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CIAY Cuba

ORCA MAFIA

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(orig under Bell)

The conspiracy theories about the Ken-
have never been properly laid to rest. The
second Mafia gangster who claimed he knew
has again raised many questions, and

Was there a connection?

BY DAVID BELL IN WASHINGTON

TWO WEEKS ago the body of an elderly gangster was found floating in an oil drum off the coast of Miami. His body had been supposed to sink, but gases from decomposition kept it afloat.

The murder bore all the marks of the Mafia, which has disposed of errant members this way before, but its significance almost certainly extends far beyond that of just another gangland slaying. For it is the latest in a series of puzzling incidents that have raised important new questions about the assassination of President John Kennedy in 1963, questions now being asked with increasing frequency in Washington and elsewhere. They involve a murky world peopled by CIA agents, the Mafia, Cubans and the FBI with the links between these disparate groups far from clear.

Thirteen years after the death of the President, there is now more interest than there has been for years in its circumstances. New information, some of which the Warren investigating commission did not have, and some which it chose to ignore, has raised perplexing questions that have yet to be adequately answered. So far there is nothing like any conclusive evidence to refute the commission's conclusion that Mr. Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone and on his own account, killed Kennedy.

But, as the Washington Post, which with the New York Times has in the past taken little notice of conspiracy theories, is now

deeply immersed in the story, put it last week in a long editorial there is now a suggestion that "there is an overlay of potentially embarrassing information sufficiently persuasive to keep an awful lot of people from wanting to have this thing aired," and Senator Richard Schweiker, Mr. Ronald Reagan's erstwhile running mate, concluded after chairing a special sub-committee on the assassination that "the only thing I am certain of is that we do not yet know the truth about it."

So much has been written about the murder in Dallas, so many false leads have led nowhere, that many people have been tempted to leave the tangled and confused circumstances that surrounded it alone. But the implications of the latest evidence are considerable and the incident is still too fresh in the public mind for it to be brushed aside. What follows is an attempt to set down the latest doubts about what happened and why, doubts which now seem more than ever likely to lead eventually to a new full-scale inquiry.

The gangster in the drum was a Mr. John Roselli, a Mafia figure of long standing, who with a Mr. Sam Giancana was among those who were recruited by the CIA in the early 1960s to take part in at least one of its six abortive attempts to kill Fidel Castro. These attempts, which included the use of poison pens, exploding seashells and even a special powder to make Castro's

hair fall out, were revealed in detail last November by the Senate Intelligence Committee.

The committee, whose temporary mandate expired earlier this year, was set up in January, 1975, following widespread allegations of what it later called



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"substantial wrongdoing" by the domestic and other intelligence agencies serving the U.S. Government. It issued an interim report last year and a final one this spring and the latter concluded that "intelligence activities have not generally been governed and controlled in accord with the fundamental principles of our constitutional system of government."

It took evidence from some 800 witnesses, 250 under oath and 50 in public. It caused the greatest stir when it released its interim report which revealed that apart from the plots to kill Castro the CIA considered kill-

ing Patrice Lumumba in the Congo, toyed with the idea of overthrowing President Diem in Vietnam, assisted a group which later shot Sr. Raphael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic and considered removing General Rene Schneider, chief of the general staff in Chile, under President Allende.

Mr. Giancana was shot dead in his closely-guarded Chicago home just before he was due to give evidence to this committee. Mr. Roselli, who testified twice, has now also met an untimely end. Mr. Giancana, incidentally, also had a girl friend called Judith Campbell Exner who says that she was also intimately involved with President Kennedy at the same time. Kennedy aides have since denied this.

It is not clear if President Kennedy knew of the CIA plots in all their detail and the Senate Intelligence Committee skirted around the issue. Mr. Robert Kennedy, the then Attorney General, is generally believed to have known of their existence, but it is not clear if he too was aware of their extent.

The Washington Post reported on Sunday that in 1967 Mr. Drew Pearson—the celebrated American investigative reporter—uncovered some details of the link between the CIA and the Mafia. He was so disturbed by them that, before printing what he had discovered, he went to Chief Justice Warren and asked him to see Mr. Edward Morgan, a prominent Washington lawyer who was one of his sources.