

CBS Studies JFK Assassination

New York City. SKEPTICS of the Warren Commission's findings of the one-bullet, one-assassin theories in the John Kennedy assassination used to have an ally in CBS correspondent Dan Rather.

After six months investigation and a \$500,000 investment of CBS money, Rather is surprised that he now subscribes to the Warren Commission findings on the details.

But he believes that there are still questions concerning a conspiracy which must be answered.

CBS will explore the JFK assassination in two parts Tuesday and Wednesday from 9 to 10 p.m., and in December another two one-hour telecasts will study the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King and the attempted assassination of George Wallace.

Much Interest

RATHER initiated the project, "The American Assassin," led the research teams and will host the shows.

Interest, of course, still is high in all four cases as evidenced by recent seminars at UNO.

"In my appearances on college campuses," said Rather in his CBS office last week, "I'm somewhat surprised that the two most-asked series of questions deal with Watergate and the John Kennedy assassination."

Rather hosted a 1967 four-part CBS series on the Kennedy killing and has had questions ever since.

"At the end of that series, I said I was not satisfied with what the Warren Commission had published, especially concerning FBI and CIA relations with Lee Harvey Oswald.

"In 1967 people were saying to us, 'Put up, or shut up.' This was all before Watergate and government misleading statements on Vietnam, when more people accepted things at face value, and we were in no position to put up.

"But in 1975, we are able to demonstrate the FBI engaged in a long, extensive coverup, though I want to make it clear we have not one scintilla of evi-

Peter Citron



dence of FBI or CIA complicity in the crime itself.

"The FBI told some untruths, as opposed to lies, to the Warren Commission. It said it had no reason to believe Oswald was capable of violence, and now we find he dropped a threatening note at the Dallas FBI office before the assassination."

Agent's Story

CBS interviewed a former FBI agent who says he was in the New Orleans FBI office Nov. 17, 1963, five days before JFK was shot, and he saw a teletype message from the Washington FBI bureau with information on a possible assassination attempt in Dallas.

"I spent 4½ months doing legwork on this story all over the country," said Rather, "and I found a man I'd been looking for for five years, a gunman who says Oswald came to him accompanied by a man of Latin extraction before the assassination trying to find four high-power rifles with telescopic sights.

"I also found a man who could corroborate that. And if the story is true, why did Oswald want four rifles? Who was the man with him? And more important, if I could find this guy, why couldn't the Warren Commission?"

Surprised

WHAT changed Rather's mind on the events of the shooting?

"At a considerable five-figure cost" CBS bought the rights to the controversial Zapruder film of the killing and moved the project into six figures by hiring an analyst.

Though bootlegged copies of the Zapruder film are around,

CBS felt only the original could be properly studied with computer data.

"I believed they might be able to show conclusively that the single bullet theory was impossible," said Rather, alluding to skepticism that the same bullet could have struck Kennedy and passenger John Connally.

"To my surprise," added Rather, "though our study could not show whether one bullet hit both men, it showed it was possible. And the Warren Commission never examined the Zapruder film original."

'From Back'

THEN CBS hired a forensic pathologist and gained access to original autopsy photographs and X-rays on President Kennedy.

"I thought the pathologist might very well be able to show some reason that a shot came from someplace but from the rear.

"But he'll stake his reputation that both entry holes were from the back, which supports the theory of only one gunman, probably Oswald.

"So if we perform any service in this series, it will be to say, 'Look, here are some questions about which there no longer is any reasonable doubt.

"But here are some about which there are some doubts, mostly concerning possible conspiracy."

Connection?

PARTS 3 and 4 in December will delve into other assassinations and attempts and whether there are any connections.

"The answer," said Rather, "is that there may well be, and we need to know more.

"Unfortunately, we did not have the power of subpoena, but there are a lot of questions that can be and should be answered.

"The CIA knew more about Oswald than they gave the Warren Commission. And it amazes me that people who knowingly and willfully destroyed evidence are still on the FBI payroll.

"But it will take someone with the power of subpoena to finally get the answers."