

Dutch Journalist in Kennedy Case Is 'Half Showman,' Colleague Says

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WASHINGTON, April 11.—When William Oltmans created a flurry of publicity recently with oblique, hearsay charges that Texas oilmen and anti-Castro Cubans had conspired with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency and Lee Harvey Oswald to kill President Kennedy, he was identified only as "a Dutch journalist."

But some of his colleagues in the Netherlands see that as a generous description. "He is half journalist, half showman," said Peter d'Hannacourt, an investigative reporter for Algemeen Dagblad, a morning daily in Rotterdam with a circulation of about 400,000. "Nobody takes him very seriously."

Mr. d'Hannacourt, who is widely regarded as one of the best investigative reporters in the Netherlands, said Mr. Oltmans' work consisted of "a lot of guessing stories" and added, "You don't know where his facts end and his imagination begins."

Mr. Oltmans has acknowledged that his accusations came not from his personal knowledge about events surrounding the Kennedy assassination but from conversations, some recorded, with his longtime friend George de Mohrenschildt, a Dallas college professor who befriended Mr. Oltman before the assassination and who killed himself in Palm Beach, Fla., two weeks ago.

By listening to a tape recorder on which Mr. de Mohrenschildt's daughter had been recording television soap operas while

she was away at work, the authorities determined that Mr. de Mohrenschildt killed himself with a shotgun blast in the month at 2:21 P.M. on March 29.

By April 1, three days later, Mr. Oltmans was on an ABC television program telling what Mr. de Mohrenschildt had told him in the months before the suicide.

By that time, too, Mr. Oltmans had called the House's deputy chief counsel for the inquiry into the assassination, Robert K. Tamm, requesting that he be heard "under oath" by the committee.

By 5 P.M. yesterday his interview was broadcast. Mr. Oltmans had flown from New York to Washington and was testifying about what he knew regarding Mr. de Mohrenschildt and about what Mr. de Mohrenschildt had told him, concerning an assassination conspiracy.

By the end of the day, Mr. Oltmans had been interviewed by reporters, had participated in an NBC radio program—the investigation of his lecture agent, he said—and was on his way back to the Netherlands.

Still, nobody seemed to know much about Mr. Oltmans. The 51-year-old Mr. Oltmans, who has contacts with literary and political figures around the world, is financially independent, he says, having inherited wealth derived from his family's quinine plantations in Indonesia when that country was under Dutch control.

According to newspaper files in the Netherlands, Mr. Oltmans was educated at the Institute for Foreign Affairs, usually attended by potential diplomats. He studied politics in Amsterdam, and attended Yale University in 1930.

He served as foreign editor for a liberal newspaper in Amsterdam, then was a correspondent in Rome for a right-wing publication. Later, he became a correspondent in Jakarta, Indonesia, for another liberal newspaper in Amsterdam before becoming a correspondent in New York for a left-wing weekly newspaper in the Netherlands.

The news editor of a large daily in Rotterdam, a publication that has compared only indirectly with Mr. Oltmans, described him as "the showman of Dutch journalism."

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"He has great skill in moving in on a small story and working on it until he builds it up into an exclusive big deal," the editor said in a telephone interview. "He pumps up all his stories, and we think him not to be very reliable."

Mr. Oltmans attributes such characterizations to "jealousy."

"But I don't blame them," he said in a telephone interview. "I am very good at what I do. I am a well-respected journalist."

One of Mr. Oltmans's exploits, according to the Rotterdam editor, was to obtain a photograph of the Paris woman alleged to be the companion of Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands at a time when the Prince was under attack for his part in the Lockheed Aircraft bribery scandal.

Mr. Oltmans says he has written five books, most of which are collections of interviews with European intellectuals and politicians on such subjects as "growth in all its forms." He wrote a book about a 150-day trip through the Soviet Union and a 700-page book that he says is a history of Indonesia. Other Dutch journalists describe it as a tribute to the late President Sukarno.

He works under some unspecified arrangement for N.O.A. Television, a small group of television and radio stations in the Netherlands. Mr. Oltmans said that he offers the network his programs and they "generally run them all." He said that he had submitted plans for six such programs, some of which pertain to the Kennedy assassination and the taped conversation of Mr. de Mohrenschildt.

Mr. Oltmans made the assertions about Mr. de Mohrenschildt, he has spent several years in Palm Beach, Fla., being interviewed by reporters for The National Enquirer, the weekly tabloid, which he said was paying his expenses in Palm Beach.