

THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

Following the the publication this week of CONSPIRACY, by British investigation reporter ANTHONY SUMMERS, there have been two television confrontations between SUMMERS and DAVID PHILLIPS, former Chief of Western Hemisphere Division of CIA. ("TODAY," (NBK Monday), and "PANORAMA," (Washington, Channel 5, Friday).

The appearances by PHILLIPS have been at his suggestion, and have aired his objections concerning coverage in CONSPIRACY of the fact that the House Select Committee on Assassinations considered the possibility that Phillips was perhaps one "MAURICE BISHOP," the cover name of a U.S. intelligence case officer alleged by a former anti-Castro leader, ANTONIA VECIANA, to have had contact with OSWALD, the alleged assassin.

Today on Metromedia's "PANORAMA" Programme in Washington, discussion between PHILLIPS and author SUMMERS - a longtime journalist with the British Broadcasting Corporation - was followed with an interview with PROFESSOR ROBERT BLAKEY, the Chief Counsel of the recent SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS. Dr. Blakey praised the new book CONSPIRACY, and appealed publicly for new Justice Department action on the assassination of PRESIDENT KENNEDY. Blakey stated without equivocation that there were two gunmen in Dealey Plaza and that there was definitely a conspiracy.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Enclosed transcript of today's PANORAMA programme. Areas of probable editorial interest are marked. Especial attention is suggested to the remarks of Professor Blakey at end of transcript.

[The enclosed transcript of PANORAMA has been produced by McGraw Hill, and its accuracy has not been checked by Metromedia, who hold the copyright.]

CONSPIRACY, by ANTHONY SUMMERS, has won high praise in advance from Arthur Schlesinger, former Ambassador William Attwood, Robert MacNeil (MacNeil-Lehrer Report), and Congressman Richardson Preyer, Chairman of Kennedy Subcommittee (Assassinations Committee) in Congress. Published by McGraw-Hill this week.

MR. CRYSTAL: November 22nd, 1963, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Controversy still surrounds that assassination. The Warren Commission Report, volumes and volumes of findings and yet it still is not complete.

There is a man who has been working on the assassination for some time now, has a new book. His name is Anthony Summers. He is an investigative reporter for the BBC.

In your book, Mr. Summers, you come out with things that you believe are new. What are these things that are new in the case?

MR. SUMMERS: I think it's not so much what I say. I think we have to look at what the Congress Assassinations Committee had in its report last year, because it makes a whole new point of which we have to look at the assassination. When I say "we," I mean--that means the people in law enforcement, in the media and, indeed, in the public. We have to take the blinkers off.

The Assassinations Committee said that was probably a conspiracy to assassinate the President, when they said they were bowing to the fact that the scientists said-- and they used the best scientists in the country, I believe--

said there was a 95 percent probability that were two gunmen at work Dealey Plaza.

Now, you won't get the scientists to say that it is definite that if you drop an apple, it will hit the ground. They never say a hundred percent.

What the new scientific advisor to the Committee in this area said was that if he were a lawyer, he would say that it was beyond a reasonable doubt that there were two gunmen. That was the basis of the Assassinations Committee's conclusions. It's a new fact. Once you have two gunmen in Dealey Plaza, then you have to look at everything else anew.

MR. CRYSTAL: Okay. And that's what you did? What did you find that was anew?

MR. SUMMERS: The most extraordinary thing that I found was that when I went down the road to do a film documentary which was shown here and on the BBC, I expected that in upteen living rooms across the country, I'd been the last of many reporters to have been there. I found to my surprise that I wasn't, and that in one or two cases, I was there before officials had been.

I found it surprising and in the end rather disquieting, and that's what led me on to do the book. What

I've done, I hope, is to do the first reporting job which involves not only the paper chase, to look through the archives, but also going down the road using the shoe leather in the places where important evidence was; and, in some case, still is, important witnesses. I mean Dallas, New Orleans, New Mexico and, in my case, Cuba.

MR. CRYSTAL: Cuba. Talk about your case.

MR. SUMMERS: Well, I went to Cuba because, as you know, there is a major element of interest in the fact that Oswald's public posture is that of a pro-Castro leftist.

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. SUMMERS: Now, there are curious apparent inconsistencies and anomalies in that evidence. They concern not least his leafleting in the summer of 1963 in New Orleans, where he spent the months before the assassination. On one occasion he handed out leaflets bearing the subber stamp--

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. SUMMERS: --of a address which was from the headquarters of a left-wing Castro organization, had important connections with anti-Castro operatives, some of them with links to U.S. intelligence. That was a problem.

There was also the area of Mexico City Oswald

prepared for the assassination. We know he was there. But a person calling himself Oswald went to the Cuba and Soviet Embassies there and was looking for a visa to go to Cuba.

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. SUMMERS: In a couple of days and, indeed, in the hours after the assassination, a mass of information about this Oswald connection with the Cuban communists or alleged Oswald connection with the Cuban communists came to Washington and, indeed, across the desk of LBJ, the new President.

There are indications that it may not have been the real Oswald who actually went to the embassy.

MR. CRYSTAL: What are the indications who that person may have been?

MR. SUMMERS: I don't know, and I haven't tried to say in my book. I avoided speculation in the book.

But what I've done, going back to your original question about what I've done, is to lay the evidence, as it is today, end to end. Based on the fact that we now know-- and it's a fact--that there was a conspiracy and that there were two gunmen in Dealey Plaza, and that we have to, therefore, open our eyes to all the other evidence all over

again.

MR. CRYSTAL: What you actually have done in the book is to name a person who may have been a link to Lee Harvey Oswald.

MR. SUMMERS: Maurice Bishop.

MR. CRYSTAL: Tell us about him.

MR. SUMMERS: Yes. A witness who I think comes up with very disquieting evidence is Antonio Vesciano, who in 1963 was the civilian leader of a thing called Alpha 66, which was then a very-well known guerilla exile group, running raids against the Cuba coastline, mostly out of Florida.

Now, Antonio Vesciano alleges that he had a U.S. Intelligence case officer. And he's no more specific than that. He says U.S. Intelligence.

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. SUMMERS: That that U.S. Intelligence case officer during 1963 in that tinderbox stage, in the wake of the missile crisis, was trying to provoke further trouble between the United States and the Soviet Union by getting Alpha 66 to do raids against the Cuba coastline and against Soviet installations and ships--a very dangerous thing, if he is telling the truth, specifically, in connection with

the assassination.

Vesciano alleges that he saw Maurice Bishop, which was the cover name for his intelligence case officer, with the alleged assassin, Lee Oswald, and--

MR. CRYSTAL: Who--

MR. SUMMERS: --and that after the assassination--

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. SUMMERS: I find this perhaps even more troubling.

MR. CRYSTAL: Who was the cover name for?

MR. SUMMERS: The cover name was Maurice Bishop.

MR. CRYSTAL: The cover name--

MR. SUMMERS: A man whose identity has not yet been established.

MR. CRYSTAL: There are segments of that book that pertain to former heads of the CIA, Western Hemisphere.

MR. SUMMERS: I report in my book that Congress' Assassinations Committee publicly considered in its report last year and in its volumes the possibility that Bishop was identical with David Phillips, the former CIA head of Western Hemisphere who at that time was working in Mexico City and was involved with anti-Castro operations; but I certainly don't say that David Phillips was Maurice Bishop.

I report the fact that the Assassinations Committee said this was a possibility.

MR. CRYSTAL: The Assassinations Committee say it's a possibility?

MR. SUMMERS: No, they considered the possibility, they considered the possibility in their report, and they ended their report on this--in a long footnote about this issue.

The said that they suspected that the main witness in this area, Vesciano, was lying when he said that Bishop was not the retired officer, as they refer to him in their report--

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. SUMMERS: And for his part, that the retired officer aroused suspicion when he said that he didn't know Vesciano. It seems that the committee felt it would be likely in his role in anti-Castro affairs that Mr. Phillips would have know the leader of a very well-known, publicly well-known, certainly well known to intelligence agencies, exile leader.

MR. CRYSTAL: David Attley Phillips is here. He will join us in just a moment when PANORAMA continues.

[COMMERCIAL BREAK.]

MR. CRYSTAL: Back on PANORAMA right now, as we discuss some new evidence, new controversy, certainly, surrounding the assassination of President John Kennedy.

Here is David Attley Phillips, former head of the CIA, Western Hemisphere Division. Mr. Phillips, you've been sitting in the studio; you've heard certainly no surprise today. You've read the book. You've heard what Mr. Summers has said and more pointedly what has been listed as what he says by the Congressional Committee.

I want to let you react to that right now.

MR. PHILLIPS: This is a town of newspaper people, as you know, a town of journalists and I'd like to discuss the matter with Mr. Summers in the context of journalistic responsibility and ethics.

I find it absolutely incredible that a reputable publishing house should have allowed one of its writers to publish a book about me which comes up with very serious charges, indeed, and that the author of that book never seeks me out to interview me. I think it's an absolute basic tenet of journalism.

Both Mr. Summers and I are journalists. He's been with the BBC a long time. He's written two books. I was a newspaper editor for five years; I'm a magazine writer.

I've written three books in three years. I simply can't understand how that can happen.

Now, there are two other points. There are two absolutely vital elements in this story which Mr. Summers doesn't tell in his book. He said that he's drawn on the House Assassination Committee's report, the final report and the appendices.

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. PHILLIPS: I certainly find it very strange that Mr. Summers has not discussed the origin of this story being told by this Cuban exile Vesciano. The circumstances of the timing of it--because he first came up with his story two weeks after he left the Atlanta Penitentiary, where he had been serving a sentence for drug conspiracy.

He told the first Senate investigator that he talked to in 1976 that he felt the intelligence community had something to do with his being there; that he was framed. He told one of his associates--and I am quoting now from the House Assassinations Committee report, from the appendix-- he told one of his associates, a former minister of the government in Cuba, he said, "The CIA framed me." If Mr. Summers had put this in his book, it would have given an entirely new perspective, because it provides another possible

motivation for what is a highly implausible story told by Mr. Vesciano.

MR. CRYSTAL: You have a third point?

You may. I'd like to get to the first point, why you did not seek him out.

MR. SUMMERS: First of all, what I'd like to come before that was he said that my book was about him. My book is not about him. Mr. Phillips features solely in the context that I've already explained in which I report what the Assassination's Committee's volumes and reports have said about him. It is a very small section. I believe you have seen the book.

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. SUMMERS: It is a small feature in the book.

Now, he also says that he's been a journalist all his life. The fact is that Mr. Phillips has, for the greater part of his career--I do know that you have been involved in newspapers in the distant past and have been a writer; but basically, we're talking here to a senior Intelligence officer.

MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, sure. Certainly. Twenty-five years.

MR. SUMMERS: Yes. And, next, the matter of not

interviewing Mr. Phillips. Mr. Phillips' name surfaced in this connection, specifically in connection with the Bishop affair.

Last year when the report came out, I, at that stage, had reached virtually the end of my writing. I analyzed the work of the Committee and have used many portions of the Committee's work in this book--

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. SUMMERS: Not only this.

Now, I also had access, as all journalists, to sources on the Committee, and I was also aware from the Committee's report of what Mr. Phillips has to say on this issue, which is basically that he is not Mr. Bishop. I note that and I've reported it. And I have not in any way claimed in the book, indeed, that Mr. Phillips is Mr. Bishop.

And if Mr. Phillips had not asked to appear on this program and others, I doubt that it would have been brought to the sort of attention that it has.

MR. CRYSTAL: One second. Do you, at least, concede that he did not do the book about you, do you--

MR. PHILLIPS: I certainly do not buy that argument for one minute.

MR. CRYSTAL: For you are only mentioned in there.

MR. PHILLIPS: I--

MR. CRYSTAL: You are mentioned in there four or five or six, seven times, but you are not the center of the book.

MR. PHILLIPS: About 70 times. My photograph is there. This is a book that--

MR. SUMMERS: Not 70 times. There is no way.

MR. PHILLIPS: Many, many times. The jacket of the book--

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. PHILLIPS: --has the theory and the theory is renegade CIA officers were manipulating Lee Harvey Oswald. My photograph is in the book and underneath the photograph, next to a drawing, is the question mark--is a question, heart of the matter. It certainly is a great deal about-- in the index, it's cross-indexed. Phillips, see Bishop. Bishop, see Phillips.

MR. CRYSTAL: You do feel the book is about you?

MR. PHILLIPS: There is no question about it. Ross, let me tell you, in the promotional material sent out by the publisher, it says the most serious accusations in the book concern a specific CIA officer; and I find that certainly very, very damaging.

MR. SUMMERS: May I answer that? McGraw-Hill picked this up--they're my publishers--they picked this up when Mr. Phillips said something very similar on the TODAY program. It doesn't say at all that the most serious specific accusations is against a specific CIA officer, referring to Mr. Phillips.

That reference is in there in a different way and it's quite clear from the context of the book that it refers to Maurice Bishop, which I have said is a cover name.

MR. PHILLIPS: May I ask you to read that from the McGraw-Hill promotion material?

MR. CRYSTAL: Sir, it is promotional material: The most serious accusations made in the conspiracy concern a specific CIA officer alleged to have been in contact with Oswald before the assassination. A question follows: How strong is the evidence against him?

MR. SUMMERS: Now, if you read the book you will see that that refers to a man cover name Maurice Bishop, whose identify I do not pretend to know.

MR. CRYSTAL: Well, Mr. Summers is saying as he's reporting. He is reporting what he found in a congressional investigation, in a congressional report.

MR. SUMMERS: The report is in the public domain,

Mr. Phillips--and the only name, since you've asked to appear to discuss this--the only name raised in public by the Assassinations Committee as a possible candidate for the role of Mr. Bishop--and incidentally, all that is indicated with Mr. Bishop is that he had contact with Lee Oswald, not as you have suggested, involvement in the assassination, is your own.

MR. PHILLIPS: We're talking now about the credibility of this Cuban named Vesciano.

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. PHILLIPS: There was a composite drawing based on his description of what Maurice Bishop looked like released to the international media. According to the House Committee report, no one said that I was Maurice Bishop.

Now, let me give you another reason that I think that Mr. Summers--

MR. SUMMERS: That is not so.

MR. PHILLIPS: Let me--

MR. CRYSTAL: One at a time.

MR. PHILLIPS: Mr. Summers has made the statement that one of the things that's really disquieting for him is that this Maurice Bishop, allegedly, tried to persuade Vesciano to talk to a cousin or a relative of his who was

in the Cuban Intelligence Service to fabricate information, in other words, to pin the guilt on Fidel Castro.

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. PHILLIPS: And Mr. Summers says he's working from the congressional material, but he doesn't include in the book this congressional material which he has in his possession.

MR. CRYSTAL: Now--

MR. PHILLIPS: I have to tell you what it is. The Committee went to Cuba and they talked to the Cuban intelligence officer. He was in Mexico at the time that I was there. I had written a book published some years before in which I sort gloated about the fact that I had outwitted some Cubans and that sort of thing.

MR. CRYSTAL: Hm-mm.

MR. PHILLIPS: They went down there and here was this Cuban intelligence officer with the most incredibly marvelous chance to get Dave Phillips and to get the CIA, but that Cuban intelligence officer was an honest man. You know what he said when asked about Vesciano's story? He said Vesciano, "Is the person who cannot be believe," unquote. And then he had some remarks about his psychiatric condition; that he had gone to a psychiatrist from the time

he was fifteen until he was sixteen, that he had personality problems.

MR. SUMMERS: I think it's time with all these points that I caught up with them.

MR. CRYSTAL: Okay.

MR. SUMMERS: What the Assassinations Committee, indeed, did was to report this. I mention it in a footnote in the book, I believe, and maybe in the text. I'd have to check.

MR. PHILLIPS: It's not in the text.

MR. SUMMERS: What I do say about that is that it is quite clear that the Assassinations Committee checked with not only Vesciano's doctors or his family and so on, but no question of psychiatric trouble.

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. SUMMERS: Now, a senior intelligence officer in Castro Cuban Intelligence is obviously certain to pour as much dirt as possible to smear a man who has long been leading an anti-Castro group in this country; and I must just say that one former associate has said of Vesciano, Vesciano was the straightest, absolutely trustworthy, most honest person I ever met. I would trust him explicitly.

This was an associate in the anti-Castro movement.

Now I should say that the smear and the praise coming from each side, that I have, in fact, talked to Vesciano on several occasions and I must say as a journalist who has to go back, for example, to the editor and say, "I believe this man," or, "I do not believe this man," on the question of a contact with an intelligence officer, I do believe Vesciano.

Now, there's one further thing to say on that, which is that the House Committee did point out, contrary to what Mr. Phillips indicated just now, that they did trace--

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. SUMMERS: --a former CIA case officer in Miami whose code name they gave, who said that he believed that David Phillips did use the pseudo name, cover name, if you like, Maurice Bishop, and they believed another CIA officer used the name Knight.

MR. CRYSTAL: Okay. We've been talking about film. The last segment we mentioned some film. We are going to show that film.

MR. SUMMERS: Oh, this is an interview with Vesciano which I did some while ago. It was a long interview, but this is the basic allegation that he makes about seeing his case officer with Lee Oswald before the assassination.

MR. CRYSTAL: Well, let's take a look at it right now.

(THE FOLLOWING IS FILM DIALOGUE:)

MR. SUMMERS: Before the Kennedy assassination, did you meet Lee Harvey Oswald?

MR. VESCANIO: Yes, I had encountered Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas at the end of August or the first days of September 1963, a few weeks before the President was assassinated. I was asked to go to Dallas at the request of my contact with the Intelligence Service in this country, Maurice Bishop. We fixed a meeting downtown in Dallas, in a bank or insurance company building--I don't remember which it was.

Maurice came with a young man. He seemed to be very quiet, very strange, preoccupied person. Shortly afterwards I recognized him from his photograph in the newspapers. He was without any doubt the Kennedy assassin Lee Harvey Oswald. I have no doubt that the person with Maurice was Lee Harvey Oswald because I have been trained to identify individuals I met by noting their physical characteristics.

MR. SUMMERS: Do you think that later in 1963 that Maurice Bishop was sufficiently against Kennedy to be a physical threat to him?

MR. VESCIANO: Look, Maurice was at odds with Kennedy. He believed that Kennedy was a man without experience, surrounded by unqualified advisors and that they were leading this country into trouble. Following the Bay of Pigs fiasco and after the missile crisis, Bishop considered it was a mistake for the United States to make the agreement which Kennedy concluded with Khrushchev.

It has been suggested here that there was a conspiracy against Kennedy. Maurice Bishop had many opportunities to take part in such a conspiracy because he was an operative whose professional business regularly involved dirty work activities and believed the best thing for this country was to depose Kennedy and his advisors.

(END OF FILM.)

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, we've just seen this rather dramatic scene of this man, and what is his credibility? That obviously is what we want to know. I do want to put it on the record quite clearly now that when the House Assassinations Committee, after some 18 months, I think, and several million dollars worth of investigation put out the final report.

In the final report, about two pages was devoted to Vesciano, and what they said was we find Mr. Vesciano's

testimony--Mr. Vesciano, we find him to be less than candid. We can't accept his story; and they gave four reasons, and we can find no corroboration of having--of his having seen Lee Harvey Oswald.

Now, I want to take up one thing--

MR. SUMMERS: I think--

MR. PHILLIPS: I want to take up one thing, please.

You brought up the point that there was this witness, who identified me as Bishop.

MR. SUMMERS: Yes.

MR. PHILLIPS: And certainly a very important key witness, correct?

Did you interview that man?

MR. SUMMERS: Certainly not. The man is indicated by cover name, in the Assassinations Committee report and volumes; therefore, I report him. I also report others who say that they didn't know Maurice Bishop.

I think one must all the time say on the one hand and on the other. Now, you have just said that the Committee found Vesciano not credible. They didn't say that. They said they couldn't fully reach a conclusion that he was wholly credible on his allegation about Bishop.

They said that from the files of agencies, it

appears reasonable that an association similar to the Marice Bishop story actually existed.

The Committed found it probable that some agency of the United States assigned a case officer to Vesciano, since he was a dominant figure in extremely active anti-Castro organization, et cetera.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes. The Committee said he was less than candid; said there were four reasons.

MR..SUMMERS: They also said you aroused their suspiciaion, Mr. Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: They arroused my suspicion. I must comment on that.

MR. SUMMERS: We've already quoted you on that. I quoted it inf ull the first time.

MR. PHILLIPS: The first time that someone said to me, this is Mr. Vesciano, do you recognize the name? I said no. Once again we go back to the business of this story. Mr. Vesciano hadn't exactly been in the news for the last couple of years. He was in the Atlanta Penitentiary. Before that, for a long period of time, he was in Bolivia, and he was traveling around.

That group, Alpha 66 is one group which the CIA was not connected with.

MR. SUMMERS: That's by no means clear from the investigation that's been carried on.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. I certainly think that if I am called out of a busy convention, as I was, and hit with the news that a man who's just been introduced to me as a chauffeur is really an assassin investigator and wants to ask me questions--and this is what happened in 1976--and has to ask them in Spanish and they turn to me and say, "You know Mr. Vesciano?"

I said, "No, I don't know Mr. Vesciano."

If that man's been in prison for two years and not active--

MR. SUMMERS: Excuse me. On that, you have, in fact, said to the Committee in the past that when you were confronted with Mr. Vesciano, he was not introduced by name. You just said that you were introduced by name. That's contrary to what--

MR. PHILLIPS: At one point, I certainly was introduced to him by name. I don't remember when it was. But I know the circumstances of how I was introduced. He came to a convention that I was running and sat at the table having been introduced as the driver.

MR. CRYSTAL: Alpha 66, did you just agree with

that statement. You kind of intimated--

MR. SUMMERS: The Alpha 66--

MR. CRYSTAL: Had no relationship with the CIA.

MR. SUMMERS: No, I quoted what the Committee had said. The Committee found it probable that some agency of the United States assigned a case officer to Vesciano. They had not been specific. They did not identify Maurice Bishop.

MR. CRYSTAL: That does not necessarily mean the CIA?

MR. SUMMERS: That does not necessarily mean so. On the other hand, the fact that the CIA's files are sparse on this matter, is by no means conclusive. It was established by the Senate Intelligence Committee that, long ago, five years ago, that just as in the FBI, there were no files filed. The CIA did the same thing.

It's ridiculous to expect that the paper chase, the documentary chase through the files of a thing which is, after all, the name used to be Secret Service, that one should find everything written down. I think Mr. Phillips would be the first to agree that that would be naive.

MR. CRYSTAL: Mr. Phillips, had you had any contact whatsoever--are you denying everything that has been printed?

MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, my goodness, no. Much--much of

the book--

MR. CRYSTAL: I'm talking about the particular Maurice Bishop--

MR. PHILLIPS: No. This is from the Appendix. I'm pointing out that Mr. Summers has found it convenient to use those things that suit him and not those things that don't suit him. I find that to be irresponsible journalism.

MR. SUMMERS: I think that is not so. I think also that my publisher would have been quite wrong if they not insisted that the book said on one hand or the other, and I must tell you that the people at my publishers both in the editorial and detail level went through the specific areas involving sensitive issues like this, through the Assassinations Committee's report, just as much through my material.

MR. PHILLIPS: All those people at the publishers approve that statement about the theory of accusations against me.

MR. SUMMERS: It does not say there is any accusation against you, Mr. Phillips. It refers to Morris Bishop an unidentified cover name.

MR. CRYSTAL: Okay. We are going to take a break. Dr. Robert Blakey, former Chief Counsel and Director of the

Assassinations Committee will join us, when PANORAMA continues.

[Commercial break.]

MR. CRYSTAL: Our thanks to David Attley Phillips for joining us.

Joining us now is Professor G. Robert Blakey, former Chief Counsel and Staff Director for the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

Professor, you have also been listening today in the studio. After so much input into the Committee and hearing this evidence being proposed and presented, how do you react?

PROFESSOR BLAKEY: I, frankly, agree with Tony. I think that the Maurice Bishop-Phillips aspect of this book is a very minor part, and that I did not read the final draft as indicating that Mr. Phillips was Mr. Bishop. The essential points in Tony's book are, one, there was a conspiracy in Dealey Plaza; there were two shooters. And it is, therefore, fundamental for our society to reexamine the evidence.

And I think on that, reasonable people should not disagree, if they look at the evidence.

And, second, what Tony's done, he has come to grips

with that evidence. As a matter of fact, I don't always agree with what he said; but I have to say that he is a man of integrity and good faith and honesty.

The third point which I think is very important is that we're beginning to learn the truth about what happened to President Kennedy; and that's important for historical reasons.

But far more significant, there are outstanding issues of justice in this that the Department of Justice must respond to, and Tony does call for a reopening of that investigation to finish what was not finished in '64; and I think that's very important.

The Phillips question is really a sideshow to that, but the crucial questions, there was a conspiracy, that the Department of Justice as an official agency of the United States Government must respond it. That's what is important here.

MR. CRYSTAL: But it is not a sideshow for Mr. Phillips if, in fact, that is him. It is not a sideshow for him either way.

PROFESSOR BLAKEY: I don't think Mr. Phillips was accused of anything in the book. In fact, ^{he} was considered by the Committee as a possible person for being Maurice

Bishop; and we decided ultimately that Vesciano's story on a number of aspects, including the Lee Harvey Oswald sighting was ultimately--could not be corroborated and, therefore, could not be accepted. But it was a minor part of what we did and I think in focusing on that minor part, we lose sight of there was a conspiracy, the Department of Justice must respond.

MR. CRYSTAL: Mr. Summers?

MR. SUMMERS: A small point on that. I don't think we should go on about what is, indeed, not a long part of my book. But the points I differ on the Committee with some of the points that it found that Vesciano's stuff could not be corroborated and, in fact, most of the point, since this book went to press, I've been doing further work for the London newspaper The Observer on the Bishop area, and I have been able to take the case further in terms of corroborating the fact that there was indeed a Bishop at that time.

MR. CRYSTAL: A Bishop.

MR. SUMMERS: A Bishop, who was in touch with Vesciano over a lengthy period, yes, and that he was involved with the U.S. anti-Castro affairs.

MR. CRYSTAL: Professor, you say it should be

reopened and we think back to the Congressional Committee, you think back to the Warren Commission and here we go again.

PROFESSOR BLAKEY: It's not that. It's not something that's old. It's not something that's current. This society, through its governmental agency has told itself something about how the President died, and that is demonstrably no longer true. We are living as a society a lie. We are living it in 1980. However, it may have originated in 1964.

It is terribly important for the soul of our society that we tell ourselves the truth. The President has made the point that the lack of credibility between the American people and the American government can be marked as beginning its decline with the President's assassination, President Kennedy's assassination.

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

PROFESSOR BLAKEY: If we are to restore credibility in our government, we have to go back to those points in times and begin telling ourselves the truth. That's the current issue, and that's a terribly important thing. I think Tony is trying to come to grips with that ruth. I have tried to come to grips with it. We don't agree with it,

but I think the important thing is, we are making an effort to speak the truth and understand the truth. That's one issue.

The other issue is the Justice Department simply must go out and if it turns out this way, fail in finishing this case. They didn't finish it in '64. They must finish it now, even if they fail. The American people will tolerate failure. They will not tolerate a failure to make an effort.

MR. CRYSTAL: Whi is it taking as long as it is taking, if we are talking about evidence?

PROFESSOR BLAKEY: On the face, I think it is extremely difficult for people to admit they are wrong, and government agencies respond like people. They are moving, however, slowly to take a look at our accoustic study and when they take a look at that accoustic study, they will, themselves, have opened their own pandora's box and they will have to reopen the investigation. I am morally certain of that.

MR. SUMMERS: You know, the one thing that I would hope my book would achieve would be to give that process a nudge. As you say, perhaps it is easier for me to say this than, say, Professor Blakey. The Justice Department is

really moving extremely slowly. I would say it was dragging its feet, six months after the Committee reported, and much longer after the Justice Department knew what the report contained.

The Justice Department wrote a letter of explanation about its tardiness to the former Chairman of the Committee, Congressman Stokes, in which it said, "Very sorry, we haven't got to it yet because we've been finding it difficult to get hold of the final report."

Now, you and I could have gone down the road--and I did--and bought the final report for a few dollars last July. So that was really nonsense. It's extraordinary that that letter was even passed.

MR. CRYSTAL: But is that the only reason to admit failure, Professor, is that it?

PROFESSOR BLAKEY: No--

MR. CRYSTAL: Are there other reasons?

PROFESSOR BLAKEY: When I go back again, you talk about the body politic, and you can talk about the soul of the nation--

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

PROFESSOR BLAKEY: And one must be honest with

one's self. The failure to be honest with one's self is a form of insanity. And I think the society in that sense is sick--it's not telling itself the truth. Self-revelation; honesty, is a first prerequisite.

Let me--you know, when we talk about David Phillips and Lee Harvey Oswald and a one-sighting, one of the things that really seems to be is the lack of perspective. If you want to find out what happened in Dealey Plaza, look at what happened in Dallas. The other important individual in this is not David Phillips, and it certainly is not Maurice Bishop, and it is certainly not Antonio Vesciano. It's Jack Ruby.

Ask who shot Lee Harvey Oswald 48 hours after his death. Don't ask who was associated with Lee Harvey Oswald. Ask who was associated with Jack Ruby. And when you go into that, you will find out that the mark of organized crime is in on that assassination, not the assassination of John Kennedy, but the assassination of Lee Harvey Oswald.

And that's the area that we have to look into and explain to ourselves, and it's very difficult for me to believe that we should be spending our time worrying about David Phillips and his feeling about--

MR. CRYSTAL: And now you bring up another issue.

MR. SUMMERS: I think there's some difference between us, probably, on the evidence in terms of which direction the assassination came from. I accept absolutely that there was an organized crime involvement in the assassination and, indeed, in the murder of Oswald which silenced him and he could no longer be questioned.

I, however, think that from my work, at any rate, and I haven't had the privilege of seeing some of the documentation that Dr. Blakey saw and privileged; but it is my impression that at this stage, anyway, we can't ignore the indications, some of the harder evidence that there was some contact between the elements of U.S. Intelligence and Lee Oswald during his adult life.

MR. CRYSTAL: Mm-hmm.

MR. SUMMERS: But said, I think the bottom line is, as Dr. Blakey has said, once you have two gunmen in Dealey Plaza, that if, in our society we still think it's right--and I think that we do--40 years on to pursue Nazi war criminals, alleged Nazi war criminals in Latin America, if we think it's right, that if one of us here is killed next week and in five years time, ten years time, there is new evidence which suggests that there's been a miscarriage of justice, hard evidence, then the District Attorney has

to reopen the case, let the chips fall where they may. There is no statute of limitations on murder.

MR. CRYSTAL: Final comment, Professor.

PROFESSOR BLAKEY: Let me say that it is terribly important that we begin rethinking this. And books like Tony's written now and the truth is that there are other books that will be written because things haven't been looked into. I've written one of my own.

People have to think about this; and if the government won't do it, well, maybe it will take a book like what Tony has written or the book that I'll be putting out in the fall to make through the agencies of the American people to do what they ought to do.

MR. CRYSTAL: The book is called "Conspiracy." It is by Anthony Summers, and it presents what may be the beginning, this beginning of a lot of talk--new talk.

Gentlemen, thank you very much for joining us on PANORAMA. Thank you.
