

The Assassination-Plot Rumors

by Clifton Daniel

Washington, June 5 - For two decades, assassinations - or alleged assassinations - by American secret agents have been a subject for movie scenarios and cocktail party gossip in Washington. Now in the new atmosphere after détente and Watergate, they have suddenly become front page news. Why?

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The proliferation of investigations has, not surprisingly, led to a proliferation of news leaks about the subjects under investigation, especially the allegation that the C.I.A. in 1961 recruited two men from the Mafia, Sam Giancana and John Roselli, to assassinate Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba.

As is usual in Washington, leaks lead to counter-leaks by those trying to protect themselves from the original leaks, and that helps to account for the spate of front page stories about assassinations.

For example, Adam Walinsky, former legislative assistant to Senator Robert F. Kennedy and aide to Mr. Kennedy when he was Attorney General, said today that the Rockefeller commission was responsible for "an unprecedented series of leaks."

"This commission," he said by telephone from New York, "is engaged, with the assistance of the C.I.A., in a concerted effort to absolve the C.I.A. for any of its questionable or scummy activities, and, after the fact, to place the responsibility on public officials who are, from the C.I.A.'s point of view, conveniently dead."

The officials to whom he alluded were Senator Kennedy and his late brother, the President, both of whom have been mentioned in speculation on the origins of alleged plots to assassinate Premier Castro.

"It is not coincidental," Mr. Walinsky said, "that the Republicans all think that [Senator Edward M.] Kennedy will be the Democratic Presidential nominee in 1972."

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