

Journalist's Story of Kennedy Death Plot

Washington

A Dutch journalist said he testified under oath yesterday that a Russian emigrant who apparently committed suicide this week had claimed to be part of a conspiracy to kill President John Kennedy.

The television newsmen, Wil-

lem Oltmans, said George de Mohrenschildt told him the alleged conspiracy also involved Texas oilmen, Cuban exiles, and CIA and FBI agents.

Oltmans said de Mohrenschildt claimed he was a middleman between H. L. Hunt, representing Texas oilmen, and Lee Harvey Oswald. The journalist said he gave

the committee "the name of an FBI official, not Hoover, who might be important."

The Warren Commission that investigated Kennedy's 1963 assassination concluded that Oswald was the lone assassin.

Oltmans also said de Mohrenschildt told him that nightclub

owner Jack Ruby, who shot and killed Oswald two days after Kennedy's assassination, figured in the conspiracy, but he gave no details.

The journalist said de Mohrenschildt told him Cubans had fired at Kennedy at the same time Oswald did. Oltmans added that he gave

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the House assassination committee the name and picture of one Cuban he believes is involved.

Oltmans testified for more than three hours before a closed session of the House panel investigating the Kennedy assassination. He later declined to tell reporters what evidence he had to support his claim.

He said he gave the committee a taped interview in which a Cuban exile named Loran Hall claims he was offered \$50,000 in the office of oilman Lester Logue to kill Kennedy.

In Dallas, Logue called that allegation "ridiculous." He said he will meet with his lawyers to discuss suing Oltmans for libel.

Logue called Oltmans a "publicity psychopath" and said, "This just demonstrates the absolute power that the media has to destroy somebody without recourse."

A spokesman for the Hunt estate in Dallas also strongly denied Oltmans' assertions and said, "To claim that de Mohrenschildt was a friend of H. L. Hunt is totally false."

"Records of the Hunt family bear evidence to this fact," the spokesman added. "His name never appeared on any of the records. It has been publicly reported that de Mohrenschildt had a history of mental problems. If in fact de Mohrenschildt ever claimed to have had any relationship with H. L. Hunt, those claims must be viewed accordingly."

And in Des Moines, Iowa, David Belin, who was on the Warren Commission staff, said: "There's 100 pages of transcript on de Mohrenschildt and 45 on his wife. We did not find any conspiratorial evidence that de Mohrenschildt ever knew Oswald."

After Oltmans had testified, reporters asked Chairman Richardson Preyer (Dem-N.C.) if he believed the story.

"Ask me that question again in a few months," Preyer replied. "Mr. Oltmans was very specific on some things which can be corroborated but not as clear on others."

De Mohrenschildt apparently shot himself to death Tuesday in Palm Beach, Fla., according to officials, just hours after a committee investigator tried to contact him.

Oltmans said in at least two news interviews that de Mohrenschildt wavered between insisting the whole story was true and indicating he made it up to sell a book.

But Oltmans told reporters after his testimony that de Mohrenschildt never told him he had made up the story.

Oltmans said in one interview that he had no idea why Texas oilmen would want to assassinate Kennedy. But he said in another interview that de Mohrenschildt had made it "quite clear to me" what that motive would be. But Oltmans refused to state it.

He said in an NBC radio



WILLEM OLTMANS
Outside the committee room

interview the reason the Cubans wanted to kill Kennedy was "they thought they had a blood debt to settle — they thought that President Kennedy had betrayed them at the Bay of Pigs."

He said the Cuban he believed was one of the Kennedy assassination gunmen had been involved in the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

The journalist said de Mohrenschildt told him he never knew what in fact killed Kennedy because an unspecified number of Cubans were supposed to be shooting at the same time Oswald was.

Oltmans said de Mohrenschildt mixed socially with Dallas oilmen and other wealthy people and became a friend of Hunt, a multimillionaire oilman now dead.

"What Mr. de Mohrenschildt said was that Mr. Oswald was acting at his guidance and his instructions," Oltmans said in an ABC interview. "Mr. de Mohrenschildt indicated to me very strongly that his ties upwards were towards H. L. Hunt . . . and downstairs to Lee Harvey Oswald."

Hunt has figured before in conspiracy theories, but none of them have ever been corroborated.

Oswald wrote a letter to someone named "Mr. Hunt" asking for advice on some unspecified plan shortly before the assassination, but former assassinations committee counsel Richard A. Sprague once said publicly he saw no evidence the letter was to H. L. Hunt.

The Dallas bureau of the FBI said yesterday that the letter is under investigation but that the bureau cannot say who was the intended recipient. An FBI spokesman said the agency has an "open mind" about whether the letter was really intended for H. L. Hunt.

De Mohrenschildt was born in the Soviet Union and was a member of Dallas' Russian community. He taught French at Bishop College there.

He knew Oswald before the assassination and said he and his wife befriended Oswald because Mrs. Oswald was Russian-born.