

Local media denied access to opening of safe at old Bill's Casino

By Linda Fine Conaboy

STATELINE – Oprah Winfrey Network has reportedly been given exclusive media rights to witness the opening of the safe found at the old Bill's Casino in Stateline.

Lake Tahoe News was at the casino Tuesday at 2pm – the time Douglas County sheriff's Sgt. Jim Halsey had said the safe would be cracked.



Instead, a construction worker said Oprah's people would be allowed in when they arrived, but he would not let this reporter in.

Several calls to Mike Laub, the current owner of the property, about this new development have gone unanswered. So, what he might have been paid to keep the news away from local and other media is not known, nor is it known if the safe was opened or if it was taken elsewhere.

The construction worker told *LTN* the contents of the safe would be revealed in January when the results of the filming would be disclosed.

Laub had brought in other locksmiths to try to open the safe, but all were unsuccessful.

The safe was discovered during the major remodel of Bill's Casino. (A CVS and Dotty's casino will be the two anchors.) Previous owners Harrah's Entertainment did not know about the

safe that was discovered in the walls of the building, under a stairway.

Before it was Bill's the site was Barney's Casino. According to authorities, the safe could be linked to the 1968 murder of the old Barney's proprietor, Richard Chartrand.

Because Chartrand was killed in 1968 in a spectacular car bombing as he departed his home in the Skyland neighborhood, and because the killing has never been solved, the buzz is this may have been a mob-style murder. Rumors have it that there is a great deal of money still missing, leaving investigators wondering if it could be stashed in the newly-discovered safe.