

Kerry camp hiring 'assassin'?

Man who plotted murder of congressmen offered job

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A Vietnam veteran who plotted to kill members of Congress in 1971 is reportedly ready to accept a position working in the presidential campaign of John Kerry.

Leaders of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, including John Kerry, debated a plot to assassinate congressmen in November 1971, according to a report in the New York Sun.

The Kerry campaign denies the senator and presidential candidate was present at the meeting, saying he quit the organization prior to the heated session in Kansas City, Nov. 12-15, 1971.

However, Randy Barnes of Missouri Veterans for Kerry, disputes that account. Barnes participated in the meeting and he says Kerry, then 27, was at the meeting, voted against the plot and then resigned from the organization. According to the Sun report, another Vietnam vet who attended the meeting, Terry Du-Bose, agreed that Kerry was there.

That the VVAW debated killing members of Congress is not a new revelation. The plot was reported in Gerald Nicosia's 2001 book, "Home To War," that one of the key leaders of the organization, Scott Camil, "proposed the assassination of the most hard-core conservative members of Congress, as well as any other powerful, intractable opponents of the antiwar movement." The book reports on the Kansas City meeting at which Camil's plan was debated and then voted down.

In a cover blurb on the book, Kerry said it "ties together the many threads of a difficult period." Kerry hosted a party for the book in the Hart Senate Office Building that was televised on C-SPAN, according to the Sun.

Camil, never prosecuted for the plot, plans to accept an offer by the Florida Kerry organization to become active in the presidential campaign, according to the report. Camil's plot, involving eight to 10 Marines, targeted the Southern senatorial leadership including John Stennis, Strom Thurmond and John Tower.

Kerry's service in Vietnam and his activities after the war have become a major source of controversy – especially with other Vietnam veterans.

Last week, one of his crew members accused him of cowardice and making strategic mistakes in battle. The testimony of Steven Gardner, a gunner's mate on the first patrol boat commanded by Kerry in the Mekong delta, contradicts accounts of the senator's military career that depict him as a brave and aggressive lieutenant who won three Purple Hearts.

"He absolutely did not want to engage the enemy when I was with him," Gardner said in an interview with the Boston Globe. "He wouldn't go in there and search. That is why I have a negative viewpoint of John Kerry."

Gardner has refused to join the tight-knit group of Vietnam veterans who are passionate supporters of their former comrade's White House bid.

Kerry is said to be "angry" about the slur.