

Another JFK assassination theory

ONE OF the main characteristics of conspiracy theories is they can't be conclusively refuted.

Their proponents are always prepared for tactical retreats: Knock down one of their arguments, and they simply withdraw to a fallback position. Then, when least expected, they feint in a different direction to keep you off your balance.

The public may grow weary of the spectacle, but the theory is never stamped out for good.

So it's no surprise that the assassination of John F. Kennedy is back in the news. An unemployed

Las Vegas Police Department only weeks before the JFK assassination, which he took part in under orders from the Central Intelligence Agency.

How does White know all this? Well, he uncovered his father's secret diary, where the details of the plot were recounted. Unfortunately, he no longer has the diary, which he suggests was stolen from him by the FBI.

Notice the ingredients common to conspiracy theories. Essential to the genre are a few facts which, in principle, ought to be verifiable. For example, it may turn out that White is correct in asserting that his father was among the Marines who sailed for duty in Japan along with Oswald back in 1957. An ordinary person might ask: So what does that prove? To conspiracy theorists, however, there is no such thing as a coincidence; everything is connected. Their motto is: "It is no accident that ..."

THE WHITE yarn also has a second element critical to conspiracy theories: "Facts" that cannot be disproved. Most obvious in this regard is the missing diary. It is suspiciously convenient for White to have lost possession of the all-important diary. But this circumstance would never faze a conspiracy theorist. After all, any group of plotters vicious enough to murder the president of the United States, and powerful enough to keep their scheme from being exposed for nearly 30 years, would find it child's play to pilfer the incriminating evidence from an inexperienced young man like White.

Needless to say, conspiracy theorists would place no value at all on the CIA's official denial that Roscoe White ever worked for "the company." But how about FBI officials? They claim they heard of White's story in 1988 and determined that "this information is not credible." Well, they would! Even if the FBI was not involved in the original plot with the CIA it surely doesn't want the scheme to be unraveled at this late date. That would be tantamount to admitting the FBI botched the most impor-

Ah, the perfect conspiracy theory, one that is impenetrable to logical argument: The elements that can be proved are unimportant, while the important elements cannot be disproved.

All that's needed now is an opportunity to cash in on the tale. Sure enough, a group of Midland investors has spent more than \$100,000 over the past 18 months on salary and travel expenses for White, who has been going around trying to interest people from the publishing and movie industries.

In this last respect, if in no other, he seems to know what he's doing. He claims to have contacted Oliver Stone, one of the hottest filmmakers in Hollywood ("Platoon," "Born on the Fourth of July"), who was quoted last Decem-

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ber as stating: "We have a fascist security state running this country ... Orwell did happen. But it's so subtle that no one noticed."

JUST THE right tinge of paranoia, wouldn't you say? Add to that his hallucinogenic world view, as enunciated in an interview in *Vanity Fair* early last year: "As we speak, you know what's going on in the whole world? ... It's like one acid trip to the millionth degree ... It's all a war. It's raging. This woman putting lipstick on at the next table — where does that lipstick come from? I mean what got mashed up to make that lipstick? ... There's a war, a psychological war all around us."

Phew! Stone's disgust at America's institutions is legendary, but the part about the ominous lipstick clinches it for me: He seems just the man to put Ricky Don White's



oil equipment salesman from Midland, Texas, has come up with a new angle — what's this, the 2,317th variation? Speaking before the inevitably packed news conference in Dallas, Ricky Don White, 29, revealed that his father shot the president on that fateful Nov. 22, 1963.

ACCORDING TO to White, his late father, Roscoe White, who died in 1971 from burns suffered in a fire, had served in the Marines with Lee Harvey Oswald. He joined the Dal-

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