

Newsman's JFK tale doubted

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By DAN WATSON

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Close friends of George de Mohrenschildt say they don't believe reports by a Dutch journalist that the 65-year-old Bishop College professor influenced Lee Harvey Oswald or knew of a conspiracy by Dallas oilmen to assassinate President John F. Kennedy.

Willem Oltmans, the journalist, told ABC's "Good Morning, America" audience Friday that De Mohrenschildt had written a manuscript in which he described an assassination plot against President Kennedy involving deceased Dallas billionaire H. L. Hunt, well-known Dallas geologist Lester Logue and Loran Hall, whom Warren Commission documents describe as a bearded man transporting medical supplies when reportedly arrested in Dallas and later released without charges.

Oltmans said De Mohrenschildt sometimes referred to the manuscript as fact and other times as fiction.

Logue and members of the Hunt family have issued statements denying any knowledge or involvement in an assassination plot. The statements call Oltmans' claims irresponsible.

Earlier this week Oltmans said De Mohrenschildt had told him that he knew Oswald was going to kill President Kennedy.

Oltmans has been called to testify before the House Assassinations Committee. He said Friday on the ABC program that he considered De Mohrenschildt's stories to be the truth.

A former Hunt employe who met De Mohrenschildt socially in the spring of 1963 said De Mohrenschildt, a geologist and a Russian instructor, never mentioned knowing Hunt, Logue or Hall.

Max Clark, a Fort Worth attorney and long time De Mohrenschildt friend, said, "I think they are wild tales created for the sensational.

"In the last six months, he seemed disappointed and not himself," Clark said of De Mohrenschildt.

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"I don't think he knew anything anybody else didn't. George was depressed, sick and probably someone offered him some money (for interviews), and he thought it was a good chance to get away."

Oltmans had agreed to pay De Mohrenschildt for a series of taped interviews, which he said De Mohrenschildt refused to give in the United States because he feared for his life but agreed to give them in Belgium earlier this month.

In addition, De Mohrenschildt had finished what was reported to be a \$5,000 interview with assassination writer Edward Jay Epstein a few hours before he was found dead in a home in Manalapa, Fla., a suburb of West Palm Beach.

George Bouhe, a Russian-born American citizen considered by many assassination researchers to be the Dallas Russian community leader most active in offering the Oswalds aid when they came to the area from Russia in 1962, said he doubted De Mohrenschildt's statements and noted De Mohrenschildt had only a casual relationship with Oswald.

Another De Mohrenschildt friend, internationally-known ballet star Nathalie Krassovska, born in Leningrad and now a Dallas dance instructor, said De Mohrenschildt had urged her to meet the Oswalds, although she declined the opportunity because of a busy dance schedule.

De Mohrenschildt had been married four times.

She said De Mohrenschildt never told her he knew in advance about Oswald killing President Kennedy or any assassination plot. She said he never spoke of Hunt, Logue or Hall.

De Mohrenschildt shot himself to death Tuesday. He was a friend of Lee Harvey Oswald before President Kennedy was killed. The Warren Commission interviewed De Mohrenschildt extensively and ruled he had nothing to do with the assassination.

The commission ruled Oswald acted alone in killing the President.

De Mohrenschildt had a record of employment with government agencies, many of which were reportedly tied to the Central Intelligence Agency. He also had direct contact with the CIA.

Warren group talked to De Mohrenschildt

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office in Dallas. The CIA figures prominently in theories of assassination conspiracies.

According to FBI records, De Mohrenschildt was hired by the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), a part of International Cooperation Administration, which was involved in foreign aid programs in 1957. Records show AID sent De Mohrenschildt to Yugoslavia that year as a geological consultant at a salary of \$13,000 a year.

In 1970, U. S. Foreign Aid Chief John A. Hannig revealed AID had been used as a cover for CIA operations in Laos and said similar operations had been approved since 1962.

After the assassination, De Mohrenschildt reportedly bragged he had checked out Oswald with the FBI at one time because he was suspicious of Oswald's behavior. He claimed he was told not to worry about Oswald.

The statements apparently prompted the FBI to travel to Haiti in the spring of 1964 to interview De Mohrenschildt about Oswald again, and De Mohrenschildt told the FBI he had not

checked with them, according to a report on the interview which is now declassified.

During the interview, De Mohrenschildt claimed he occasionally met with the head of the Dallas office of the CIA from 1957 until De Mohrenschildt left for Haiti in the spring of 1963.

De Mohrenschildt told the FBI he was debriefed by the Dallas CIA head when he returned from the 1957 trip to Yugoslavia. At the time of the FBI interview, De Mohrenschildt was in Haiti aiding the Haitian government at a sisal (hemp) plantation.

According to federal sources familiar with the CIA's procedures, De Mohrenschildt was interviewed by the Dallas office of the CIA when he returned from Yugoslavia in 1957 and "four or five times, probably on orders from Washington, between 1957 and 1961." The News has learned.

The source, however, said the agency was never associated with De Mohrenschildt while De Mohrenschildt was acquainted with Oswald because De Mohrenschildt was never queried by the CIA after 1961.

The U.S. Department of State told The News Friday that all of De Mohrenschildt's personnel records, including those from AID, had been destroyed through normal procedures in November, 1964, shortly after the Warren Commission questioned De Mohrenschildt for the 10 hours. The government had kept the records for five years as required by AID.

Both Hall and Logue are mentioned in a Warren Commission document which states the FBI was told in 1964 that Hall and a friend, William Houston Seymour, brought a trailer of supplies for anti-Cuban friends through Dallas on their way to Florida. The two reportedly were detained by police, and Hall was arrested for possession of drugs, according to FBI documents.

Dallas police records for 1963 do not show Hall's arrest.

Logue's family said he was out of town on business Friday, but Logue's company released a statement about the reported claims.

"I'm literally appalled that a national television network would interview and then broadcast a statement of a man who supposedly interviewed another man with a lifelong history of mental disorders," the statement quoted Logue as saying.

"It's absolutely incredible that this kind of hearsay could be given any credibility."

The Hunt family statement said, "Any allegations by Oltmans that H. L. Hunt was involved with De Mohrenschildt or Oswald in any way are figments of a strained and distorted imagination. It is ludicrous to state that H. L. Hunt had anything to do with the assassination of President Kennedy."