

MONDAY, APRIL 20, 1992

The JFK Conspiracy

(Weds. (15), 8-10 p.m., KTLA)

Distributed by All American Communications Television. Exec producer, George Paige; co-producer, Daniel Helfgott; line producer, Mark Rains; director, Bill Davis; music, Richard Glasser; art director, Brian Scott.

Host: James Earl Jones.

Lacking the editorial authority or production sophistication of an infantry training film on field sanitation, this JFK assassination-conspiracy compendium represents the latest and most blatant effort to take a payday from the controversy.

The greatest mystery here is not who killed JFK but why James Earl Jones, the distinguished actor and imposing voice of the CNN network identification, got involved in a production that would humiliate a Junior Achievement broadcasting class.

Jones spent most of the two hours, broadcast live, peering uneasily at the camera, leaving the viewer to wonder whether he was bewildered about what was going

on around him, sincerely astounded at the latest rehash of conspiracy paranoia or—like a deer mesmerized in the brights of an onrushing logging truck—horrified by what would happen next.

To the degree that one could sustain attention, this production seemed a chaotic blur of people (some quite peculiar), production pieces and bizarre re-enactments designed to establish some new, ill-constructed conspiracy concept that even "Hard Copy" might find a tad implausible or muddy.

Is there an intelligent, legitimate broadcast to be done about the assassination controversy? Absolutely! Will it be done by the zealots of either side? Absolutely not!

There is a role for a calm, balanced broadcast that fairly frames the most compelling contentions of both sides, giving the viewers a basis for rational conclusions.

But that kind of a editorial effort is unlikely. As this syndicated broadcast makes clear, the issue now seems firmly in the hands of the champions of cheesy conspiracy commercialism.

—Van Gordon Sauter