

Movie inspires a closer look at JFK killing

Looking at evidence that demands different verdict

By Greg Tully
Staff Writer

Oliver Stone's latest motion picture, the controversial "JFK", is a masterpiece and is, in my opinion at least, clearly the best picture of 1991.

It is memorable for its tremendous, innovative use of footage combined with use of several different types of film to simulate that footage. It is memorable for the outstanding performances by Kevin Costner, Gary Oldman, Tommy Lee Jones and particularly Joe Pesci. It is memorable for the cameo appearances by Donald Sutherland, Walter Matthau, Jack Lemmon, Ed Asner, Brian Doyle Murray, Kevin Bacon, John Candy and Jim Garrison. But mostly, it is memorable for the subject matter it tackles and the firestorm of passionate reaction that has ensued.

"JFK" is the story of New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison's investigation into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the subsequent trial of Clay Shaw, a high-profile New Orleans businessman, whom Garrison prosecuted as part of a conspiracy in the assassination. Garrison's work resulted in the only trial in history of the assassination.

Stone uses Garrison as a vehicle for his own conspiracy theories, as well as those of Garrison and fellow conspiracy researchers Jim Marrs and Mark Lane.

Stone's vision is, at times, mesmerizing. Pieces of evidence, witnesses, conjecture, names, dates and places roll through the movie as if off an assembly line. The theory involves the Pentagon, the CIA, the FBI, the anti-Castro Cubans, the Dallas Homicide Unit and even Lyndon Johnson in the alleged conspiracy.

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The movie has drawn an incredible backlash from the most unified marriage of government and media in memory.

Why? Because it attacks "the truth". Their truth. That Lee Harvey Oswald, demented and acting alone, killed President Kennedy. That "truth", it seems, must never be threatened.

But what is the real truth? What truly happened on Nov. 22, 1963 in Dallas, Texas, and the months and years leading up to and following it?

Well, to believe the Warren Commission, the official government report on the assassination, Oswald was a rabid communist and his killer, Jack Ruby, was a patriot who wanted to spare Kennedy's widow, Jackie Kennedy, the pain of a trial, so Ruby eliminated Oswald. There is no evidence of any other possible explanation, according to the commission. The Warren Commission has become the bible of The Establishment

(government and media).

So, let's examine the facts. George Bernard Shaw once said "Assassination is the extreme form of censorship." And so it was with John Fitzgerald Kennedy and Lee Harvey Oswald.

John Kennedy in 1963 was at war with the FBI and, more precisely, J. Edgar Hoover. Kennedy had promised to "splinter the CIA into a thousand pieces and scatter it to the wind," and was, reportedly, about to end the cold war and withdraw from Vietnam. With Kennedy's death, the CIA and the FBI prospered, the cold war with the Soviet Union and the hot war with North Vietnam both raged on.

Certainly, too, Oswald was a man with many secrets. He was a supposed communist arrested in a disturbance in which he was distributing pro-communist Cuban literature. Yet, some of the leaflets were stamped with Oswald's name and the address of an office which was a front for Cuban invasion activity. Oswald was, at best, a medium shot who had supposedly killed the President of the U.S. in a display of marksmanship that would have made Robin Hood proud.

And what of the Warren Commission? Napoleon once said, "In politics, absurdity is not a handicap." This is the best explanation possible for the Warren Commission.

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The commission ignored the testimony of 51 witnesses who heard shots from the grassy knoll to the side of Kennedy and not, as the commission believed, the Texas School Book Depository where Oswald was located.

Using Abraham Zapruder's home movie of the shooting, it was established that the shooting took only 5.6 seconds, an amount of time possible for only three shots from Oswald. Since one of the shots hit a civilian a hundred yards from Kennedy's limo, the commission had to come up with a plausible explanation for all the wounds to Kennedy and Texas Governor John Connolly. Hence, the "magic bullet" theory. They asserted that one bullet, fired by Oswald, caused seven wounds in the two men, presumably zig-zagging around and, at one point, possibly pausing in mid-air for 1.6 seconds. If the magic bullet theory is not believed, then the whole foundation of the Warren Commission findings come tumbling down.

The Warren Commission, acting almost solely on evidence provided by the FBI (who, amazingly, closed their case against Oswald within two weeks), found that Oswald was undoubtedly a communist. This was found, largely, on three facts: One witness' claim that Oswald was a marxist in his Marine Corps days; a CIA claim that Oswald had been seen entering the Russian Embassy in Mexico City; and, most importantly, Oswald's

defection to the Soviet Union in the early '60's.

However, that one witness was not closely associated with Oswald in the Marines, and, in fact, lived on the opposite side of the base from Oswald. The Warren Commission ignored contrary testimony from all of Oswald's closest friends to believe this one witness.

The CIA, who have Russian Embassies under constant camera surveillance, could not produce a photograph of Oswald entering the embassy.

The defection was one of the focal points of "JFK". Oswald, according to the government, walked into the U.S. Embassy in Moscow and announced his intention to defect and sell military secrets to the Soviets. Instead of being charged with treason on the spot, he was allowed to go. Months later, Oswald, having fulfilled his quest, returned to the embassy and asked to be reinstated as a U.S. citizen. He was granted his passport within 48 hours and was even lent the money to return home. He was not even debriefed, standard procedure at that time for even casual tourists to the USSR.

Stone and Garrison insist that this would be impossible if Oswald was not, in fact, a CIA operative. This may have been the beginning of the set-up to frame Lee Harvey Oswald.

Other evidence is disturbing as well. Such as the gunshots themselves. How did Oswald do that shooting job? Two shots with a mediocre rifle, apparently through the branches of a tree. The FBI's best marksmen couldn't duplicate this performance. Not to mention Oswald's history as a poor shot. Or that the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle that Oswald is supposed to have used had a defective scope. Or that nitrate tests done the night of Nov. 22 showed that there was no way Oswald could have fired a rifle that day.

This is just a sampling of the troubling evidence raised by "JFK". Evidence ignored by the Warren Commission.

Now, another question has surfaced. Why is the Establishment so intent on burying this evidence, or any questions one might raise because of it?

To wit, *The Washington Post*. After obtaining part of Stone's first draft for a script to "JFK", they weighed in with the first public attack on Stone. In an article titled "Dallas in Wonderland", they said, among other things, that "Stone is chasing fiction." How can any high-profile publication begin attacking a movie that hadn't yet assembled a cast or crew? Or even finalized a script? In fact, that script would end up being re-written five times.

Or *The New York Times*, who have devoted more than 20 articles to single-minded Stone-bashing.

Or *Time, Inc.*, who have de-

voted articles in almost all of their many publications to the same purpose. And why should we listen to anything *Time/Life* has to say about the JFK assassination anyway? They refused to let the public see the Zapruder film for over six years, until Garrison had it subpoenaed for the Clay Shaw trial.

Or Dan Rather, who decided it was so important to slam "JFK" that he magically transformed himself from impartial reporter into Mr. Editorial (twice).

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The Establishment has told us that this movie is dangerous solely because it makes a hero out of Garrison and a villain out of Clay Shaw.

The Establishment has accepted as fact the allegations that Garrison drugged witnesses and accepted bribes from gambling operations.

In fact, the drug was Sodium Pentothal, or truth serum, used under the supervision of the Louisiana Surgeon General. It was used to determine that witnesses were telling the truth when they had earlier come to Garrison. The charges of accepting money from gambling organizations was a total fabrication, with one doctored audio tape and one witness who admitted to being blackmailed by the government into testifying against Garrison.

Shaw was made out as a saint, wronged by the vindictive, self-serving Garrison. In fact, Shaw testified that he had never met anti-Castro rebel David Ferrie, but, after his death, photos were found of Shaw and Ferrie together. In 1979, CIA Director Richard Helms admitted that Shaw had been a covert CIA agent. Shaw was also a member of an organization that tried to assassinate French President Charles DeGaulle. When is the media going to inform the public of these facts?

The Establishment also is quick to point out that Shaw was acquitted within an hour of jury deliberations. However, they fail to mention the death of a key witness or the judge throwing out a key piece of evidence. They also fail to mention that all the jury members are on record saying they believed there was a conspiracy, but couldn't tie Shaw to it. Or that the judge said he thought the verdict was wrong.

In fact, the government's case against Garrison took even less time for the jury to realize it was hogwash.

Maybe, in 28 years, someone will make a movie about The Establishment's plot to verbally assassinate Oliver Stone and Jim

Garrison.

Why? Why is The Establishment so afraid of this movie that it would resort to tactics stinking of McCarthyism or Stalinism?

The government, obviously, has something to hide. That is their reason.

But, what of the media? They have backed the Warren Commission for 25 years, trying desperately to discredit any other explanations, even though they make more sense. Will they admit now that they have been wrong? That they believed the greatest lie ever passed off on the American people? Of course not. They have changed, from the objective reporters of fact, into a self-serving entity concerned only with their own survival. They have become, in Stone's words, "George Orwell's worst nightmare."

They tell us it is ridiculous to believe Stone's vision of a conspiracy involving the CIA, the FBI and the Pentagon. But those of us examining the evidence objectively accept it as a strong possibility. Those of us grounded in reality understand what our government is capable of. Were Watergate, Vietnam, or Iran-Contra also ridiculous? If Stone's vision is ridiculous, the Warren Commission was ridiculous times 20.

Now, Stone's movie may bring a release of the CIA's many documents on Oswald and Ruby, as well as the evidence that convinced a House sub-committee in 1979 that there was "probably a conspiracy." But, we will never truly know what happened on Nov. 22, 1963 or why it happened. The Establishment has assured that.

And that is worse than ridiculous. That is criminal.

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