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BOOK ON KENNEDY SEES A WIDE PLOT

Origin of Europe Bestseller
Remains a Mystery

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Special to The New York Times

PARIS, Dec. 31—A book of mysterious origin accusing the entire American power structure of complicity in the assassination of John F. Kennedy has spread through Western Europe and is now crossing the Atlantic.

The book, called "Farewell America" in its English-language edition and "l'Amérique Brûle" ("America Burns") in French, says several dozen persons participated directly in the plot and many more, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, knew about it before the event.

"Farewell America" was printed in Belgium for a company chartered in Liechtenstein, apparently for that purpose. It was marketed in France, with considerable success, by a new company that has no other product, and is now being offered to Americans outside regular trade book channels by a Montreal concern.

The author is listed as James Hepburn. He is described in publicity for the book as an American, but a biography on the cover flap says he was born abroad 34 years ago, went to the London School of Economics, was graduated from the "Institute of Political Studies" in Paris, met Jacqueline Bouvier in 1951, first visited the United States in 1960 and twice met Mr. Kennedy that year.

'Pretty Much Pseudonym'

In fact, René Lamarré, head of Editions Nouvelles Frontières, the French company marketing the book, affirmed

in an interview that "James Hepburn" was actually "pretty much a pseudonym," representing a "group of European and American researchers."

This is supported by author's acknowledgments in the book, in which 16 collaborators in the French edition and 11 in the English are thanked. Only first names are given for most of those thanked, who are listed as living in six countries, including the United States.

Mr. Lamarré said the manuscript had been offered to and rejected by "practically all" American trade publishers before it appeared in West Germany and France last summer. It has been an evident best-seller here; Mr. Lamarré put French sales at 60,000 so far. He said 30,000 copies of the English edition had been printed.

An apparent reason for its rejection by American publishers was the fear of libel action. A number of prominent citizens are accused in the book, either directly or by implication, of having had guilty knowledge of the plot to kill the President.

Written in Clear Prose

The book is written in a clear, educated prose, heavily studded with citations from both historic and recent socioeconomic sources. It is harsh on virtually all elements of American society except its hero, President Kennedy, and his brother, Robert; even Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy does not escape criticism, although the book was written before her remarriage.

Two-thirds of the book is devoted to an effort to explain why the late President had incurred the wrath of various segments of American society — the underworld, segregationists, the military, Texas oil interests, business, the Federal bureaucracy and especially the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency.

The authors are critical also of leaders of labor, Negroes and liberals, and of the public

in general. At the time of the assassination, they say, "America was fat, dumb and happy."

But they say the President was actually was "condemned" by a "Committee" of Texas and Louisiana notables. The crime itself is reported as having been committed by a band of professionals directly aided by the Dallas police.

No New Evidence Offered

Lee Harvey Oswald is described as having been an agent of both the F.B.I. and the C.I.A., as are several other figures in the alleged plot. Unlike the F.B.I., the C.I.A. as an organization is acquitted of having had direct knowledge of the affair. Only afterward, says "Farewell America," did the commanding sections of the power structure rally to cover up the crime.

No new evidence is offered to support the allegations, which are generally conclusions or suppositions drawn previously published material.

The English-language edition challenges persons named to sue for libel, but this would pose difficulties. Companies chartered in Liechtenstein, such as the publisher of "Farewell America," are covered by that little country's secrecy laws, as well as by its tax exemptions.

The book has found a substantial market in Europe for at least two reasons. One is its intense and uncritical praise of President Kennedy, who was widely loved here. (Kennedy half-dollars are worn as medallions in some countries.)

The other is the conspiracy theory. The Warren Commission's thesis of a lone killer has never won wide acceptance on this side of the Atlantic.

For earlier material see Books, Hepburn.