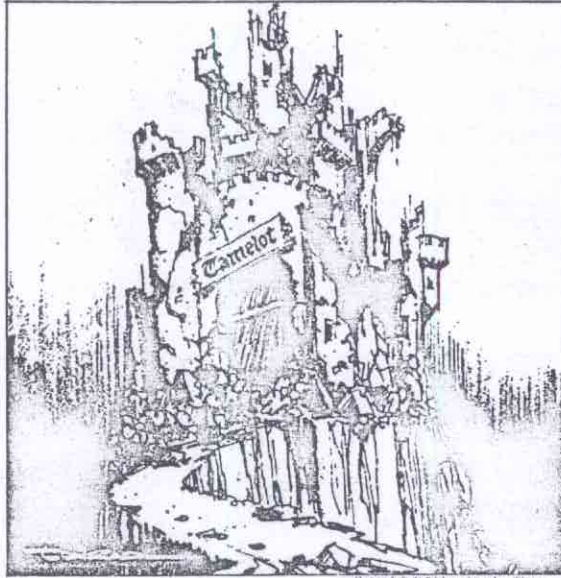




Meyer: A call from the President



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Angleton: A search in the garden

**KENNEDYS:
More Pillow Talk**

Another tale of extracurricular romance by John F. Kennedy emerged last week, this one involving not a West Coast party girl but a Washington socialite. As told in the tabloid weekly National Enquirer, JFK carried on an intermittent two-year affair with Mary Pinchot Meyer, a divorcee in her early 40s, and once smoked marijuana with her in a White House bedroom. When Mrs. Meyer was murdered a year after Kennedy's assassination, a diary she had kept about their relationship was allegedly destroyed by James Angleton, a family friend who was also chief of counterintelligence of the CIA.

Mary Meyer—attractive, vivacious and artistic—was a fixture in the McLean, Va., and Georgetown social set when Kennedy took office. She was the niece of Gifford Pinchot, the noted conservationist, and sister of Toni Bradlee, who was married to Benjamin C. Bradlee, then chief of NEWSWEEK's Washington bureau and a good friend of JFK's.* Her marriage to Cord Meyer Jr., a fast-rising CIA officer (he is now station chief in London), had broken up in the late 1950s, and Mary had plunged into the Washington art world, painting large color-field abstracts that earned her a show at the Corcoran Gallery.

Tête-à-Tête: The main source for the Enquirer story was James McC. Truitt, who was a vice president of The Washington Post from 1962 to 1964 and later NEWSWEEK bureau chief in Tokyo; he and his wife were close friends of Mrs. Meyer's. She told them, he reported, that Kennedy had asked her to stay behind after a White House party in December 1961, and she had refused. But a month later the President phoned her and again invited her over for a tête-à-tête. She

resisted, he pressed, and she finally agreed. Shortly afterward, a White House limousine driven by a Secret Service agent picked her up and delivered her to the South Portico.

This began, said Truitt, a series of brief encounters—sometimes two or three times a week—between Mrs. Meyer and JFK that lasted nearly to the assassination, always while Jacqueline Kennedy was away. One night in July 1962, according to Truitt, they went into his bedroom and she produced a snuff box containing six marijuana cigarettes. "Let's try it," the President said. They sat on the bed, so Truitt said, and smoked two joints; at one point JFK (who smoked the grass very inexpertly—in short puffs, flicking the ash off) laughed and said, "We're having a White House Conference on Narcotics here in two weeks." "This isn't like cocaine," he also said. "I'll get you some of that." But they apparently never used drugs again.

Murder: One afternoon in October 1964, Mary Meyer went for a walk, as she often did, on the towpath alongside an old canal in Georgetown. A witness on a bridge saw her struggling with a black man. By the time he reached the scene, she was dead of two bullet wounds. A suspect was tried and acquitted.

A few days after her death, according to Jay Gourley, a free-lance writer who helped report the Enquirer story, a group of Mary's friends (including Toni Bradlee, Angleton and his wife and Cord Meyer) went to her home to try to find her telltale diary. Angleton had come equipped with drills and white gloves from the CIA, and they tapped on walls, poked around in the furnace and dug in the garden—to no avail. But Toni Bradlee found it later and gave it to Angleton who reportedly destroyed it.

NEWSWEEK's examination of the story indicates that parts of Truitt's account are fairly well corroborated; others not at all. Toni Bradlee told the Enquirer: "Neither the relationship of Mary with JFK nor the existence of the diary has ever

been made public before. It was nothing to be ashamed of." But Truitt, who is now doing archeological work in Mexico, is the only source for the account of marijuana smoking; contacted by NEWSWEEK, he indicated that he had been told these details by Mrs. Meyer. As for the disposal of the diary, Angleton said simply that "After [Mrs. Meyer's] death, I was asked by her family to assist in a purely private capacity." Clearly not every element of this latest Kennedy scandal can be accepted as proved, but portions of it are enough to widen still further the growing cracks in Camelot.

*Bradlee, now executive editor of The Washington Post, published "Conversations With Kennedy," a book of reminiscences about private moments with JFK, last year.