

Interview with JACK ANDERSON by Peter Jennings on "A.M. America", ABC-TV
March 12, 1975

J (Asks A to summarize)

A: Well, we found out in 1971 that a decade earlier 6 attempts had been made on Castro's life. I was able to find out who was involved, the name of the agents, the times, the details--to pin them all down very carefully, and was able to write in Jan of 1971 that an attempt had been made to knock off Castro just before the Bay of Pigs operation as part of the Bay of Pigs invasion scheme. The idea was to get rid of the charismatic Castro before the CIA invasion force landed. They were afraid he'd rally the troops. They wanted--they thought if he were killed the troops would be demoralized and disorganized.

J: One of Kennedy's aides, Mr. Wolinsky, says that Kennedy put a stop to this. Is there any evidence to the contrary, that Robert Kennedy was in fact involved in either the ^{planning} attempts or the supervision of the attempts on Castro?

A: I can't answer either question, I can only speculate. I know that the attempts took place. I have dates; I have details. There's just no question about it. I've talked to everybody involved. There were 6 attempts after the first one failed, five additional attempts. All these 5 occurred after the Bay of Pigs, and therefore after Robert Kennedy was placed in charge of the CIA. You remember his brother, President Kennedy, was so angry at the CIA over the Bay of Pigs operation that he declared privately that he wanted to break the CIA into a thousand ~~pieces~~ splinters. Instead of doing that he put his brother Robert in charge. Now 5 of these assassination attempts occurred after Bobby Kennedy took over. From what I know of the CIA I think that they would have been very foolhardy to have gone behind the backs of the Kennedys, after the Bay of Pigs operation, and tried to knock off Fidel Castro without advising Robert Kennedy. I have to believe, or I have to speculate that he knew about it.

J: Also involved in this, at least in the speculation, is attempts on Trujillo of the Dominican Republic and Duvalier of Haiti. Do these ~~in any way~~ take away from the single directness of trying to get away from Castro? Does it appear to you in any way that this was part of an overall plan to eliminate leaders in Latin America who were running contrary to American policy?

A: As nearly as I know the facts the Castro thing was an independent move. This was the first plan and it was tied completely to the Bay of Pigs invasion scheme. After the Bay of Pigs failed, then it was decided, the decision was made inside the CIA to continue to try to assassinate Castro. Whether that led to--if you're going to assassinate Castro there's some other people just as bad so let's assassinate them too, I just don't know. I don't have any of the details about the Trujillo assassination plot. I have been told by confident sources that the CIA was behind that assassination plot, but I've been unable to _____, and I don't have any other details.

J: Do I recall that in one of the columns you wrote in 1971 you said that the CIA and the Mafia had worked together in the past, that this was not to be unexpected?

A: I don't recall writing that except in the CIA case. What the CIA obviously wanted to do was entrust the assassination to someone who could be disowned. The Mafia was a logical choice. The Mafia had a feud with Castro. It was well known that Castro had thrown the Mafia out of Havana, thrown them out of their very profitable casinos, so if it could ever be traced back to John Roselli, the man whom the CIA chose to conduct these assassination attempts, if it was ever traced back

to him the CIA could disown him, and said, eh, he's Mafia.

J: The last attempt on Castro, according to you and to other sources who've written the story, preceded the the death of President John F. Kennedy by only 9 months. It is inevitable, I suppose, that some may see a correlation between the two. Do you?

A: Well, it's certainly possible, but again, I don't have any facts. I can only speculate. The last attempt, by a team of marksmen who made it to a rooftop in Havana, where they were caught with high powered rifles, that occurred in late Feb-early March of 1963. 9 months later John F. Kennedy was killed by Lee Harvey Oswald who had been active in the Castro movement and before going to Dallas had paid a mysterious call upon--at the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City.

J: Did you ever have any indication from the Kennedy family that that attempt on ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Castro and the death of John F. Kennedy had any relationship?

A: No. I spoke to Ted Kennedy about it; he said that he had never heard his brothers ever speak of any assassination attempts on Castro. But a source close to the Kennedys told me that immediately after Pres.

Kennedy's assassination, his brother Robert seemed plagued with grief. Now that would be expected. But he was always a man who could handle grief, who could handle crisis, and in this case he seemed to be out of control. They say he went into seclusion for a few---days, semi-seclusion in that his closest friends couldn't reach him. Now these friends told me they thought but didn't know that Robert Kennedy may have been plagued by this suspicion that this attempt on Castro's life could have backfired against his own brother.

J: Have you ever had any indication or have your really impeccable sources ever had any indication that any member of the Kennedy family has had doubts about the Warren Commission?

A: I have not. The Warren Commission of course did not investigate the assassination; that was done by the FBI. The FBI, I think, investigated it with a vacuum cleaner, they just sucked up all the information that was available, and what happens in a case like that, something as traumatic as that, is that well meaning people, reputable people, come to the FBI with conflicting stories. People, quite responsible people, begin to think--they're so eager to cooperate, so eager to bring justice, to get to the bottom of the assassination, that they volunteer to the FBI things that they think they saw, things that they think they heard, pieces and tidbits, jigsaw pieces of evidence that they believe that they know about.

J: Tough job for the FBI and for reporters.

A: The FBI gets all these conflicting reports from well meaning and responsible people. I would say that if you took the FBI's evidence, all the evidence that was gathered in the assassination--you took it all and you wanted to isolate any block of it, you could prove just about anything you wished to.

J: That seems to be what's happening in the country to some extent today with certainly various groups that--the Kennedy assassination continues to have a momentum all of its own, doesn't it?

A: They might be useful to try to get to the bottom of it. I have a feeling we never will. I have a feeling that the American people who like clean cut, clear cut answers to everything are never gonna get one. They're never gonna be absolutely sure just what did happen on that dreadful day in Dallas.

J: Jack Anderson, thank you very much for coming.

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