

June 21, 1968

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Italian Reporter Questions U.S. Assassinations

PAUL EBERLE

Augusto Marcelli, Italian newspaperman and foreign correspondent for the Rome newspaper, Paese Sera, told me yesterday that there are many strange contradictions in what the public has been told about the assassination of Sen. Robert Kennedy last week.

Marcelli covered the riots in Washington at the time Dr. Martin Luther King was killed as well as the assassination of President John F. Kennedy for his paper.

"Right now," he said, "I don't know any more than any other publication. But I am checking some interesting leads, because certain details of this story sound rather strange to me."

"Which ones?" we asked.

"One is the story of the girl with the polka dot dress. The girl seen by Sandy Serrano, a woman with a polka-dot dress. Then, another woman, Kathy Fulmer, went to the police and said she was the girl with the polka-dot dress—only she wasn't wearing a polka-dot dress, but a scarf, which makes a difference."

"Another thing that interests me and puzzles me is, the nationality of this fellow, Sirhan, the country from which he came, and then the newspapers say this Kathy Fulmer is a belly dancer. I don't know if that is significant, but it makes me wonder."

"Then, there is the fact that it seems that there are more than one girl with the polka-dot dress. At least three, who went to the police. Now, I guess in this season polka-dot dresses are very usual. But, how many girls with polka-dot dresses were in the same place and said the same thing, 'We killed Kennedy?'"

"So, I consider this a possibility, that maybe the police are still looking for the polka-dot girl—OR—perhaps they give out this information to reassure the real polka-dot dress girl that she is safe—that she is no longer sought after."

"You think," we asked, "that the police might be involved?"

"That could be. You know, in a case like this, every minimal lead must be taken into consideration."

"What about the man?" we asked. "Wasn't a man also seen with the polka-dot girl?"

"Yes. And he has not been described. This fact looks rather odd, because plenty of people saw that man, but no description has been circulated by the police. I presume that those people who saw

him or said they saw him, described him to the police. I am asking myself why no description of this man has been circulated by the police."

"What else seems strange to you about this affair?"

"Well, I strongly believe that the first Kennedy assassination was the result of a plot. I got very close to the actual material proofs of this and from what we have learned today, it seems almost assured that Martin Luther King's assassination was the result of a plot."

The Canadian landlady of that fellow Ray, the alleged murderer, said she saw a fat man giving him money before he was leaving. That doesn't necessarily prove a plot, but I feel sure, from the few facts I could gather in the month of May, for example, the fact that Ray was able to escape, the length of time he was able to remain concealed, the abundance with which money and passports were supplied to him, the particulars of his escape ... I think that he was not alone. I exclude the possibility that he was alone.

"So, now, we have already two plots. Let's look at the third murder, and of course it is too soon, but we cannot discount the possibility that Senator Kennedy's death was also the result of another plot. Before discarding the possibility that it was a plot, we must look very closely at the various leads which help us strengthen the hypothesis that it might be a plot."

Contemplating this, I asked Mr. Marcelli ... "All of the prominent people assassinated in the past five years, Malcolm, Medgar Evers, the Kennedy Brothers, King, all of these people, although not necessarily radicals, were a little bit left of center, in that they wanted change, or at least, reform of the status quo. None of them was a reactionary. Isn't that in itself very significant?"

"I knew all of them. I knew Medgar Evers, Malcolm, I was rather friendly with him. Also President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy. I would say that only one man who was killed was on the Right, and that was George Lincoln Rockwell. But also I know that that was a private business, the killing of Rockwell. It was not clearly an ideological situation. I knew also the man who killed him, because I visited him in Arlington Virginia. He was a very good-looking young man, and very shy. We were doing a documentary on the

United States, so we went there ... His name was Pratt."

"What other details of the Robert Kennedy murder seem odd to you?" I asked again.

"There are a few other things, but at this moment I hesitate to tell them because I am still checking points that seem contradictory, so I am not sure about what to do with them yet. But what really worried me is that there are some exterior effects of the story."

"First, I wasn't here when he was assassinated; I only arrived on Thursday night, but of course, I've been going through all the newspapers of the past few days, I have learned that when nobody knew who the identity of that fellow Sirhan, the Mayor of Los Angeles and the Attorney General

of the United States, Ramsey Clark, stated that it was not a plot."

"I would say that in an investigation you start from the beginning. You try to learn who the man who did the crime is. Then, you can express an opinion about him—it is a plot or it is not a plot. I cannot understand why they both say immediately, when they didn't know what the man's name was, that it was impossible that it could be a plot. That is one thing. I would not say that implies that it is a plot, but it is unusual this kind of an attitude. It sounds strange."

"Another thing that I do not understand is the patent lie of the Mayor Yorty, because he has been saying and repeating that the man, Sirhan, is a Communist, that his car had been seen near the Du Bois Club. Now, everybody knows that the Du Bois Club in Los Angeles has not been in existence since two years ago, but, I can tell you something more—and I heard it from a very direct source—this man, Sirhan, since he has been in jail, has expressed violent anti-Communist feelings. This is from an absolutely reliable source."

"Then he is not a leftist?" we asked.

"That is correct. Now, I have not questioned Mr. Yorty's behavior in stating that he had a diary, a notebook, and so on, but it seems

to me that his accusation of Sirhan's being a Communist—when it was a lie—with the diaries, and all the little news items that have been leaked out, but it was a kind of an artificial leak—you could feel it—it looked to me that Mr. Yorty, at least, was trying to follow a kind of line which brings to mind right away another person involved in another Kennedy assassination. He was, let's say, using the Oswald silhouette to build up Sirhan Sirhan as a Communist in the public opinion. And

he was doing exactly what the District Attorney in Dallas in November 1963, Mr. Wade, did—then it was Oswald, and now it is Sirhan."

"A loner," I suggested, "With Communist leanings."

"One cannot accept the fact that the Mayor of Los Angeles releases false statements. He is supposed to have an investigating system, and this investigative system is supposed to give him true answers to the questions. Therefore, it is possible that Mayor Yorty thought he was saying the truth in calling Sirhan a Communist, and all that, but since it is not the truth, as has been clearly demonstrated, the false information must have come through his investigators. And this again, this

hypothesis, makes me think very strongly of the possibility of a plot."

"Especially with the two other people seen with Sirhan, Sirhan," I added.

"Yes." "Have you had occasion to meet Garrison in your investigation of the John Kennedy assassination?" I asked.

"I never met Garrison, but last year, through our New York office, Garrison expressed a desire if it was possible, for me to go to New Orleans, when the trial was going to be held."

"Have you ever been threatened or warned to discontinue probing into that assassination?" I asked.

"Fifteen days after John Kennedy was assassinated, I was shot at in New York. I was with three other people on 97th and Central Park West. I was leaving the subway, and we were four people, and suddenly on the left side of the street, on the small buildings which had been condemned, which were inhabited by Puerto Ricans, somebody starts shooting."

"Shooting in that area was not unusual, so you know what you have to do. We just threw ourselves on the ground, trying to be as inconspicuous as possible."

"Three more shots followed the first one. I saw the flash of the shooting coming on the roof of these three-story buildings. Then, the police arrived after a few minutes, because they were usually cruising the area, especially in the night. They questioned us, and nobody was able to give an answer."

"I was the only one able to give an answer because I had received in the previous five or six days, some threats through the telephone. It was a kind of a conversation which, at moments, got almost friendly ... you know? Almost jovial, from one side and another. And the fact was this, that some days before, the magazine L'Affaire had published an article of mine on Kennedy's assassination."

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"When did you arrive in Dallas?"

"A few days after the assassination, I went to Dallas and wrote this article. I think I arrived three days after Kennedy was assassinated. The funerals were going on. I went many days, and one night, I met some people who told me something. That person didn't know very much, but what she said was important. That was around ten o'clock of the evening that I arrived. After two hours, that person called me at the hotel and she told me that by paying some money I could have some more information.

"So I went to this woman in Dallas, and she took me to a place, an apartment in Dallas, and there was another woman, very scared and drunk, who didn't want to tell anything about it. She was so scared, and she was saying, 'Tell him to go away! Tell him to go away. I don't want to get killed. I don't want his money, because they can buy everything. What do I want with his money?'

"Put them together—what I heard from the first woman and what the second woman said, and you have to come to some kind of conclusion. So I went back to the hotel and sent a cable to the editor in Milano. And this cable said,

"I understand, at this point, it seems to me that the assassin has something to do with the Cubans."

"At that point, I couldn't say which kind of Cubans. The next morning I got a letter from the editor in Milano. He told me that I was crazy, that the Cubans are in Cuba and the Castro Cubans couldn't possibly have anything to do with this. Then I realized that there were also other kinds of Cubans running around. I was tired, I had been working hard...

"Anyway, I wrote my article in Dallas, and went back to New York. I went to Chicago to write an article on Jack Ruby, because he had been living there most of his life. But something happened in Chicago.

"First of all, I found something extremely important, concerning Oswald. I don't know whether you are familiar with that book, 'Oswald—Assassin or Fall Guy,' by Joachim Joesten. I am widely quoted in that book for what I found out in Chicago about Oswald. And this is what I found out.

"I went to see Mr. [redacted] whose department store had shipped the rifle to Oswald and this man refused to see me. And then we convinced him it was better to talk to me. He was a little bit scared, but also he wanted to relieve himself of something which he didn't like.

"So he decided to tell me the truth, and he told me, 'The FBI has ordered me not to talk to anybody about this.' And the thing was exactly this way: Now I do not remember all the names, but you can check them if you have the books—the Dallas Police had found, in Irving, a gunsmith who

said that he had had a rifle belonging to a man named Oswald, and it had the tag that said Oswald, and he had put the telescope on that rifle and drilled the holes on that rifle—I don't know whether you remember this. Anyway, this was in the Warren Report.

"So, it was commonly accepted that the rifle had been shipped from Chicago. Milton Klein, department store and antique, Oswald took the rifle to Irving."

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this gunsmith and asked him to put the telescope on the rifle. That was the official version.

"BUT—Milton Klein told me that the rifle had left Chicago with the telescope, with the holes for the screws for the attachment of the telescope already drilled. So I published that in L'Europeo, and when the news bounced back all over, the Dallas Police were forced to change the version of their story—only they couldn't find a suitable version.

"And even today, if you read the Warren Report, it says at this point—'It is true that the rifle with the telescope came from Chicago, but the gunsmith in Irving had the rifle on which to fix the telescope, by a man who gave his name as Oswald.' The man called Oswald took the gun to the gunsmith in Irving to have the telescope put on. And that seems to imply that Oswald had another gun.

"BUT—we had been searching and investigating, and we had been unable to find that second gun, and to find out where that second gun came from. This is one of the major flaws in the Warren Report. They had been investigating Oswald all over, and they were able to say how many buttons and how many pills he had. But they were unable to find the other gun.

"So, that is what I found concerning Oswald in Chicago."

"And was it for that," I asked, "that you were threatened and shot at?"

"No. No. Because of looking for information about Jack Ruby. I found information about Jack Ruby that contradicted the official picture that was being built up of Ruby, by the police and by the American press.

"He was, I found out, a second-rate gangster, but he never liked the president and never expressed any affection for the president.

"Also, he was implicated in some of the killings, the vendettas, that the Chicago underworld was perpetrating some years before. I could establish a connection between the underworld of Chicago and the underworld of Dallas, and this link passed through Jack Ruby. So he was not a minor figure, the good-natured, simpleton, which the media had manufactured.

"But I came back from Dallas with the idea that the Cubans had

something to do with it. I was asking myself and wondering why. I had my journalistic file, which I was building up by myself just from the newspapers and the magazines. I had also a big, fat file on the Cuban anti-Castro operatives, and activities here in the United States.

"So, when I was back in New York, I went through that file, and I found out that now and then the Cuban committees, the Anti-Castro committees used to get together in Chicago, and that the few meetings had been held between the end of 1962 and May 1963.

That was right after the prisoners were freed by Castro.

"And there was also another meeting—I don't remember now but you can check it easily—held in Chicago right before Cardona resigned as a leader of the Cuban Liberation Movement. He sent that 6000-word letter to the White House, and the State Department denouncing the American policy toward the Cuban Liberation Movement. But the letter was not 6000 words—it was 20,000 words. So only one part was released.

"Now—it was clear enough, even from the part that was released, that there was some kind of mood in the air, Cardona was warning the American authorities, using very mild words—but the meaning was clearly there—that, should the United States continue their policy of curbing the Anti-Castro activities in the United States, he was not going to be responsible any longer for what these people were going to do. That is in the letter. I was able to see, two years later, in 1965, a photostatic copy of the letter, of the MISSING part of that letter.

"Anyway, let's go back to Chicago now. As I told you, when I went to Chicago, I went to follow that lead about the Cubans. And that is what I found out, that in a meeting of these Cuban exiles and some of the prisoners which had been released—those people were informed then that the United States didn't intend to do anything to liberate Cuba.

"If you remember, it was in the Orange Bowl in Miami, I think, when the prisoners were there, and President Kennedy went down, and, waving the Cuban flag, said, 'This flag will soon wave again over a free Cuba,' and so on... But, after a few weeks, in an interview with the French press, he told these journalists that it was unthinkable to invade Cuba and destroy world peace, just to liberate Cuba.

"That was, I think, around the fifteenth or twentieth of January, 1963, this interview with Danielle. A meeting took place a few days

after, at Chicago, a Cuban refugee's meeting. And I learned in Chicago that at that meeting, some group of the refugees, of the exiles, started arguing very violently and accusing President Kennedy, and saying that if he didn't want to liberate Cuba, they were going to kill him.

"Now, you can take all this and say it's sort of a passionate despair and disillusion. But at this moment, I had already two leads, one from Dallas and one from Chicago.

"Three days later, when I was going to write my article in the Blackstone Hotel, I went through the Chicago papers, and there was a column. This column had this news—that at the meeting held there last January, there was a group of Cuban exiles conspiring to assassinate President Kennedy. It said that Oswald also was in the plot. Only, we don't know now whether he was paid by them or by somebody else.

"So I felt that I had enough to advance a hypothesis, and I wrote that story in L'Europeo, about Jack Ruby, and Milton Klein and Oswald, and so on...

"And so, after a few days, came the shooting. I also then received more phone calls in which it was made clear that the shooting was directed at me. I went to a friend of mine and told him about it, and he said, 'In a case like this you usually go to the police or the FBI, but in this case, they may be involved, and I think you'd better go back home!'

"Now, after that, in February, I went to Miami Beach. There was the match between Liston and Clay. I wanted to see if there was something I could learn from these Cuban exiles and refugees. And there I found a man who knew a Cuban exile who knew some man named David Ferrie. Yes!

"So he told me that he knew David Ferrie and that something funny had been going on between Miami and New Orleans, that he had met Ferrie a short while before, and that Ferrie seemed to him to be very preoccupied.

"From what he told me, David Ferrie had gone to some place in the Everglades, on the Keys, to put something in a bank safe. At that

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Marcelli

Prepared Assassinations

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moment I didn't write anything about it, because I couldn't connect David Ferrie with the plot.

"Getting back to Sirhan Sirhan," I said, "Did you say that he was homosexual?"

"I think, from what information I gather, he is bi-sexual. But I think the most interesting source of information on this man lies in the direction of the race track. Those people there, they know everything and nothing. You know?"

I asked him if he had been there.

"Yes. I gathered that there is something that they know. I think it is probably a far-right plot or a mafia plot. The race track tends to mix those two elements together. So I don't know. Probably, living in Los Angeles, you can do that much better than I. But he has been seen with a girl. His younger brother has a deportation action pending for narcotics."

"Why do you think Robert Kennedy was assassinated?"

"A man in that position, who says the things which he said... you know? Or even fifty percent of that, in this country with the mood which has been expressed in Dallas in 1963, can be killed any day."

"Why?" I asked, "Because he wanted to stop the war? Because he wanted change?"

"Well, let's say this. It is everything which stopping the war implies. Stopping the war—it implies a lot of things, political and economic. It implies re-educating the American public to a new image for the major issue of the cold war—and that is of course

the Communists. They have to start to re-educate the American people to think in a different way about Communism and Communists, first of all.

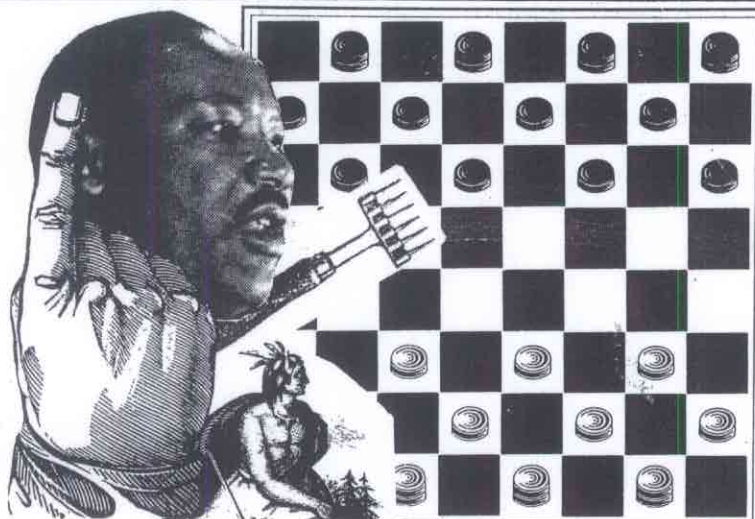
"And, of course, you know that Anti-Communism here is one of the most powerful industries. Now, it is an industry which implies the manufacture of public opinion through the mass communications media. It is an industry which implies saving the American war economy, which has not yet been dismantled.

"I think that these two things by themselves are more than enough to bring about a reaction like the assassination of the Kennedy brothers.

"In addition, there are the smaller issues—dismantling all that implies also to start peaceful relations with Cuba. Now you know powerful American interests have been damaged by the nationalization instituted by Castro. Those interests are related to power groups, economic groups, whose interests are not confined to Cuba but are spread all around the world.

"Those groups are the ones who hold the real power in the United States. Those are the ones who make and unmake the Presidents. They use an Oswald, a Sirhan Sirhan, a Jack Ruby, a Ronald Reagan for one purpose, Oswald for another.

"Now, these people, you cannot suppose they will give up so easily. We have been learning in recent days that a plot was uncovered to assassinate Johnson, Humphrey and Rockefeller. There was also a plot in New York to assassinate Robert Kennedy. There is also a plot to assassinate Roy Wilkins and other people



less important. I don't know who they were.

"But it makes me think that the plot to assassinate Robert Kennedy was conceived, was planned, was prepared together with the plot to assassinate his brother in 1963. To assassinate Martin Luther King, and then to assassinate Robert Kennedy, to assassinate somebody else."

"You think they were planned by the same people?"

"Yes. I do not mean 'them' as individuals, but let's say, even two years ago, you could anticipate that Robert Kennedy was going to play some kind of role. So I guess he just crossed the line beyond which he was to be killed if he crossed it. The situation showed that if he had some major possibilities for becoming president, he was going to be eliminated. So

now, in America, I don't know who, but somebody, in that line, like McCarthy, might be assassinated. And I would say that the layout, the plan for that assassination has already been prepared."

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