

SECRET

25X1

Tape 35

Side A, 1/16 -1/8

22 JUL 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: PB/NSC Coordinator

FROM: D CI

SUBJECT:

I'd like to refresh myself on the 25X1
renewed anti-U.S. demonstrations throughout the Caribbean. (S)

Add to the Brzezinski list for Wednesday to have a discussion on the

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SECRET

BOOK REVIEW

New Look at J.F.K. Assassination

By BILL BOYARSKY

Conspiracy by Anthony Summers (McGraw-Hill, \$17.95, illustrated).

In the mid-1960s, those who doubted the Warren Commission's solution to President Kennedy's assassination were generally dismissed as untrustworthy conspiracy addicts. The only forums that generally welcomed them were nighttime radio talk shows. And there, hosts often treated serious scholars and crazies with equal respect. Listeners did not know what to believe about the assassination after hearing a complicated discussion of ballistics immediately followed by an astrologist blaming it all on the stars.

Looking back on those years, it now seems surprising that the nation so unquestioningly accepted the commission's solution to the murder of the century—that Lee Harvey Oswald acted completely on his own in killing the President. Possibly the event was so terrible that few wanted to think about it.

Analgasic Acceptance

In his excellent book, Anthony Summers, a British journalist, says that instead of the truth, Americans accepted the commission report as "an analgesic." The time, he argues, has come for the nation to quit taking aspirin and try to find out what really happened in Dallas in 1963.

An immediate reaction might be "why?" And especially why another Kennedy assassination book. Why? Because new information has come out in recent years from investigations of the House Assassination Committee and the Senate committee investigating U.S. intelligence operations. Summers believes this new information, combined with grave flaws in the Warren Commission findings, makes a new investigation imperative.

Summers distills work by the House and Senate committees, by previous scholars and supplements it with interviews and an investigation of his own.

Carefully and calmly, Summers builds a persuasive case that Oswald was not a lonely, mentally ill killer. He was, in fact, a man with interesting associations, especially for someone just 24 years old. Summers makes a convincing argument that Oswald had associations with U.S. intelligence as a Marine, as a defector living in the Soviet Union and as an alleged pro-Castro demonstrator in New Orleans, where he actually worked out of the office of an extreme right-wing private detective, who used to be an FBI agent.

Motives for Killing

Assassination scholars have argued over Oswald's background for a long time. In that sense, Summers is going over familiar ground. What makes Summers' book significant is that post-Warren Commission investigations have shed so much light on the peculiar relations between U.S. intelligence, the Mafia and the anti-Castro Cubans in the United States. These investigations have provided motives for the killing. Some elements of intelligence and the anti-Castro Cubans opposed Kennedy's growing inclination to reach a settlement with Castro. The mob wanted to stop Kennedy's prosecution of the Mafia.

Summers believes Oswald was tied to the anti-Castro movement and that his days with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee were a ruse to make him seem pro-Castro, and to have the Kennedy assassin portrayed in the press as being pro-Castro. In Dallas, Summers argues, the anti-Kennedy conspirators left Oswald holding the bag and then had Jack Ruby kill him.

"From the plethora of past theories as to who killed Kennedy and why, the key targets of suspicion can now be distilled to three—members of the Mafia, American intelligence personnel and anti-Castro activists," Summers writes. "Elements of all these groups, accomplices in crimes that they indubitably were in the Sixties, may have been involved."

The book does not settle the dispute. Preoccupied with conspiracy, Summers does not hesitate to make shaky inferences. A 1963 Associated Press interview with Fidel Castro, for example, went against Summers' theories. Without an ounce of evidence, he raised the possibility that the reporter who wrote the story was controlled by the CIA.

But this book does not have to settle the dispute. The book's importance is the compilation of existing material in readable, understandable style. Considering the enormous amount of detail and the confusing number of characters, Summers has covered the case with literary style, particularly once he is out of the forest of conflicting physical evidence. Then his story becomes a thriller as Summers evokes the dangerous world of right-wing fanatics, anti-Castro Cubans and Mafia killers that are a part of the assassination story.

Summers has marshaled the facts that argue for a federal investigation of a murder, the murder that ended America's post-World War II optimism and began years of trauma.

Boyarisky is The Times' Los-Angeles County bureau chief.