

O'Neill Says FBI Coached Witness for Warren Panel

By JOSEPH VOLZ

Washington (News Bureau) — House Speaker Thomas (Tip) O'Neill (D-Mass.) has charged that the FBI asked at least one witness testifying before the Warren Commission investigation into President Kennedy's assassination not to tell his whole story.

O'Neill, a persistent critic of the commission, told reporters yesterday that several witnesses, whom he did not identify, failed to give "a full and honest description" and instead, reported the "will of the FBI."

O'Neill's attack on the FBI, which conducted 25,000 interviews for the commission, came after reporters asked O'Neill if he still had confidence in the current investigation by the House Assassinations Committee. The panel has been criticized for failure to uncover any significant leads after six months of investigation.

Panel Found No Conspiracy

The Warren Commission, headed by the late Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone and was not part of any conspiracy to kill Kennedy.

Although O'Neill did not specify the witnesses or testimony, a reliable source said O'Neill referred to a witness he had talked to when the Warren Commission report was released in 1964.

The source said: "When this fellow (the witness) told the (FBI) what he was going to say, they said, 'Well don't say all that, it will just confuse things.'"

The House voted last week to continue for two years the Assassinations Committee investigation into the deaths of both Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The panel, torn by internal bickering that resulted in the resignations of Chairman Henry Gonzalez (D-Texas) and the chief counsel, Richard Sprague, must now seek approval of an annual \$2.7 million budget.

O'Neill also said that committee members had described leads, which he believed, were worth pursuing. But he said that those leads did not include any testimony from a flamboyant Dutch TV reporter, Willem Oltmans, who told the committee last week that a conspiracy, including not only Oswald, but also oil millionaire H.L. Hunt, Cuban Bay of Pigs veterans, the CIA and FBI and Oswald's killer, Jack Ruby, planned Kennedy's murder.

Oltmans said his testimony was based on a recent interview with a mentally disturbed Russian emigre, George de Mohrenschildt, who was a "close friend" of Oswald's in Dallas. de Mohrenschildt committed suicide last Tuesday in Palm Beach, Fla., as committee investigators sought to interview him.



Rep. Thomas (Tip) O'Neill
He's critical of FBI.