

Forum Airs Plot Theory In Killings

CTIA CTIA

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A myriad of conspiracy theories, including one attempting to link the assassination of President John F. Kennedy to some of the figures involved in the Watergate affair, were raised yesterday on the concluding day of a two-day conference here on political assassinations of the last decade.

Various theorists at the conference at Georgetown University's Gaston Hall attributed President Kennedy's assassination to organized crime, the CIA, anti-Castro Cubans, big businessmen, the late President Lyndon B. Johnson, soldiers of fortune or combinations of these elements.

In most instances, the theories were old ones brought up to date. While some theorists exonerated Lee Harvey Oswald of the assassination of President Kennedy, others said Oswald may have been a minor figure in a large conspiracy.

What was different about the discussions from those of earlier years was the apparent widespread feeling that the Watergate affair and cover-up had links to President Kennedy's assassination in Dallas 10 years ago last Thursday.

Although the conference sponsor, the private, Washington-based Committee to Investigate Assassinations (CTIA), had not listed Watergate on its program, the issue was brought up yesterday afternoon by Chicago-based gadfly Sherman Skolnick, who was in the audience. A sizable portion of the audience of about 200 persons appeared to support Skolnick's successful effort to put Watergate on the agenda.

Skolnick, the chief proponent of the theory that there was deliberate sabotage in the plane crash that last December killed Dorothy Hunt, wife of Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr., stirred up the conference by questioning what he alleged were possible links between the CIA and the

CTIA.

He questioned why the conference was being held on "a CIA campus," a reference to CIA-sponsored research that has been carried out at Georgetown, and suggested that at least two prominent CTIA members have ridden CIA ties.

One of the panelists, Dr. Richard Potkin, professor of philosophy at Washington University at St. Louis, said that many other countries have had political assassination conspiracies, yet American officials here would have the nation believe that the assassinations of the last decade have been carried out by "a lone nut." Potkin said the Watergate affair, with its "conspiracy to re-elect the President," should convince Americans once and for all that conspiracies do exist and that President Kennedy was the victim of one.

Although none of the panelists dealt specifically in their prepared remarks with links between Watergate and President Kennedy's murder, various members of the audience contended that there may exist evidence to show that persons arrested in the break-in at Democratic Headquarters in the Watergate also were in Dallas on the day of Mr. Kennedy's assassination.

Ramparts magazine and many underground and smaller circulation publications have suggested in recent months that there may be direct links between the Dallas shooting and the Watergate affair but, as some members of the audience said yesterday, the major news media have ignored this possible connection.

Peter Dale Scott, author and professor at the University of California at Berkeley, said there were "lessons of Watergate" that should be applied to examining what he said was the "cover-up" of the facts about the Kennedy assassination.

The Watergate affair also showed, he said, that the persons involved in the cover-up need not necessarily have been involved in the original crime. He said he suspects this was the case in the investigation of Mr. Kennedy's murder.

In a morning panel discussion, authors of various books and articles on political assassinations expressed frustration over not being able to interest major news media in newly discovered evidence or theories relating to the political murders and attempted murders.

Although some panelists said they felt there was a new willingness by the news media to do more investigative reporting as a result of the Watergate affair, others said there was still a strong reluctance in the media to re-open investigations of assassinations.