

# How to break a big story

KAMPARTS Dec

POTPOURRI BY OUR WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

4-11 '66

Washington reporters are only part time cynics, conspirators, and blasphemers. To hear them talk around the press table in the Senate dining room, reputations and governments will fall as soon as they get to their typewriters. A New York Times reporter covering the mutual admiration society between the German lobbyist Julius Klein and supra-patriot Thomas Dodd dreams of a probable State Department memo recording Dodd's conversations with ex-West German Chancellor Adenauer. How official Washington would shudder if he got his hands on it. "Of course, the Times would never print it," he says, wandering off to his typewriter.

Something happens. They wipe the famous Senate bean soup off their chins, sit down in their offices and suddenly only the most obvious is worth mentioning. In a safe world you can see forever.

A reporter who ten minutes ago had wondered aloud why the Justice Department had suddenly de-



ecided to reveal wire tapping in the Bobby Baker and Fred Black cases now before the Supreme Court, hesitates and writes it straight.

Was it to make sure the cases would be thrown out and Baker's smelly affairs would be hushed up? How could he prove it anyway? And he's also heard the story about how Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach had an FBI tail when he met Bobby Kennedy in the Senate parking lot to discuss whether the Justice Department should own up to the snooping.

Or the reporter forgets that the President, who freely calls himself "the leader of the free world," is the kind of man who clips his finger nails during the hymns on a Sunday morning in an Austin church.

This could be called "the ones they wouldn't let me do this week for the Monday a.m.s." Here's what the irresponsible, unfair, un-free press has with its bean soup.

• As reporters say, (sigh), "He's our President." The White House press office, directing the press operation at Bethesda Naval Hospital, like the Battle of the Bulge, archly sent out a special release reprimanding the Associated Press for reporting the President wore silk pajamas. They were polished cotton, idiots.

And to end the nasty rumors about him gaining weight, Johnson called in a group of top reporters, pulled up a pajama leg and sleeve and said, "Is this a fat arm? Is this a fat leg?"

• Then there's the Bobby bingo game. '68 or '72, and with whom? Bobby himself joked with another top-lefter, Jack Newfield of the Village Voice, "Oh, the President

will dump Hubert and run Lady Bird in '68." When Newfield told him to be serious, he mused, "Well, knowing the President, he'll dump Humphrey and put my brother on the ticket."

But Bobby's keeping all lines open. Rumor is he has White House train bearer, Bill Moyers, to dinner in his McLean home privately.

Assassination gossip here is over the unofficial "official" version, William Manchester's *Death of a President*, based on authorized information the Kennedy family gave him. It was to be the black day from the Kennedys' point of view, but they think Manchester went overboard. Rumors have it there are 200 headlines in the book, all unfavorable to the President. One passage supposedly has someone discovering Johnson smiling calmly over the coffin in the rear of Air Force One.

A row over the disappearance of the autopsy photos into the abyss of the National Archives has died down. Reporters who wondered a week ago how the Kennedys got those photos in the first place, and why the Commission didn't look at them, didn't notice 50 Swarthmore College students who picketed the Justice Department this week asking, "Who killed Kennedy?"

Likeliest prospect for a peek or a foot in the Archives Door seems to be Edward J. Epstein, least controversial of the reviewers, who reportedly is on Teddy Kennedy's staff as a consultant.

For those worried men still needing a guide to Vietnam, one of the President's top speech writers recently reassured a White House reporter who was moaning over the state of the world, "Relax, at least we're at peace. Now if we had that many men in Europe, things would be really hot." They're right, they're just little fellows, and the Washington Star newspaper thinks the Viet Cong aren't even that. They ran a big picture last week of a G.I. holding his "mascot" which was complete in fatigue, cap and cigar—it was a Viet Cong skeleton. **ENP**

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**Sleuthing**

One of the ironies surrounding the controversy over the Warren Report is that many of the Report's defenders have not read either the Report itself (let alone its 26 volumes of evidence), or any of the books or articles criticizing it. One exception to these clairvoyant counter-critics is Joel Pimsleur of the San Francisco Chronicle.

Yet his articles in the Sunday Chronicle-Examiners of Nov. 20 and 27 are particularly disappointing. He fails to answer any of the central arguments raised by the amateur sleuths, and instead launches a tirade against them, accusing many of writing "the worst in contemporary gee-whiz journalism." And he attempts to implicate some of the better-known critics in conspiracies which place no less a strain on the imagination than the theories of some of the more fanciful Commission opponents.

Pimsleur's plots revolve around attorney Mark Lane, author of "Rush to Judgement." Pimsleur would have us believe that the book "Inquest," originally written as a doctoral thesis by Cornell graduate student Edward Jay Epstein, was part of a sinister plot by Lane to legitimize criticism of the Commission by a fake mantle of scholarship.

Pimsleur also implies that the verse play "MacBird"—a humor-

ous satire which implicates President Johnson in the assassination—is part of Mark Lane's machinations too. Who is "MacBird's" author, Barbara Garson? Pimsleur asks. She is the wife of Marvin Garson, a former "investigator" for Mark Lane. Thus the sinister hand.

Pimsleur's suggestions are disturbing. If we can reveal some seedy motives of the Commission critics, he implies, we can simply dismiss all of the problems about the Commission's findings that the critics raise.

Perhaps, as a Chronicle editorial of Nov. 28 stated, (only a day after Pimsleur's second article — conspiracy!) some of the Commission's critics do have "political or commercial" motives. But the same can be said of the Commission's defenders. But both sides are equally obligated to stick to the facts.

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