

'RFK Must Die' Raises Disturbing Possibility of Another Conspiracy

By HARRIET VAN HORNE

NEW YORK — Americans are naturally curious and suspicious. We're cynical about people in high places. We dispute the judgments of the Supreme Court and question the findings of government commissions. And each time we're horrified by some foul deed—such as an assassination—we instantly cry "Conspiracy." And on this last point, if in nothing else, the judgments of history may ultimately be on our side.

Who killed President Kennedy? A respectable number—including lawyers, detectives and psychologists—believe a second assassin, perhaps unknown to Lee Harvey Oswald, fired the fatal bullet. Dogged investigators are still working on the case at their own expense, devoting years to the task of deciphering the Warren Report.

Though the biographer of James Earl Ray, veteran journalist William Bradford Huie, discounts the conspiracy theory in Martin Luther King's death, a great many Americans stoutly differ. How could a low IQ drifter and ex-con have plotted such a crime? What about the plastic surgery, the sudden riches, Ray's clever hideouts in Canada and England? There had to be a "mastermind."

Mastermind Theory Returns

NOW THE mastermind theory has bobbed up in a re-examination of the Robert Kennedy murder. Sirhan Sirhan, according to this theory, was in a trance at the time of the shooting. A hypnotic trance in which he was "programmed" to shoot Sen. Kennedy at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles and about him. That he later had no memory of the incident is regarded as highly significant.

One's first reaction to this theory is "reposterous!" After all, the psychiatrist who testified at Sirhan's trial judged him to be mentally ill. "Paranoid schizophrenia, a borderline psychotic."

But a persistent, cool-headed young man named Robert Blair Kaiser firmly believes that Sirhan was not solely responsible for his terrible deed. For some time prior to the shooting Sirhan had steeped himself in the occult. The psychiatrist who first hypnotized him in his cell after the shooting was astonished when the Arab youth "went under" in a few seconds. Only a person long accustomed to hypnosis responds so quickly.

In a meticulously documented 630-page book, "R. F. K. Must Die," Bob Kaiser sets forth his view that Sirhan had been promised money, had been hypnotized and told that his mission was to kill Sen. Kennedy. Key evidence in Kaiser's theory is Sirhan's notebook, rambling, chaotic, much of it in "automatic writing." Throughout the wildly repetitive pages

(reproduced down to the last squiggle in the book's appendix) there appear the words "R. F. K. must die . . . R. F. K. must be killed . . . assassinated."

And wherever the name Kennedy appears in the notebook—obviously written in a dissociated state, there also appears the phrase "Please pay to the order of Sirhan."

Girl in A Polka Dot Dress

IN PREPARING this massive book, Bob Kaiser read 6,000 pages of FBI and Los Angeles police reports. He does not have a high opinion of either agency. He is convinced that there was "a girl in a polka dot dress," as two witnesses claimed there was. Because the police couldn't find her, they persuaded the witnesses that they had been mistaken.

Kaiser probably got to know Sirhan better than anyone else involved in the case. He joined the investigative team, spent hundreds of hours in his cell with a tape recorder, got to know his mother and brothers. "Soon the attorneys began to need me," he writes, "for in my total curiosity I soon knew more about the case than they did themselves."

"R. F. K. Must Die" has greatly disturbed the Sirhan family. From his San Quentin cell, the assassin has attempted to institute a \$2 million lawsuit to prevent its publication.

Is Kaiser A Crackpot?

INEVITABLY, the charge will be made that Bob Kaiser is deluded, a crackpot wedded to a fantasy. His background belies such a charge. He studied for the priesthood at a Jesuit college. He was Time magazine's bureau chief in Rome for 10 years. His book on Pope John, "Pope, Canon and World," was a best seller in England. He is a direct, outgoing young man with the shrewd, quick eyes of an Indian scout. (Indeed, he says he has a smidgen of Indian blood—"on the Canadian side." And he once lived for six months with the Navajos.)

Kaiser's trance theory is further buttressed by the concurrence of Dr. Bernard Diamond, the psychiatrist who spent many hours studying Sirhan in his trance state. Dr. Diamond is a full professor in both the School of Law and the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California. It was he who discovered that "Sirhan could easily be programmed to climb his cell bars or sing an Arab tune."

Naturally, there will be millions of people who reject Bob Kaiser's thesis in toto. But before rejecting it, one ought to read "R. F. K. Must Die." It is fascinating and deeply disturbing.