

JFK Had Affair With D.C. Artist, Smoked 'Grass,' Paper Alleges

2-23-76
By Don Oberdorfer

Washington Post Staff Writer

The National Enquirer alleged today that President Kennedy conducted a two-year love affair with a Washington artist and smoked marijuana with her in a White House bedroom.

The Enquirer account identified the woman as Mary Pinchot Meyer, a long-time friend of Kennedy and his wife. Meyer was shot to death Oct. 12, 1964, nearly a year after Kennedy's assassination, while walking along the C&O Canal towpath in Georgetown. A 25-year-old District man was arrested and tried for the

murder but was acquitted.

The Enquirer said Meyer kept a diary of her romance with Kennedy and that the diary was destroyed after her death by James Angleton, a Central Intelligence Agency official and friend of the Meyer family.

The principal source for the Enquirer story is James Truitt, a former editor and executive assistant at The Washington Post who lives in Mexico. Interviewed there by a special correspondent for The Post, Truitt confirmed the substance of his Enquirer statements. He said he was paid by the Enquirer but refused to disclose how much. Truitt

said he had been told of the affair by Meyer at the time and that he kept notes on what he had learned.

Truitt told the Post correspondent that Meyer and Kennedy met about 30 times from January, 1962, to November, 1963, when Kennedy was assassinated. He said many of the meetings took place when Mrs. Kennedy was out of town, and that Meyer, then 42, was driven to the presidential mansion by White House car and taken by private elevator to living quarters where Kennedy did not permit the Secret Service.

See **KENNEDY**, A9, Col. 1

JFK Had Affair With Artist,

KENNEDY, From A1

In the Enquirer article, Truitt is quoted as saying the Meyer and Kennedy "met this way regularly, sometimes two or three times a week," during the 23-month period. Truitt, according to the Enquirer, said the two would "usually have drinks and dinner alone or sometimes with one of the aides. Then the aides would excuse themselves and leave."

In his interview with the Post correspondent, Truitt identified two of the aides as presidential assistants David Powers and Timothy J. Reardon Jr.

Reardon said yesterday that Truitt's account was "not so." He said he had never heard of Meyer or Truitt, but that "nothing like that ever happened at the White House, with her or anyone else." Powers could not be reached for comment.

The Enquirer article quoted Truitt as saying that his notes "show that after one such dinner the night of July 16, 1962, Mary and Jack went into the bedroom and Mary told him, 'I have something special for you.' She took out a snuff box with six marijuana cigarettes inside and JFK said, 'Let's try it.'" Truitt told the Post correspondent that he gave the marijuana to Meyer.

According to the Enquirer account of Truitt's notes:

"Mary said that at first JFK didn't seem to feel anything but then he began to laugh and told her: 'We're having a White House conference on narcotics here in two weeks.'

"She said that after they

smoked the second joint, Jack leaned back and closed his eyes . . . He lay there a long time, and Mary said she thought to herself, 'We've killed the President' . . .

"They smoked three of the joints and then JFK told her, 'No more. Suppose the Russians did something now.'

"She said he also told her, 'This isn't like cocaine. I'll get you some of that.' She said JFK wanted to smoke pot again a month later but never got around to it."

A check of Washington Post library files shows that Kennedy was in Washington on July 16, 1962. A White House Conference on Narcotics was held on Sept. 27, 1962, two months after the alleged marijuana incident.

The Enquirer account said Meyer kept a diary of her romance with Kennedy, and that it was found by her sister, Toni Bradlee, in Meyer's artist studio. The Enquirer said the diary was turned over to Angleton, who took it to CIA headquarters and destroyed it.

In the Enquirer account, Toni Bradlee, former wife of Post executive editor Benjamin C. Bradlee, is quoted as confirming the affair and the existence of the diary.

Asked for comment by The Post, Mrs. Bradlee would say only that "The National Enquirer quoted my words out of context to make it appear that I corroborated their story."

The Associated Press quoted her as saying, "I knew nothing about it when



MARY PINCHOT MEYER
... fatally shot



JAMES TRUITT
... source of story

Mary was alive. I have no further comment."

Angleton, who resigned as chief of CIA counterintelligence in 1975 following disclosures of some illegal activities by his department, said Meyer had been a "cherished friend" of his and his wife's. He said he had assisted the family after Meyer's death in a "purely private capacity," also making the funeral arrangements. He refused to say whether there had been a diary.

Anne Truitt, who was named in The Enquirer story as having been told of the affair by Meyer along with her husband, also refused to comment when reached by The Post. The Truitts were divorced in 1971.

Records of the U.S. District Court in Washington show that a court-appointed conservator was named to manage Truitt's financial

matters in 1969 on the basis of a physician's certification that he was suffering from a mental illness that was "such as to impair his judgment and cause him to be irresponsible." The conservatorship, which was sought

Smoked 'Pot,' Paper Says



JAMES ANGLETON
... Meyer family friend

by his wife in connection with divorce and support proceedings, terminated in 1972.

Ben Bradlee, reached on a vacation in the Virgin Islands, said he had no comment on The Enquirer ac-

count. In his book, "Conversations With Kennedy," Bradlee mentions Meyer five times and quotes Kennedy as commenting after a White House dance in February, 1962, about the "overall appeal" of Meyer and saying, "Mary would be rough to live with."

A source who refused to be named quoted a National Enquirer reporter as saying the weekly tabloid obtained the story from Truitt a year ago but decided not to publish it. The story was resurrected after Judith Campbell Exner, a West Coast housewife, gained nationwide prominence with her account of a "close, personal" relationship at the White House with Kennedy.

Another source confirmed that Meyer's diary was found and destroyed after her death in keeping with her wishes. This source said the diary was taken up almost entirely with the subject of art, but contained a

few hundred words of vague reference to an unnamed friend.

Meyer was divorced prior to 1962 from Cord Meyer Jr., a CIA official. Former White House appointments secretary Kenneth P. O'Donnell said yesterday, "She knew Jackie as well as she knew Jack." O'Donnell said allegations of a love affair were totally false.

Calling her "a legitimate, lovely lady," O'Donnell said Mary Meyer made infrequent visits to the White House "through my office—nevr privately, either, not when Jackie was away or when Jackie was there."

Truitt, who has remarried, lives in San Miguel Allende, Mexico. Washington attorneys familiar with the matter said he has written many rambling and bitter letters in recent years, to Ben Bradlee and others, threatening exposure of alleged scandals.

Formerly a Time-Life cor-

respondent, Truitt was a special assistant to former Washington Post President Philip L. Graham. Later he was editor of Art News, a magazine then owned by the Washington Post Company, and Tokyo correspondent for Newsweek. His last position with the company was as an editor in the Post's Style section in 1969.