

Doubts About Assassinations Just Won't Go Away

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Washington — During the violent 1960s, assassins gunned down President John F. Kennedy, his brother Robert and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Again, in 1972, a gunman shot Alabama's Gov. George Wallace, putting him in a wheelchair for life.

The shootings have raised questions that cannot be dispelled. Millions of Americans simply are not satisfied with the official verdicts. Investigators keep uncovering new facts, offering fresh theories and suggesting possible conspiracies.

Hoped to 'Settle the Dust'

Now, Sen. Richard Schweiker (R-Pa.) has produced circumstantial evidence that President Kennedy may have been murdered in retaliation for attempts on Cuban Premier Fidel Castro's life. The senator has submitted his findings to the Senate Intelligence Committee for further investigation.

Coretta King, widow of the martyred civil rights leader, suspects that her husband also was the victim of a conspiracy. She has asked the Congressional

Black Caucus to help reopen the investigation.

But in the back rooms of Congress, there is a strange reluctance to inquire too deeply into the Kennedy and King assassinations.

The late J. Edgar Hoover indicated that higher authorities wanted the FBI to "convince the public" that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, killed Kennedy.

The Warren Commission, headed by the late, respected Chief Justice Earl Warren, was appointed to review and assess the Kennedy assassination. As part of its investigation, the commission specifically requested information on political assassination attempts in other countries. Yet the Central Intelligence Agency, incredibly, failed to mention that its operatives had been trying to knock off Castro.

On Sept. 7, 1963, the angry Castro told the Associated Press that he knew about the attempts and warned that two could play the same game. Later in the month, Oswald turned up in Mexico City, where he visited both the Cuban and Soviet consulates. It is known that he spoke to a Soviet KGB agent.

A Mexican informant named Sylvia Duran later informed the U.S. Embassy that she had seen Oswald inside the Cuban Consulate on September 28. She said she overheard the Cubans talk to

Oswald about assassinating someone and saw them pass money to Oswald.

President Kennedy was murdered on Nov. 22. The next day, CIA chief John McConne informed the new President, Lyndon Johnson, about Oswald's activities in Mexico City. The astonishing account of the Mexican informant was subsequently reported to the President.

It was a story, however, that she repudiated under questioning by Mexican police.

But, years afterward, President Johnson told intimates he was convinced that the CIA's attempts on Castro's life had backfired and that Castro was behind the Kennedy assassination.

Nevertheless, no federal agency has bothered to review the evidence and reconsider the Warren Commission's verdict. Schweiker's investigation has merely raised more questions.

Chairman Cites Other Priorities

He has passed the buck to the Senate Intelligence Committee, which has the jurisdiction. Chairman Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) assured us that he did not intend to let Schweiker's report "gather dust." But he said the committee had other priorities that would occupy it for the rest of the year.

On the House side, two unheralded congressional conferees, Thomas Downing (D-Va.) and Henry Gonzalez (D-Tex.) are press-

ing for a full investigation of political assassinations. Downing wants to concentrate on the John F. Kennedy murder. Gonzalez would widen the probe to include the other assassinations. And the Black Caucus will also insist upon investigating the shooting of the Rev. King.

Conservative Is Convinced

Downing doesn't claim to know who was behind the conspiracy. But he recently received 1,000 CIA documents on the Kennedy assassination. He told us that the information "clearly indicates that the CIA never believed that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, planned and carried out the brutal murder of our President."

Downing and Gonzalez must get past the powerful House Rules Committee before they can get authorization for a special investigation. Chairman Ray Madden (D-Ind.) told us the authorization would not get past his committee this year.

He could be overruled by House Speaker Carl Albert (D-Okla.), who privately favors an investigation. But Albert, who is retiring, is not expected to take any action.

So, like the Senate, the House will probably put off any investigation of the assassinations until next year. The questions, meanwhile, won't go away.