

U.S. & Diem Murder Plot

By ANTHONY MANCINI

A behind-the-scenes account of the plot to kill South Vietnamese President Diem with American acquiescence was reconstructed in chilling detail on the television screen last night.

The account, the second installment of a two-part NBC documentary "white paper" called Vietnam Hindsight was a fast-paced, dramatic hour that added some graphic

footnotes to our store of knowledge of the 1963 assassination and the political events surrounding it.

The centerpiece of the program was a set of interviews with Lt. Col. Lucien Conein, a craggy-faced former legionnaire and the key CIA agent in South Vietnam at the time of the coup.

Another highlight was the portrayal of President Ken-

nedy as having first been emotionally shaken by the death of Diem and his brother Nhu, then having been motivated by the episode to begin to question seriously our role in Vietnam.

When Kennedy read the news of the assassination, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Maxwell Taylor said in an interview on the program, he "jumped to his feet, his face turned pale, he seemed to have difficulty controlling himself and rushed out of the room. It shook him personally . . . bothered him as a moral and religious matter. It shook his confidence, I think, in the kind of advice he was getting about South Vietnam, and it troubled him really deeply."

Former Kennedy adviser Michael Forrestal added his touches to the portrait, recalling that Kennedy had told him: "I want to start a complete and very profound review of how we got into this country, what we thought we were doing and what we think we can do . . .

I even want to think of whether or not we should be there."

It was also disclosed in the program that seventeen generals and colonels voted un-animously to kill Diem after three of the plotters who wanted to spare his life were assassinated. Others of the group were excluded from the vote.

Associated producer Alvin Davis related, and Conein admitted later in the program, that Davis' account was "correct," that General Duong Van (Big) Minh directed the assassination and gave the actual order for its execution. Davis said Minh was overheard muttering in French: "The pig must be killed."

Nab Woman on FBI's Top 10

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — One of the FBI's 10 most-wanted fugitives, Marie Dean Arrington, 38, was arrested here yesterday, ending a search of nearly two years. An FBI spokesman said Mrs. Arrington, who was under a death sentence on a murder conviction, escaped from a prison for women in Lowell, Fla., on March 1, 1969.