

DREW PEARSON

Was JFK Killed In CIA Backfire?

WASHINGTON—President Johnson is sitting on a political H-bomb—an unconfirmed report that Sen. Robert Kennedy, D-N. Y., may have approved an assassination plot which then possibly backfired against his late brother.

Top officials, queried by this column, agreed that a plot to assassinate Cuban dictator Fidel Castro was "considered" at the highest levels of the Central Intelligence Agency at the time Bobby was riding herd on the agency. The officials disagreed, however, over whether the plan was approved and implemented.

One version claims that underworld figures actually were recruited to carry out the plot. Another rumor has it that three hired assassins were caught in Havana where a lone survivor is still supposed to be languishing in prison. These stories have been investigated and discounted by the FBI.



DREW PEARSON is still supposed to be languishing in prison.

Yet the rumor persists, whispered by people in a position to know, that Castro did become aware of an American plot upon his life and decided to retaliate against President Kennedy.

This report may have started New Orleans' flamboyant Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison on his investigation of the Kennedy assassination, but insiders believe he is following the wrong trails.

This much can be verified: 1. President Kennedy was disillusioned with the CIA after the Bay of Pigs fiasco that he swore to friends he would like "to splinter the CIA in a thousand pieces and scatter it to the winds." He ordered a thorough investigation by a group headed by Gen. Maxwell Taylor. But the president's real watchdog was his brother Bobby, who ended up calling the shots at the CIA.

2. During this period, the

CIA hatched a plot to knock off Castro. It would have been impossible for this to reach the high levels it did, say insiders, without being taken up with the younger Kennedy. Indeed, one source insists that Bobby, eager to avenge the Bay of Pigs fiasco, played a key role in the planning. Whether the assassination plot was ever actually put into effect is disputed.

3. Some insiders are convinced that Castro learned enough at least to believe the CIA was seeking to kill him. With characteristic fury, he is reported to have cooked up a counterplot against President Kennedy.

4. Shortly after Kennedy was gunned down, the FBI handed President Johnson a memo reporting that Cuban leaders had hoped for Kennedy's death. The President showed it to Kennedy's top aide, Ted Sorensen, who thought the details were so ambiguous, that he called the memo "meaningless."

5. It is also known, of course, that Lee Oswald, the accused assassin, was active in the pro-Castro movement and traveled to Mexico seeking a Cuban visa a few weeks before the dreadful day in Dallas.

SOME SOURCES consider Robert Kennedy's behavior after the assassination to be significant. He seemed to be tormented, they say, by more than the natural grief over the murder of his brother.

Author William Manchester, who got his information chiefly from Kennedy-controlled sources, portrays Bobby as a character of granite during those tragic days. But others had a different impression.

McGeorge Bundy, then a

top White House aide, told a colleague that he was "worried about Bobby," that "Bobby was reluctant to face the new reality," that he had "virtually to drag Bobby" into President Johnson's first cabinet meeting.

Four weeks after the tragedy, this column was told, Bobby was morose and refused to see people. Could he have been plagued by the terrible thought that he had helped put into motion forces that indirectly may have brought about his brother's martyrdom? Some insiders think so.

Note: Those who may be shocked that the CIA would consider stooping to a political assassination should be reminded of the ugly nature of what Secretary of State Dean Rusk has called "the back-alley struggle."

HE HAS DESCRIBED it as "a tough struggle going on in the back alleys all over the world . . . a never-ending war . . . no quarter asked and none given. . . It's unpleasant, and no one likes it, but that is not a field which can be left entirely to the other side."

The blunt truth is that the subterranean world of espionage is harsh almost beyond relief. There have been times that the CIA has been forced to resort to the most extreme measures to protect the national security.

Some of the CIA's best operatives also have suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. No word will be heard of them for months, then a few grim details will leak out.

"We will learn that these people have been subjected to the most skillful, most fiendish tortures that man can possibly devise and that they have been reduced to animals or vegetables," Clark Clifford, head of the President's Foreign Intelligence Committee, told this column. "When they no longer can really be called men and when all possible information has been extracted from them, then they are disposed of. It is not a pretty picture, but that is the way

picture, but that is the way the game is played." We also play rough. The New York Times, in an exhaustive report on the CIA, quoted "one of the best-informed men in Washington on this subject" as saying: "When we catch one of them (A Soviet or other agent), it becomes necessary to get everything out of them, and we do it with no holds barred."

List of Key Figures In JFK Probe Here

Numerous names are appearing in headlines detailing the investigation of what the Orleans Parish district attorney says was a plot made in New Orleans to assassinate President Kennedy.

Here is a run-down on some of those who have figured in the probe:

DIST. ATTY. JIM GARRISON—Garrison, who initiated and is heading up the probe, has been DA since 1961. Garrison won't say what got him started on the probe, but promises that more arrests and convictions will result.

CLAY L. SHAW—Former managing director of the International Trade Mart, Shaw has been booked with criminal conspiracy in the death of President Kennedy. He denies any connection with any plot to kill the President.

CLAY BERTRAND—A mystery man mentioned in the Warren Commission report as seeking to hire New Orleans attorney Dean Andrews Jr. to defend Lee Harvey Oswald after the assassination. In affidavits filed with Criminal District Court, Garrison's office has said Clay Bertrand is an alias used by Clay Shaw.

LEE HARVEY OSWALD—A New Orleans native who was arrested after the 1963 assassination and accused of killing the President. He was shot to death two days later by Jack Ruby in the Dallas police station.

DEAN ANDREWS JR.—Andrews says he is unable to say whether Clay Shaw and Clay Bertrand are the same. He told the Warren Commission he saw Bertrand on two occasions, but gave conflicting descriptions of him. The commission said it was unable to locate Bertrand.

SAM MONK ZELDEN—A New Orleans criminal lawyer, he is representing Andrews. Andrews, who was ill at the time Bertrand contacted him, referred Bertrand to Zelden as a possible attorney for Oswald.

JACK RUBY—A Dallas nightclub operator who shot down Lee Harvey Oswald before a national television audience two days after Kennedy was slain. Ruby died of cancer in a Dallas jail cell while awaiting a new trial in the slaying of Oswald.

DAVID WILLIAM FERRIE—A New Orleans airplane pilot and private investigator who was found dead Feb. 22 in his apartment. His death was ruled natural by the coroner's office, but Garrison first said it was suicide. Ferrie was named in an affidavit filed by Garrison's office as joining Shaw, Oswald and others in plotting the President's death here in September, 1963.

JAMES R. LEWALLEN—Ferrie's former roommate, he was subpoenaed by Garrison and questioned just before Shaw's arrest. He is a Boeing Co. employe at the Michoud space center here.

DR. NICHOLAS CHETTA—Orleans parish coroner. He witnessed Garrison's interrogation under truth serum of a mystery informant who the affidavit says was present when Kennedy's death was plotted at Ferrie's apartment. He ruled Ferrie's death natural.

WILLIAM GURVICH—An official of the New Orleans Private Patrol Service, Gurvich is heading Garrison's investigation. He is the son of a former FBI agent.

Austria Doubts JFK Report, Envoy Asserts

Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's investigation of the Kennedy assassination "has been getting good coverage in our Austria newspapers," the ambassador of Austria to the United States said here.

"No one in Austria was absolutely satisfied with the Warren Report," said Dr. Ernest Lemberger yesterday. He is a visitor at International House.

He added that the Austrians "just can't think a great personality such as President Kennedy has been shot by, let's say, a crazy man."

THE ENVOY SAID President Kennedy was the first American president to go to Austria. He met Russian leader Nikita Khrushchev there.

Dr. Lemberger said his country "was not delighted to hear about" the involvement of the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Students' Association.

But he said the story made much more of an impression in the United States than it did in Europe.

Austria's economy is good, he said, adding that America, if it desired, could export more to Austria. It is generally believed that tourism is Austria's greatest industry, while in fact "it is steel."

TOURISM "only balances our budget," the envoy said.

The ambassador inaugurated the Austrian Room at International House. Furnishings for the room are a gift of Col. Eberhard P. Deutsch, honorary consul of Austria here. Col. Deutsch is a founding member and director of IH.

Dr. Lemberger presented Col. Deutsch with the Gold Cross of Merit of the Republic of Austria in recognition of Deutsch's work as counsel to Gen. Mark W. Clark in the military administration of Austria between the spring of 1945 and the fall of 1946; her re-establishment as a free and independent nation, and his work as honorary consul for the past five years.

DA May Gain High Prestige, Governor Says

By BILL LYNCH

BATON ROUGE — Gov. John J. McKeithen says that District Attorney Jim Garrison will reap tremendous prestige internationally if he proves his conspiracy charges in the assassination of President Kennedy.

The Louisiana chief executive told a news conference yesterday that he did not believe the Orleans district attorney is politically motivated in the case that has stirred worldwide attention.

McKEITHEN said he has been in touch with Garrison about the situation, but did not want to comment on the possible outcome.

He said he certainly did not want to criticize Garrison "because he has a habit of criticizing back."

A close political ally, McKeithen said that the district attorney's image already is bright in the state.

"There is no doubt about it. If his investigation proves that the FBI, the Secret Service, the CIA, the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court and the Warren Commission have overlooked something, Mr. Garrison has gained stature — not statewide or nationally — internationally," McKeithen said.

"Political overtones, I don't know, but it would certainly give him tremendous prestige," McKeithen said, "There is no question about that."

ON THE subject of air pollution, the governor said that the state must face up to the problem at hand but is looking to the federal government for guidance.

He said that money will be provided in the next year's fiscal budget to operate the Louisiana Air Control Commission, which was created in 1966 but has gone without legislative appropriations.

When questioned about the national gambling probe that affected Louisiana State University facilities this week, Mc-

Keithen said "I'm aghast at it."

However, he said he would be surprised if there is a great deal of organized crime in the state.

On other topics, McKeithen said:

—The Louisiana Municipal Association has proposed creation of a state commission on local government.

—He has named Dean John Altazan of the college of business administration at LSUNO to the domed stadium commission.

—He has offered the position of director of the highway safety program to Mrs. Wilma Lockhart who he declined to reappoint to the state tax commission because she is too controversial. Mrs. Lockhart is considering it, he added.

—He will make recommendations to the Legislature—perhaps at the regular session in 1968 if he is governor then—to change the law pertaining to tax commission members. One change would be to eliminate the requirement that it be full-time work and the other that no outside employment income may be made.

He said a number of persons have declined the post after "reading the fine print" on the job.

—It is possible, but not probable, he may run without a lieutenant governor candidate on his ticket this fall.

—Described the situation in the state tourist commission, which has had a rapid turnover in directors, as unhealthy and thinks the next director will have to be chosen after due care.

—Most state agencies will have to get by with the same amounts of funds next year as they are receiving this year.

—Does not plan to seek out-of-state applicants for the job of warden at Angola and praised Institutions Director Wingate White for his handling of the state penitentiary.

He said that the state will try to dig up \$750,000 for additional facilities at DeQuincy for first offenders so none of them will have to go to Angola.

—Is letting the LSU board of supervisors post now held by Tom Dutton of New Orleans alone. Dutton's term has expired, but he continues to serve.