

# CUE TELEVISION

## CBS Looks at The Assassins

By MIMI MEAD

Did Lee Harvey Oswald act alone? Watergate and the recent CIA investigations have re-opened this question and on Tuesday and Wednesday November 25 and 26 at 10 p.m., CBS News will re-examine the assassination of John F. Kennedy in the first two of a four-part series called *The American Assassins*, with Dan Rather reporting. It promises to be an unusual and controversial series.

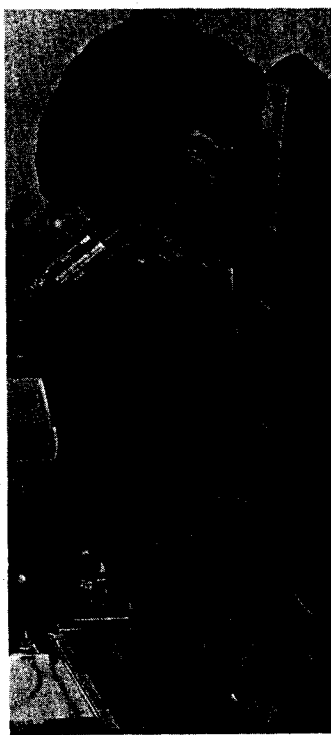
The first program will show, for the first time ever on network TV, the original Zapruder film of the actual assassination. (*Life* magazine bought the home movie from Abraham Zapruder in 1963, and only bootleg copies of varying fuzziness have been seen on TV before. When *Life* folded, Time, Inc. sold the film back for \$1.00 to the Zapruder family, which has given CBS exclusive permission to air it.)

The program also contains a film clip of President Lyndon Johnson expressing his opinion that Oswald did not act alone. Several CIA and FBI agents are heard from, as well as other experts. Two later programs covering the killings of Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, and the attempt on George Wallace's life, will be aired in December.

Explaining why CBS is dealing with the assassinations now, Leslie Midgley, executive producer of the series, declares: "In 1964 we did a two-hour show when the Warren Report came out, and in 1967 we did four one-hour shows on it. Now remember, the X-rays and photographs of the autopsy were sealed by the Kennedy family. The fact is that the Warren Commission never got to see them. But our conclusion in 1967 was that, although we were very disappointed with the Warren Report, it was probably the best we were going to get."

There were those who disagreed with CBS's 1967 conclusions, among them Professor Josiah Thompson of Haverford College, author of *Six Seconds in Dallas*, who appears in the present show. But as Midgley notes, "The whole thing died down until Watergate came up with all that secret stuff and the CIA murders and all. Nobody believes what the Government says any more, so last spring we decided to take another look."

What CBS discovered was that the Jack Kennedy case has become much



Dan Rather examines evidence

more interesting to the nation. "The subject has become the hottest thing on the college lecture circuit," says Midgley. "Mark Lane [a noted Warren Report critic] is making a fortune."

The time limit on the sealed autopsy films finally ran out, so CBS, after getting permission from the Kennedy family, asked forensic pathologist Cyril Wecht to examine them for the program. Wecht maintains that there was more than one gunman. "There's no question that the autopsy was badly bungled," says Midgley. "It was done by the wrong people at the wrong time."

According to Midgley, the first segment of the series essentially looks at the questions of whether Oswald shot Kennedy and if he was the only gunman. The second hour deals with "what did the CIA know and do, what did the FBI know and do, and what was the Cuban connection?" Last summer's Congressional hearings on the intelligence services revealed, among other things, that Oswald wrote a note to the Dallas FBI office several days before the murder, saying that if they did not stop bothering his wife he would blow up their headquarters and

the police station; the FBI, by the way, has the note. On the program interviews a one-time FBI informant says Oswald was also an informant.

"The FBI behaved very badly and there's no question about it," he believes. "They've admitted they received no obstruction in our investigation, essentially. Of course, we don't have subpoena power, the FBI and the CIA aren't going to go too willingly. But Dan Rather went to see Bill Colby, who was a friend, and of course he laid out the CIA's version of Oswald. Now, the critics are not going to believe what Colby says, so to balance that, we also interviewed Victor Marc, a former CIA agent and an agent of the FBI."

FBI head Clarence Kelley told CBS to interview some people who are still in the FBI, and Midgley says, "The picture of the FBI that we got is not good and Kelly knows his position is difficult, but after talking to J. Edgar Hoover, he was in Kansas City at the time."

Lyndon Johnson's remarks were made in 1969 during a film interview with Walter Cronkite. Johnson later said he did not want to be interviewed. However, when two of his biographers recently wrote articles saying he believed in a conspiracy, CBS decided to air the film.

Midgley declares that "most people in the United States don't believe the Warren Report. I want to believe it. Even when they want to find it in the reports. People who write papers and magazines want to know that there was a vast conspiracy linking all the assassinated people even though they're not connected with the political activities of Richard Nixon, but that's an important question. At the end of the series we'll try to come to a conclusion." Midgley won't say that conclusion will be, but it's clear that he would not be airing this program if he accepted the Warren Report unquestioningly.

One person who would not be interviewed is Marjorie Kennedy. Her present husband is adamant about her privacy. She did lunch with the show's producers, but, says Midgley, "she will not answer any questions on the record. She's just a Texas wife. She works in a dress shop where the kids go to school, but her position is that she'd kind of let it out if there was someone else on the onus off their father."