

Critics of Warren Report Meet to Ask New Study

By JOHN KIFNER

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BOSTON, Feb. 2—Encouraged by the disclosures of Watergate and of the Government's domestic counter-intelligence operations, conspiracy-theory assassination researchers and buffs from across the country gathered here this weekend to ask, "Who killed J.F.K.?"

They sought to start a national political movement to reopen official investigation into the slaying of President Kennedy in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

The researchers, some of whom have spent years tracking minute details, recalled to the conference audiences that they had long worked alone and had been scoffed at for being "crazy."

"People used to say, 'Where's your new evidence?'" said Mark Lane, author of "Rush to Judgment," a book critical of the Warren Commission report on the assassination. "I say what's wrong with the old evidence?"

"What's changed in the past 11 years is the political climate of this country," he added. "A Gallup Poll shows 78 per cent of the American people don't believe the Warren Commission. What's changed is the political climate—that we can convince members of the Congress, members of the Senate," he added.

The Warren Commission said that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting as a lone demented assassin, shot and killed the President from a sniper's nest. He was gunned down before live television cameras in a police station by Jack Ruby, a strip-joint operator and police hanger-on.

The dramatic high point of the conference was the show-

ing of a "bootleg" copy of what is known as "the Zapruder film." This is an amateur movie made by Abraham Zapruder, a Dallas dressmaker, which is the only known pictorial record of the moment Mr. Kennedy was shot. The film was purchased by Time Inc. and has never been officially released.

In the film, President Kennedy is seen slumping forward in the back seat of the convertible, his hands moving upward toward his neck.

Images on Film

His wife, Jacqueline, is seen moving across Gov. John B. Connally of Texas, who is sitting slightly forward, reaching for the President.

Suddenly, the President's head and the upper part of his body are snapped violently backward. Blood gushes about his face.

This moment of the film was marked by groans and gasps from the audience packed into an auditorium at Boston University, the conference site.

The assassination researchers contend that the short backward movement shown on the film is at odds with the Warren Commission finding that the President was killed with a single bullet fired from the rear.

The conference, sponsored by the Assassination Information Bureau, a group of young people working out of a Cambridge apartment, attracted about 1,000 people to its program of films, workshops and panel discussions.

Many in the predominantly young crowd held the microphones of tape recorders aloft to preserve the proceedings. Pamphlets and books were sold at the door, near a framed dis-

play of a can opener once owned by Jack Ruby, which, a sign noted, was "the work of a lone, crazed assassination buff."

What unites the researchers is a strong belief that the Warren Commission report was a "cover-up" that did not tell the truth of the assassination.

Questions were also raised about the slayings of Robert F. Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the attempt on the life of Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama. Underlying the questions were various theories of shadowy forces or "infrastructures" within American life, including, but not limited to, the Central Intelligence Agency.

But there were also disagreements over some of the researchers' methods, egos and conclusions. Privately, members of the sponsoring group said that they regarded some of the material as quite shaky, but that they wanted all efforts represented and that the most important point was the questions that were raised.

Among the more controversial of these self-styled researchers were Mae Brussel, who has a syndicated radio show and writes for The Realist magazine, and Sherman Skolnick, who helped force the resignation of three Illinois judges.

Speaking in a strident voice, her words tumbling over one another, the California-based Mrs. Brussel described spending eight years cross-indexing 90 notebooks of everyone who had ever met Lee Harvey Oswald and her conviction that Sirhan Sirhan, convicted of shooting Robert Kennedy, "was smuggled into the country by the same C.I.A. network as Marina Oswald under cover of

the Greek Orthodox Church."

"J. Edgar Hoover was murdered," she snapped in response to a question. "He ingested apple pie and there were Cubans in his house. I'll stake my reputation on it."

Mr. Skolnick, who is confined to a wheelchair, contended that the Chicago airplane crash in which the wife of E. Howard Hunt Jr. died had been caused by C.I.A. sabotage.

But, he added, a document "which should have been written on asbestos" fluttered from the plane, became stuck on a bush and came into his possession. It was, he said, a National Security Council memorandum of Nov. 27, 1960, "three years to the date before," saying that "for the good of the Republic, John F. Kennedy should be removed."

Mr. Lane was visibly upset by such charges, and in the closing session today, when petitions urging new investigations were distributed, warned against reaching conclusions beyond what could be substantiated. "We should not make statements that most reasonable Americans cannot accept," he said. "We cannot require an acceptance of the unbelievable. It will set us back 20 years. It is their credibility that must be at stake, not ours."