

French hit-men killed JFK, TV show says

Reuters News Service

A British television documentary contends that President Kennedy was assassinated by a three-man French hit squad hired by the U.S. Mafia.

The two-hour program, *The Men Who Killed Kennedy*, was to be screened Tuesday night in Britain after what its producers, Central Television, said were two years of research.

The program's director, Nigel Turner, said it alleges that three gangsters from the French Mediterranean port of Marseilles received a "contract" from U.S. organized crime to kill Kennedy.

The film says the assassination was an attempt by organized crime to stop a crackdown ordered by Kennedy and carried out by the president's brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy.

French police officers said on Tuesday a Marseille hit squad could have been involved.

"Marseille killers could easily have been used by the American Mafia, especially since the three people mentioned all later worked in the United States with the 'French Connection' heroin ring," said a retired Marseille drug squad agent, who asked not to be named.

He said Interpol, the international police organization, asked French police to investigate Marseille contract killers soon after Kennedy's assassination.

But Honore Gevaudan, a former police chief who helped break the French Connection in the 1970s, discounted the theory, saying the heroin ring had not been set up at the time of Kennedy's assassination in November 1963.

Lee Harvey Oswald was accused of killing President Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963, but was shot to death in a Dallas police station by local night club owner Jack Ruby before he could be tried.

Turner said a French drug smuggler, who claims he was offered the assassination contract, and a former narcotics trafficker give evidence in the program to back the Mafia conspiracy claims.

According to the documentary, one of the assassins was disguised as a policeman and was standing 50 yards from Kennedy's open-top limousine during the presidential motorcade through Dallas.

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