

CBS may ask new probe of JFK assassination

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CBS news may urge that Congress reopen its investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy following a six-month-long investigation by that network's "CBS Reports" staff.

Dan Rather, who headed the 24-man, \$500,000 investigation, told this newspaper that a strong official statement was being discussed with top CBS news executives.

Two JFK programs, first and second in a four-part "CBS Reports" series: "The American Assassins" (which will also include material about Robert F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Gov. George C. Wallace in the third and fourth parts) will air Tuesday and Wednesday Nov. 24 and 25 (10-11 p.m., check local listings).

According to Mr. Rather: "We know that both the FBI and the CIA were involved in cover-ups, although I want to emphasize that there is no evidence to support an accusation that they were directly or even indirectly involved in the actual killing [of President Kennedy]. What we want to know is why they deliberately and, possibly illegally, told untruths to the Warren Commission."

Although discussions between the "CBS Reports" staff and top-level CBS news executives were still going on concerning the advisability of calling for a reopening of the investigation, Mr. Rather himself says: "I am personally convinced that a House and Senate blue-ribbon select joint committee should reopen the case. There are certain questions that must be asked — such as what in fact did the CIA and the FBI do and not do? And these questions can only be asked by a Congressional committee with subpoena powers."

Richard Salant, president of CBS news, had "absolutely no comment at this time" on whether or not CBS will request a re-opening of the investigation.

Mr. Rather, with executive producer Leslie Midgley, also was involved in the CBS 1967 four-hour assassination investigation report which came to the conclusion that, based upon available evidence, the Warren Commission reached the most reasonable conclusion.

Now he says: "At that time, although we raised questions about CIA and FBI involvement, they were only hunches: we didn't have any evidence. Now, in 1975 we have proof positive that both the FBI and CIA knew more about Oswald than they ever told the Warren Commission."

For the two assassination shows, according to Mr. Rather, CBS news has obtained exclusive rights from the Abraham Zapruder family to show the original film of the assassination for the first time on network television. In addition, the CBS report includes a scientific analysis of that film, independent forensic pathologists' reports on the autopsy xrays and photographs, and a current interview with Mr. Oswald's mother who, Mr. Rather feels, "could conceivably turn out to be the Martha Mitchell of this case."

According to Mr. Rather, such things as the destruction by the FBI of an Oswald note in Dallas and the CIA connection with Mafia figures about the murder of Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro also are investigated.

"We found a man who says that he talked to Oswald a short time before the JFK assassination. Oswald in the company of a 'Latin person' was arranging to buy a number of high-powered rifles and was willing to pay big money for them. He even put us on to somebody who corroborated the story," Mr. Rather said. "If this story is true it raises the question of who was the person with Oswald, where was he going to get the money, why was he interested in a number of rifles? If CBS found this story and corroborated it to a degree, why didn't the FBI?"

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