

Albany

UPDATES

THE BEAT GOES ON

As if the Watergate scandal and the fall of Indochina isn't enough to shatter our illusions about America, now comes the official word from General Mills: Betty Crocker is not a real person — and never was. General Mills Vice President Mercedes Bates admits that Betty Crocker was a fictional character created by the giant food conglomerate back in 1921. Since that time, General Mills says, Betty Crocker has had at least five different faces to keep us with changing styles and times. And, on the heels of this Betty Crocker bombshell, Quaker Oats reports that Aunt Jemima of pancake fame never existed either. The final straw is the report from the Uncle Ben Rice Company that Uncle Ben is fictional too. Uncle Ben was dreamed up, the rice company admits, simply to stimulate the sale of long grain rice.

In the wake of mounting interest in the assassination of President Kennedy, C.B.S. is negotiating for the television rights to President Ford's book on Lee Harvey Oswald. C.B.S. is expected to finalize arrangements with M.G.M. and now productions this week for full T.V. rights to the book *Portrait Of The Assassin, Portrait Of The Assassin* was co-authored by Gerald Ford in 1965 as an answer to critics of the Warren Commission investigation. The work is the only book ever authored by Gerald Ford —

and in it, Ford paints a picture of Oswald as being a psychologically deranged individual who was driven by personal insecurities to carry out the assassination alone. C.B.S. is expected to make a three to four-hour T.V. documentary out of the book.

Time Incorporated has sold the famous Zapruder film — the movie of the John Kennedy Assassination — back to the family of Abraham Zapruder . . . for \$1. The 8-millimeter color movie was filmed by Dallas dressmaker Abraham Zapruder on November 22nd of 1963. Immediately after the assassination, Zapruder sold the film to Time Incorporated. The original film has since never been shown publicly and has been locked up in a Time Corporation vault for the past eleven years. A Zapruder family lawyer, Robert Treen, says the film will be preserved in the National Archives — but that it will be made available to serious scholars and official agencies studying the assassination.

A former staff member of the Warren Commission who is now a judge in Cleveland, Ohio, is calling for a reopening of the investigation into the assassination of President Kennedy. Judge Burt Griffin, an attorney who questioned dozens of witnesses in the J.F.K. assassination case, says: "The case ought to be reopened . . . it's all tied in with everything that's been happening in our government for the past ten years." Griffin's views are spelled out in the current edition of *Rolling Stone* which contains ten pages of stories and photos relating to the 1963 assassination in Dallas. Judge Griffin states: "I don't think some agencies were candid with us. I never thought the Dallas police were telling us the entire truth. Neither was the F.B.I." The former Warren Commission staff member says that six months after the investigation began, he wrote out a long memo to the investigation's director asking a series of what he thought were unanswered questions about possible loopholes in the investigation and about Lee Harvey Oswald. Griffin reports: "We only got answers to two or three of them." He says that the Warren Commission staff settled for inadequate answers without challenging government agencies. He explains: "To do so, we'd have had to challenge the integrity of the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. back in 1964, that was something we didn't do." *Rolling Stone* reporter Robert Kaiser reports that Griffin's memo questioning the official version is mysteriously missing from the National Archives.

The *Washington Post* reports that F.B.I. Director Clarence Kelley exerted behind-the-scenes pressure in an attempt to block an investigation into charges that the Mafia has successfully bribed an F.B.I. agent. *The Post* quotes "reliable sources" as saying that Kelley, on at least two occasions, attempted to prevent a Justice Department Strike Force from investigating the possible bribe offer. The case in question involves

John Caputo, an alleged member of the Luchese Mafia family in New York. Two F.B.I. agents in the New York office have told the Justice Department that Caputo paid off a third F.B.I. agent, Joseph Stable, in an effort to stop an F.B.I. probe into Mafia activities. According to *The Post*, when the bribery charges were first brought against Stable, Kelley attempted to halt the investigation by exerting pressure against the Justice Department. *The Post* quotes its sources as saying that Kelley was worried about the F.B.I.'s reputation being tarnished if the Mafia-bribery charge was made public. The alleged Mafia member, Caputo, goes on trial for perjury in New York on April 14th.

The Federal Communications Commission has been petitioned to investigate the mushrooming Bell Telephone scandal. A Houston radiophone company has filed a brief with the F.C.C. complaining that Southwestern Bell has been employing unfair business practices. The brief includes a sworn affidavit from former Southwestern Bell executive James Ashley who recently filed a \$29 million damage suit against the phone company. In his affidavit, Ashley states that he "personally participated" in at least fifteen "illegal" wiretaps arranged by Bell for local police agents without court warrants. Ashley states that top Bell officials commonly and knowingly authorized these "illegal" wiretaps. Ashley also states the phone company maintained a secret hunting

Conspiracy Theory

by Neal Wiggins

Evidence of conspiracy behind many of the dramatic political events of the past decade continues to pile up. The latest to gain widespread attention is the previously ignored ballistic and eyewitness evidence implying a conspiracy in the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy, but serious doubts continue to grow about the assassinations of John Kennedy and Martin Luther King and the attempt on George Wallace, as well as supposedly unrelated cases such as Watergate, the Chappaquiddick affair and, yes, even the Patricia Hearst kidnapping.

The CIA and top Pentagon officials are usually implicated in conspiracy theory and the tendency now is to knit things all together into one big super-conspiracy, a military takeover of the U.S. government which uses and dismisses presidents and the congress as it chooses. But one need not buy the whole package for there exist enough unanswered questions and questionable tactics in each of the sensational political developments individually to raise acts of eyebrow.

Was Oswald a patsy? Was JFK really killed by a shot from the front? Was Jack Ruby part of a well concerted plan involving Nixon, J. Edgar Hoover, the Dallas police, the CIA and the anti-Castro Cubans? These and literally

books full of additional questions are still being seriously researched and analyzed by at least two investigative reporters, Penn Jones in Texas and Harold Weisberg in Maryland.

Jones, editor and publisher of the weekly *McDonnell Mirror* for close to 30 years, has written and self-published four volumes collectively titled *Forget My Grief*, which utilize Jones' familiarity with the Dallas area and his persistent analysis of the 26 volumes of Warren Commission evidence. Copies of the famous Zapruder film of the JFK assassination and several other books are also available from: Penn Jones, Jr., Box 70, Midlothian, Texas 76065. A stubborn reporter who claims to have evidence that Lyndon Johnson was also implicated in the assassination and cover-up, Jones' books are worth considering despite the plodding style and tendency to repetition and vagueness in many passages.

Harold Weisberg (Rt. 8, Frederick, Md. 21701) also self-publishes a series of books on the JFK assassination, this one called *Whitewash*. Weisberg makes a habit of ransacking the Nation Archives for documentary and photographic evidence of inconsistencies, suppressed evidence, and cover-up by the Warren Commission (including Gerald Ford) and several government agencies. Weisberg (also

author and self-publisher of *Frame-Up* on the Martin Luther King killing) recently lost a Supreme Court case aimed at making the suppressed FBI spectrographic analysis report in the JFK killing available to the public. But despite such setbacks, Weisberg continues his much needed and valuable investigation on his own.

Another self-publisher in the conspiracy field is Edmund C. Berkeley, editor of the monthly *Computers and People* (815 Washington St., Newtonville, Ma. 02160), a magazine devoted about equally to the technical aspects of computers and the social implications of political assassinations and implied conspiracies behind Watergate and other recent events. Author/Editor of *Ride the East Wind*, a book of parables, Berkeley and numerous political investigators have covered the Kennedy, King and Wallace cases, the death of Walter Reuther, DA Jim Garrison's struggle with the federal government, and a variety of other issues involving the misuse of power and possible conspiracies behind them.

And going even further is Mac Brunsel (25620 Via Croialo, Carmel, Ca. 93921), whose *Conspiracy Newsletter* has taken up considerable space in Paul Krasner's *The Realist* (595 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012) for several is-

ses. The *Newsletter* goes into considerable detail analyzing links between the assassinations, the CIA, Watergate and supposedly unrelated cases such as the Hearst kidnapping. Ms. Brunsel, whose 15 year old daughter was killed several years ago in what Krasner calls "a suspicious automobile accident," sends out a free bibliography of assassination material upon receipt of a stamped, self-addressed return envelope and offers copies of her *Realist* material for sale.

Undoubtedly other sources of information on assassinations and possible conspiracies and coverups exist and will continue to spring up as the evidence accumulates. For despite the official denials and lack of public outrage, certain basic and suspicion-generating details continue to cast doubt on the belief that no conspiracy exists. After studying the Zapruder film in the Archives for several hours, TV personality Mort Sahl reports that "it's...obvious, you don't have to be a ballistics expert... The President is hit from the right front. I saw it repeatedly."

Such suppressed and ignored evidence calls out for an aroused and informed public which will at last demand its legal and elected representatives to uncover the truth about who really runs America in 1975.