its elongated, glowering saints, quasi-cubist mountains and doe-eyed Madonnas.

Work attributed to Panselinos, from the late 13th and early 14th centuries, is considered the finest produced in an empire that straddled Europe and Asia and endured from the fall of Rome until the capture of the imperial capital Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

Art historians had long suspected that the name — Greek for “full moon” — could have originated as a nickname for some member of the so-called Macedonian School of painting, based in Thessaloniki.

Recent research by a Greek monk and linguistics scholar linked “Panselinos” with Macedonian School painter Astrapas. Now court handwriting expert Christina Sotirakoglou has matched lettering on a manuscript tentatively attributed to As-

trapas with characters on a church painting in northern Greece, long seen as Panselinos’ best work.

Father Cosmas Simonopetritis, a former senior administrator in Mount Athos, the semi-autonomous monastic community where the Protato church stands, says Sotirakoglou’s and his own research “clearly prove” Panselinos’ real identity.

“Panselinos was a real person, and (the name) was just the nickname by which Ioannis Astrapas became known,” he told The Associated Press.

Constantinos Vafiadis, a professor of Byzantine art in Athens who was not involved in the studies, said he found merit in the nickname theory and Astrapas link, even though it appeared more than one painter had undertaken the Protato project.

“I agree with attributing part of the paintings to Ioannis Astrapas,” he said. “But again there

remains much ground for future research into that person, because other Mount Athos monuments from the same period have not yet been sufficiently published.”

“Panselinos” — a role model for generations of painters — and his contemporaries are associated with a renaissance of kinds in Orthodox art that revived forms and techniques inherited from antiquity. Facial expressions acquired a deeper humanity, and greater attention was paid to proportion and depth of field in composition.

Father Cosmas said Astrapas was an “extremely gifted painter ... with vast knowledge who harmonically combined the ancient, classical world with Orthodox Byzantine spirituality.”

“And that ... makes his work unique worldwide,” he added.

Artists’ signatures were not common at the time, although some survive from members of the Astrapas fami-

ly. There are none by “Panselinos.”

The trail started with earlier research linking Astrapas with the artist and scholar who wrote and illustrated Marcan Codex GR 516, an early 14th century Greek handwritten text treating subjects from astronomy to music theory. Among the painted illustrations was a full moon.

“For me ... that was the main proof,” Father Cosmas said.

With a name found for the hand that produced the manuscript, the next step was to check its style against writing on the Protato painting, traditionally linked with “Panselinos.”

“Mrs Sotirakoglou, who is a handwriting expert, filled in that blank,” Father Cosmas

said.

There was one problem: Women have for more than 1,000 years been banned from entering Mount Athos.

“I was forced to study the Protato paintings based on photographs,” Sotirakoglou, who works as a court consultant on identifying or authenticating handwriting in criminal cases, told the AP.

“(The work) was very difficult, because the writing on the wall paintings is in capital letters, and the painters subdued their personal handwriting to conform” with the traditional format, she said — rather like anonymous letter-writers’ attempts to disguise their true style. “The Marcan codex is written in very small lower-case letters.”

PUBLIC NOTICES

BOYD CIRCUIT COURT CIVIL ACTION NO. 24-CI-00078
 ANP TAX LIEN COMPANY, LLC, PLAINTIFF,
 VS.: **ADVERTISEMENT**
 JOHN CLARK; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF JOHN CLARK; RTLF-KY, LLC; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, INTERNAL, REVENUE SERVICE; COUNTY OF BOYD, KENTUCKY; DEFENDANTS,
 Pursuant to Judgment and Order of Sale entered on November 8, 2024, I shall sell the property described herein below at public auction in the lobby inside the front door of the old Boyd County Courthouse, Catlettsburg, Kentucky, on **Friday, December 13, 2024, at 11:00 a.m.**, to the highest bidder on the following terms:
 Full purchase price will be due at time of sale, payable by personal, business or official check. We do not accept cash. **IF the Master Commissioner has pre-approved the surety and collateral for a bidder's bond**, a down payment of ten-percent (10%) of the purchase price will be due at time of sale, and the unpaid balance with interest at the rate of **12% per annum** will be due within thirty (30) days from the date of sale.
 Address/Short Description of Property: 4304 Dog Fork Laurel, Catlettsburg (For Legal Description, see LSOT: Deed Book 590, Page 42, Boyd County Clerk's Office)
 Map/Parcel ID Number: 034-02-00-020.01
NOTE - Only delinquent ad valorem taxes shall be paid from the sale proceeds. The Purchaser shall be responsible for payment of the taxes for the current year and thereafter.
 /s/ **Roger W. Hall**
 ROGER W. HALL
 MASTER COMMISSIONER
 BOYD CIRCUIT COURT
 Please visit our website:
 www.boydcountykymastercommissioner.com
 Published: November 29 & December 6, 2024

BOYD CIRCUIT COURT CIVIL ACTION NO. 23-CI-00639
 SPECIALIZED LOAN SERVICING LLC, PLAINTIFF,
 VS.: **ADVERTISEMENT**
 TIM BUTCHER, AKA TIM EUGENE BUTCHER; LINDA BUTCHER, AKA LINDA GAIL BUTCHER; CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY, DEFENDANTS,
 Pursuant to Judgment and Order of Sale entered on November 15, 2024, I shall sell the property described herein below at public auction in the lobby inside the front door of the old Boyd County Courthouse, Catlettsburg, Kentucky, on **Friday, December 13, 2024, at 11:10 a.m.**, to the highest bidder on the following terms:
 Full purchase price will be due at time of sale, payable by personal, business or official check. We do not accept cash. **IF the Master Commissioner has pre-approved the surety and collateral for a bidder's bond**, a down payment of ten-percent (10%) of the purchase price will be due at time of sale, and the unpaid balance with interest at the rate of **7.125% per annum** will be due within thirty (30) days from the date of sale.
 Address/Short Description of Property: 3108 Carter Avenue, Ashland (For Legal Description, see LSOT: Deed Book 647, Page 754, Boyd County Clerk's Office)
 Map/Parcel ID Number: 038-08-16-004.00
NOTE - Only delinquent ad valorem taxes shall be paid from the sale proceeds. The Purchaser shall be responsible for payment of the taxes for the current year and thereafter.
 /s/ **Roger W. Hall**
 ROGER W. HALL
 MASTER COMMISSIONER
 BOYD CIRCUIT COURT
 Please visit our website:
 www.boydcountykymastercommissioner.com
 Published: November 29 & December 6, 2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
BOYD CIRCUIT COURT CIVIL ACTION NO. 24-CI-00365
 DEUTSCHE BANK NATIONAL TRUST COMPANY, AS TRUSTEE, IN TRUST FOR THE REGISTERED HOLDERS OF MORGAN STANLEY ABS CAPITAL I INC. TRUST 2007-HE7, MORTGAGE PASS-THROUGH CERTIFICATES, SERIES 2007-HE7, PLAINTIFF,
 VS.: **ADVERTISEMENT**
 UNKNOWN SPOUSES OF UNKNOWN HEIRS, LEGATEES, AND DEVEISEES OF ROBERT MCCOY; UNKNOWN OCCUPANTS; PORTFOLIO RECOVERY ASSOCIATES, LLC; CITY OF ASHLAND, KENTUCKY; COUNTY OF BOYD, KENTUCKY; ASHLAND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS; UNKNOWN HEIRS, LEGATEES, AND DEVEISEES OF ROBERT MCCOY; UNKNOWN CREDITORS OR ANY UNKNOWN PERSONS HAVING AN INTEREST IN THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 430 PIERCE STREET, ASHLAND, KY 41101, DEFENDANTS,
 Pursuant to Judgment and Order of Sale entered on November 8, 2024, I shall sell the property described herein below at public auction in the lobby inside the front door of the old Boyd County Courthouse, Catlettsburg, Kentucky, on **Friday, December 13, 2024, at 11:05 a.m.**, to the highest bidder on the following terms:
 Full purchase price will be due at time of sale, payable by personal, business or official check. We do not accept cash. **IF the Master Commissioner has pre-approved the surety and collateral for a bidder's bond**, a down payment of ten-percent (10%) of the purchase price will be due at time of sale, and the unpaid balance with interest at the rate of **5% per annum** will be due within thirty (30) days from the date of sale.
 Address/Short Description of Property: 430 Pierce Street, Ashland (For Legal Description, see LSOT: Deed Book 702, Page 769, Boyd County Clerk's Office)
 Map/Parcel ID Number: 030-07-04-017.04
NOTE - Only delinquent ad valorem taxes shall be paid from the sale proceeds. The Purchaser shall be responsible for payment of the taxes for the current year and thereafter.
 /s/ **Roger W. Hall**
 ROGER W. HALL
 MASTER COMMISSIONER
 BOYD CIRCUIT COURT
 Please visit our website:
 www.boydcountykymastercommissioner.com
 Published: November 29 & December 6, 2024