



By TRISTRAM COFFIN

# Washington Watch a private newsletter

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## THE JFK ASSASSINATION AND WATERGATE -

Lee Harvey Oswald, the man who shot President Kennedy. Did he know or have contact with E. Howard Hunt or Gordon Liddy, or any of the others in that mysterious and dangerous crew convicted in the Watergate crime and, under investigation still in connection with a series of other criminal acts including burglarizing homes, offices and embassies?

"What about Sirhan Sirhan, the assassin of Robert Kennedy and James Earl Ray, the killer of Martin Luther King, and Arthur Bremer, the man who shot George Wallace? Did Hunt or Liddy or his strange Cuban contacts, did any or all of them know any of these people?"

These questions are being asked by a respected Washington correspondent. Dan Rather was with the Presidential party when John Kennedy was murdered. He covered the Warren Commission hearings. He conducted an independent investigation for CBS News.

He now reports, "The old sores, the old doubts, the old questions and some new ones are being reopened. Oswald's involvement with anti-Castro Cubans...his mystery appearance in Mexico City. The possibility of contact with people who had CIA connections. Hunt and Liddy's involvement with anti-Castro Cubans."

Since the Warren Commission closed its books, new evidence has been dug up.

(1) Lyndon Johnson in an interview published after his death in Atlantic (July 1973) said he believed Kennedy was the victim of an organized conspiracy. "I never believed that Oswald acted alone, although I can accept that he pulled the trigger." The interviewer, Leo Janos, continues, "Johnson said when he had taken office he found that 'we had been operating a damned Murder Inc. in the Caribbean.'"

"A year or so before Kennedy's death, a CIA-backed assassination team had been picked up in Havana. Johnson speculated that Dallas had been a retaliation for this thwarted attempt, although he couldn't prove it." LBJ told Walter Cronkite a similar story, but, after the taping, asked this be deleted for "national security reasons."

A member of the Warren Commission, Senator Richard Russell (D-Ga.), was convinced of a conspiracy, too.

THE MAFIA CONNECTION - "The Murder Inc." gang has been identified as a Mafia team under contract by the CIA for murder and other crimes in Latin America. It had intimate associations with the exiled Cubans. The Meyer Lansky wing of the Mafia ran the Havana gambling casinos during the Batista regime, and Lansky is said to have offered \$1 million to get rid of Castro. The Mafia ran a Grade B

counter-revolution, smuggling men and arms into Cuba. The job was too big for the mob; it needed the resources of the US Government.

The Mafia put on pressure through the Cuban exile community in Miami, its CIA friends, and political connections including then Vice President Nixon and Senator George Smathers (D-Fla.) Sun Dance magazine claims that "information from two ex-FBI agents" shows that Nixon had been "in close contact. . . with persons closely associated with organized crime."

Vice President Nixon persuaded President Eisenhower to undertake the Bay of Pigs operation. Hunt became head of plans for the invasion attempt.

NEW EVIDENCE - (2) New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison is said to have a copy of an FBI report, quoting Oswald, and warning of the assassination of President Kennedy. This did not appear in the Warren Commission reports. Professor Peter Dale Scott of the University of California claims to have evidence of a massive official "cover-up" of evidence of the slaying.

(3) A Secret Service man present at the scene of the assassination says privately he is sure shots were fired from the knoll. He was not questioned by the Warren Commission, and has not volunteered his information publicly for fear of retaliation.

(4) The French newspaper, L'Aurore (October 2, 1972) claims a French soldier of fortune was hired to kill President Kennedy May 31, 1961 during his visit to Paris. The contact with the hired gunman was made through a CIA man in Algiers.

(5) The Washington Star-News reports (November 6, 1972) that four detectives hired by Aristotle Onassis conducted a private investigation and presumably found "the names of the 'real' murderers of President Kennedy. . . . The report is locked away in Onassis' private safe at Glyfada."

(6) Donald Freed, co-author of Executive Action, a novel of the assassination, told the Los Angeles Star, "The professionals in the Watergate. . . are tied to the CIA, Cuban politics, the Miami area, and assassination." He states there was a plot "to assassinate Castro before or coincident with the invasion," and this was called off by President Kennedy. Freed claims Hunt and Frank Sturgis, another Watergate defendant, were involved in this action, and two other assassination plots, in Haiti and Guatemala. Also, he states in a new book, Give Us This Day, that Hunt, Sturgis and Liddy "were in Mexico City in 1971 as part of an executive action to assassinate the president of Panama" but this was "called off and aborted."

Freed suggests the answer to a mystery of the Watergate

hearings. Why did the White House order CIA officials to stop the FBI from investigating the laundering of funds through Mexico? "The probabilities were that they (FBI) might come up with someone from the Kennedy assassination and the whole thing would be blown open."

Some investigators believe the assassination was organized in Mexico, the pay-off money passed through there, and the "team" came to Dallas two days before the murder from

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Mexico.

HOW MUCH DOES HUNT KNOW? - Freed told his interviewer that Hunt "had something on somebody." Jack Anderson states (July 16) that Watergate investigators "are eager to examine the papers of Hunt's late wife, Dorothy, who is supposed to have said her notes 'would impeach the President ten times over.' "

She died in an airplane crash near Chicago on December 8. A private investigator, Sherman H. Skolnick, claims she was murdered, and has besieged newspaper offices with what he believes is proof.

Public interest will be spurred again with the showing of the movie of Executive Action. The St. Joseph (Mo.) Gazette (July 3) reports: "A major, big-budget movie is now in the works, starring Burt Lancaster and Robert Ryan, and setting forth the view that John F. Kennedy was assassinated not by Lee Harvey Oswald, but as the result of a plot involving... Texas oilmen, retired right wing generals, CIA agents, and anti-Castro Cubans, plus the Mafia."

Rather concludes, "Under normal circumstances, and in more normal times, these questions would not be asked. Unfortunately for us all... these are not normal times."