

CIA role claim in Kennedy killing

New video and photographic evidence that puts three senior CIA operatives at the scene of Robert Kennedy's assassination has been brought to light.

The evidence was shown in a report by Shane O'Sullivan, broadcast on BBC Newsnight.

It reveals that the operatives and four unidentified associates were at the Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles in the moments before and after the shooting on 5 June, 1968.

The CIA had no domestic jurisdiction and some of the officers were based in South-East Asia at the time, with no reason to be in Los Angeles.

'Decoy'

Kennedy had just won the California Democratic primary on an anti-War ticket and was set to challenge Nixon for the White House when he was shot in a kitchen pantry.

A 24-year-old Palestinian, Sirhan Sirhan, was arrested as the lone assassin and notebooks at his house seemed to incriminate him.

However, even under hypnosis, he has never been able to remember the shooting and defence psychiatrists concluded he was in a trance at the time.

Witnesses placed Sirhan's gun several feet in front of Kennedy but the autopsy showed the fatal shot came from one inch behind.

Dr Herbert Spiegel, a world authority on hypnosis at Columbia University, believes Sirhan may have been hypnotically programmed to act as a decoy for the real assassin.

Evidence

The report is the result of a three-year investigation by filmmaker Shane O'Sullivan. He reveals new video and photographs showing three senior CIA operatives at the hotel.

" What were they doing there? It's our obligation as friends of Bob Kennedy to investigate this "

Paul Schrade

Three of these men have been positively identified as senior officers who worked together in 1963 at JMWAVE, the CIA's Miami base for its Secret War on Castro.

David Morales was Chief of Operations and once told friends:

"I was in Dallas when we got the son of a bitch and I was in Los Angeles when we got the little bastard."

Gordon Campbell was Chief of Maritime Operations and George Joannides was Chief of Psychological Warfare Operations.

Joannides was called out of retirement in 1978 to act as the CIA liaison to the Congressional investigation into the JFK assassination. Now, we see him at the Ambassador Hotel the night a second Kennedy is assassinated.

Memory

Monday, 20 November would have been Bobby Kennedy's 81st birthday. In Los Angeles, his son Max has just broken ground on a new high-school project in memory of his father on the old Ambassador Hotel site.

Paul Schrade, a key figure behind the school project, was walking behind Robert Kennedy that night and was shot in the head. He believes this new evidence merits fresh investigation:

"It seems very strange to me that these guys would be at a Kennedy celebration. What were they doing there? And why were they there? It's our obligation as friends of Bob Kennedy to investigate this."

Ed Lopez, a former Congressional investigator who worked with Joannides in 1978, says:

"I think the key people at the CIA need to go back to anybody who might have been around back then, bring them in and interview them, and ask - is this Gordon Campbell? Is this George Joannides?"

This report was shown on Newsnight on Monday, 20 November, 2006.

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