

SF Examiner MAR 30 1977

# A mystery suicide:

# Key Oswald witness

## Friend reported to have known of death plot

PALM BEACH, Fla. (UPI) — A Russian-born professor described as "intimately involved" with Lee Harvey Oswald was found shot to death late yesterday — an apparent suicide. Shortly before, he had been informed that House Assassination Committee investigators wanted to question him in their inquiry into the slaying of John F. Kennedy.

Georg de Mohrenschildt, 65, who taught French at Bishop College in Dallas, apparently put the barrel of a shotgun in his mouth and pulled the trigger. He was found in the drawing room of a beachfront mansion where he was a guest for the past week, Sheriff Richard Wille said.

"We're 99 per cent sure he killed himself," Wille said.

Informed late last night of De Mohrenschildt's death, Rep. Richard Preyer, D-N.C., of the House committee said De Mohrenschildt "was a crucial witness for us, based on the new information he had. He was intimately involved with Oswald."

De Mohrenschildt's death was revealed less than 24 hours before an important House vote on whether to extend the select committee's life for the current Congress. A close vote had been expected in light of dissension within the committee and skepticism from without.

The mysterious death was likely to improve the committee's chances for survival — as did the sudden support of Martin Luther King Sr.

The elder King had previously been critical of the panel, which is charged with investigating the death of his son, Martin Luther King Jr. as well as Kennedy.

De Mohrenschildt reportedly told a Dutch journalist that he had known in advance that Oswald planned to kill Kennedy.

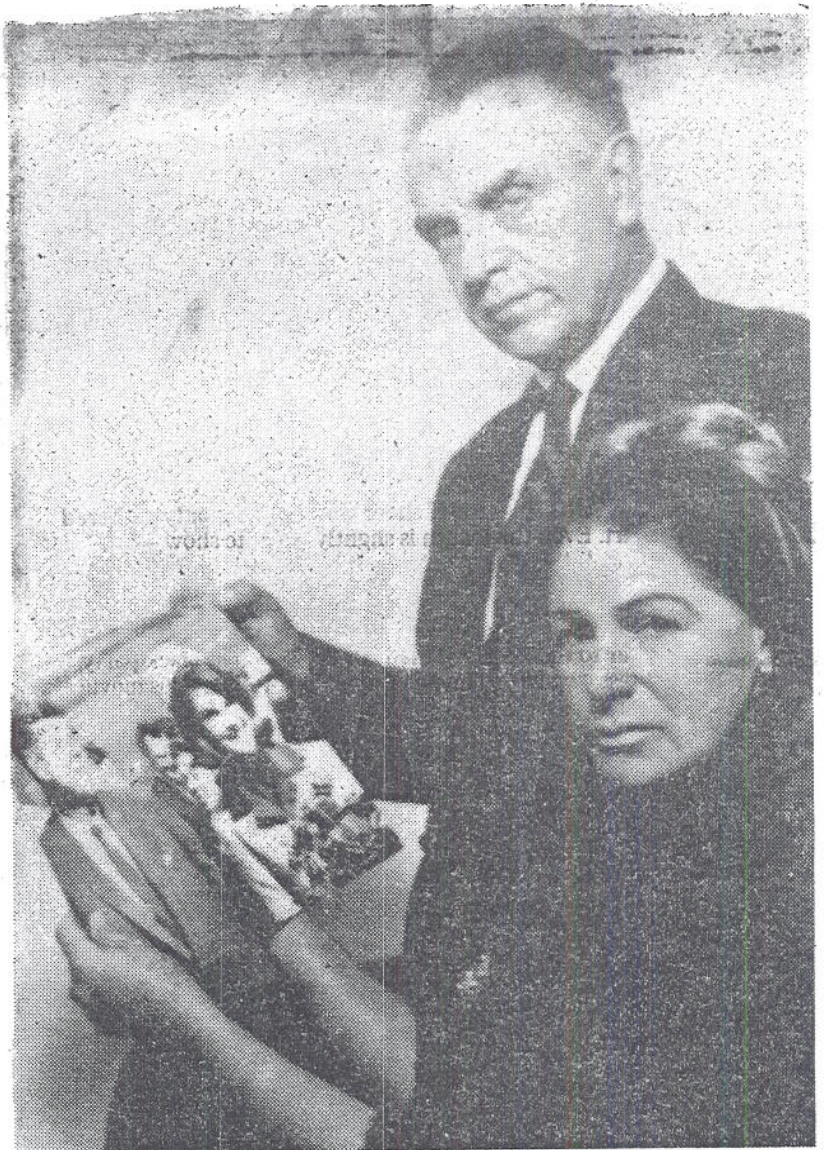
A source said the House committee "had been looking everywhere" for De Mohrenschildt after he disappeared from Dallas three weeks ago. The journalist, William Oltmans, said the professor had accompanied him to Europe at that time but he too later lost track of him.

Wille said De Mohrenschildt returned to the Palm Beach mansion about 2:45 p.m. yesterday and learned that Gaeton J. Fonzi, an investigator for the select committee, had phoned from Miami, seeking him as a committee witness.

De Mohrenschildt killed himself about an hour later, Wille said.

A chauffeur and a maid were the only persons in the mansion at the time and the body went undiscovered for hours until the victim's daughter found it.

The source said the committee had been given a tip that De Mohrenschildt was "ready to talk." He had been questioned about the



GEORGE DE MOHRENSCHILDT AND WIFE WITH JFK PHOTO  
Key witness was found dead in Palm Beach

## Witness 'who knew plan of Oswald' kills self

—From Page 1

Kennedy assassination by the Warren Commission and is mentioned in its 1964 report.

Sources in West Palm Beach indicated today that committee investigators were in Dallas, attempting to locate a photo, documents and possibly a tape recording, all of which may have been turned over to an attorney there by De Mohrenschildt.

Oltmans reported recently that De Mohrenschildt had made a "shocking confession" that he knew in advance what Oswald planned to do. Oltmans said, "he asked me,

'how do you think the media would react if I came out and said I feel responsible for Oswald's behavior?'"

De Mohrenschildt and his wife met Oswald and his Russian-born wife, Marina, in Dallas in 1962. The Warren Commission report indicated that De Mohrenschildt was one of the few members of Dallas' small Russian-speaking community that Oswald liked.

De Mohrenschildt arrived about a week ago in the Palm Beach suburb of Manalapan, where he was a house guest in the beachfront home of Mrs. Charles Tilton III.