The AIB was wildly irresponsible, misrepresenting and making exciting things up to titilate and Kinsella personally prevented the lecture bureau for which she then worked, to which I'd veeb sent by Dick Gregory, from booking me, claiming Mark Lane had an exclusiv contract with them, which was false.

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Five still probing the JFK killing

Activists are baffled by the lack of outrage among today's students.

By Michael Matza
Inquirer Staff Writer

To their friends back in the fall of 1972, they were the Grassy Knoll Debating Society, five armchair critics of the Warren Commission, who believed in a need for a re-investigation of the John F. Kennedy assassination and were obsessed by the question, "Who shot JFK?"

To the public who came to know them through their persistent and powerful skepticism, they were the Assassination Information Bureau — sober, public-interest activists in a field that included kooks. Through their moving college lectures and seminal conference on "The Politics of Conspiracy" — which drew 3,000 people to Boston University in 1974 for the first public showing of a clear copy of the famous Zapruder film of the shooting — the AIBers shook society's confidence in the Warren Commission's "lone gunman" theory of the assassination. They set the stage for the creation in 1976 of the U.S. House Select Committee on Assassinations, the most expensive congressional investigation in history.

Now, a decade and a half after their barnstorming touched a nerve in the collective psyche, the former AIBers have been on the road again. Not as the band of activists they were in the early '70s, but as independents, talking to students who weren't even born in November 1963, when America changed in ways that are still being felt.

What began as a slide-and-film presentation by Boston journalist Bob Katz, who rented church basements at his own expense, publicized the gatherings on the fly and sought a dollar a head at the door, snowballed into a growing movement of surprising respectability.

In 1977, as the House Select Committee's work got under way, the AIB abandoned the ramshackle Cambridge, Mass., apartment that served as its national headquarters for an office near Du Pont Circle in Washington. Among celebrities at the kickoff news conference at the National Press Club was author Norman Mailer. Other supporters came to include former U.S. Rep. Allard Lowenstein (D., N.Y.), a Kennedy adviser.

In 1979, after Congress concluded there had been a "probable" conspiracy to kill the Kennedy, the AIB quietly closed up shop. Today, when pollsters find that 80 percent of Americans believe there was a conspiracy to kill Kennedy, the AIB can be cited as the first citizens group to effectively make that claim.

"There is no doubt in my mind that [the AIB] led to [the formation] of the Select Committee," said Kathy Kinsella, senior vice president of the Kamber Group, a Washington communications-consulting firm. As a lecture agent, Kinsella represented the AIB when it was the most heavily booked in the country for college lectures, eventually collecting $750 a lecture, and making more than 150

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The NBC reporter who broke the news to a stunned nation. Page 8-E.

Still probing the killing of JFK

BUREAU, from 1-E
appearances in 1973 alone.

What several AIBers found as they revisited college campuses last week was a generation of students that seemed almost outrage-proof — ready to believe in the existence of a conspiracy but emotionally divorced from the consequences of that belief.

"It's not because they have a blind faith in the virtues of the establishment," said Katz, 41, who spoke last week at Iowa State University. "It's because they have such comprehensive cynicism about government that it undermines any motivation to do anything about anything." Katz, who heads a lecture agency that represents investigative reporter Seymour Hersh and Harvard Professor Stephen Jay Gould, among others, said he was elated to see his audience in Iowa pick up his conclusions about the case so readily — and deflated to find they didn't ask, "What can we do about it?," as audiences had done 15 years ago.

"That is the single most outstanding difference," Katz said. "People are no longer bamboozled by official pronouncements, [but] neither are they distressed by the conclusions an unsolved murder of the president ought to excite. ... The questions I get asked [today] are consistent with the questions one would get asked after giving an interesting history lesson. Interesting, informed questions — but not animated by a desire to mobilize or act."

The presidential car speeds away, seconds after the shooting.

Carl Oglesby, 53, a former national president of Students for a Democratic Society and author of *The Yankee and Cowboy War*, was the AIB's theoretician and resident big thinker. From 1971 to 1975, he taught political science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and lectured for the AIB. He returned Friday to Cambridge from a tour that included stops at the University of Pittsburgh and Long Island University.

"It's middle-of-the-road discourse now to talk about the loss of faith in America," Oglesby said. "Fifteen years ago it was pretty radical to talk like that." The loss of innocence that accompanied the assassination, he speculated, is partly responsible for the change.

"The most interesting reaction [this time around] was from the [reporters] who came to interview me," Oglesby said. "They didn't seem more educated, but they seemed more sympathetic. In the '70s, the media would look at you with one eye shut and treat you like some kind of crank." A generation of reporters "not involved in the defense of the lone-assassin theory" may be "freer to look at it critically," he said.

Harvey Yazijian, 40, co-author of *The Cola Wars*, a book about the geopolitical influence of Coca-Cola and Pepsi, is a veteran of the AIB. He recently gave several lectures on the assassination, including one scheduled for yesterday at the University of Pittsburgh.

"We grew up with Vietnam and the Kennedy assassination and Watergate and realized that parts of the government have deceived us, that there have been illegal acts committed, sometimes in the name of the flag, and we developed a lot of cynicism," Yazijian said, adding that when the AIB toured in the '70s, Watergate was front-page news. In the absence of that powerful, contemporary symbol of public corruption, the message plays a little flatter this time, he said.