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June 3, 1991

Mr. Oliver Stone
Camelot Productions Corporation
11255 Olympia Blvd.
Los Angeles CA 90064

Copy to 512 S. Peters St., S.202
New Orleans, LA 70130

Dear Mr. Stone:

Your statement in the June 2 Washington Post establishes that, like your hero, Jim Garrison, you can't tell the truth even by accident - not even when under pressure to do so.

It also flaunts your ignorance of the established facts and realities of both the JFK assassination and its investigations.

That you would undertake what, without excess immodesty, is known in your trade as "The Oliver Stone Project for 1991" based only on the limitless unproven, unprovable and mostly irrational conspiracy theories while refusing access to what you do not acknowledge even exists, a quarter of a million pages of official records relating to it, is shocking to me. Instead, you pretend they do not exist. This is false and a further display of your ignorance of and contempt for fact and truth. You also pretend that the Commission's files are "kept from the public until the year 2039" and that "the CIA has the option of continuing this censorship until the year 2118."

These faults and misrepresentations, far from all, when you are so far into production of your movie reflect your determination not to face the to me crude and vulgar reality - that you have fallen in love with the irresponsible, misleading, misinforming and not infrequently nutty and impossible conspiracy theories and that you see and anticipate success in exploiting and commercializing them.

You have the effrontery to state what you say I "believe" without having spoken to me. You say that I believe "that the FBI and CIA withheld evidence that might have resulted in different findings by the Warren Commission." This is false!

I believe no such thing. I believe and published the exact opposite. The Commission began its work with a determination to conclude that Oswald was the lone assassin as I state in the chapter, "Conclusions First," in my Post Mortem. It began also in mortal terror of the FBI, articulating this in its January 22, 1964, executive session. I obtained the stenographic transcript by Freedom of Information action although it had decided to destroy that record. (It missed the stenotypist's tape. I didn't.)

Moreover, if the Commission had wanted to make "different findings," what the FBI did give it and it ignored was more than enough.

The Washington Post, against which you make numerous false charges, published this in its 1966 Memorial Day edition with extraordinary prominence, under a banner headline across the top of the front page and more than a full page of text.

This is not in Garrison's book, On the Trail of the Assassins, the one trail that, to my personal knowledge, Garrison never took.

Despite your weaseling, your movie remains based on that book.

Neither Garrison nor you, even when it could have advanced the argument you both make without substance, use that executive session transcript. The Post did, that one and others I distributed when I forced the government to disgorge them.

The grim truth is that you are both ignorant of the fact that, beginning the very first day, the government on all levels decided not to investigate the crime itself and never did. This is clear in the records you ignore and pretend are suppressed.

If you were not so determined to exploit and commercialize what you found so attractive in Garrison's self-serving, self-glorifying fiction, you could have made effective use of this truth of which you both are so ignorant.

You say your movie "does use Garrison's investigation as the vehicle to explore the various credible assassination theories, and incorporates everything that has been discovered in the 20 years since Garrison's effort."

You do not use his "investigation." You use, blindly and uncritically, his untruthful representation of it in his book.

You don't know enough about the established fact to know what is and is not credible. Most of those theories are not credible.

You infer that Garrison did "discover" fact and bring it to light. He did not - not a single fact relevant to the assassination.

And when you say your movie "incorporates everything that has been discovered in the 20 years since Garrison's effort," you, sir, tell an extraordinarily big lie and you know it!

You do know about and you do refer to my "persistent Freedom of Information suits." They did yield about a quarter of a million pages of previously withheld records.. You did not ask and you did not examine a single page of them, Not even when I offered access and copies to your "research director," Jane Rosconi. When she asked if you might phone me the next day, I said certainly, but that "next day" never came.

Instead of "exploring" you deliberately ignore "everything that has been discovered in the 20 years since Garrison's" fiasco you refer to as his "effort."

When it serves your purpose you change your description of your movie to merely "entertainment." Earlier, once you began promoting it along with your just-released (and also severely criticized) movie "Doors", you unabashedly and

repeatedly told the country you were using your movie to tell it who killed their President, why and how.

Without this false and boastful claim for your commercialization and exploitation, I would have said nothing about your movie. As a work of fiction, it is entitled to mislead, deceive, misrepresent, invent and imagine anything at all. But once you claimed to be telling the truth factually about who killed JFK, why and how - you even used the word "history" - you changed the ground rules, you made yourself and your movie subject to criticism.

I believe this is vital in a representative society, that it is required of those of us who undertake to inform the people about major issues and controversies.

I am the one who initiated proper, accurate and truthful exposure of your own representation of what you are up to as well as your misrepresentation of it.

How dare you claim to be immune to criticism merely because your movie is not yet out?

If you were not so egocentric and pretendedly omniscient, you would understand that criticism is one means by which fault and error are correctable.

If you really intended telling the people who killed their President, why and how, you would have welcomed criticism and benefited from it.

The fact, as you well know, is that as soon as you announced that you were basing your movie on Garrison's book, I wrote you, on February 10, documenting irremediable errors, glaring and nonaccidental untruths and overt dishonesties in it. That was some time before you started shooting, before I got a copy of your script.

You can't have it both ways - assuring the people that you will take the truth and the full truth to them on film and be immune to criticism when you persist in the exact opposite after being fully informed, including with documentary proof.

You make a big thing of "the hobo pictures." You insist, without offering proof because you cannot - without even pretending to cite a source, whether or not a credible source - that "the hobos' arrest was about 25-30 minutes after the shooting - not 90 as Lardner claimed - and they were taken off a train behind the Book Depository, not from the other side of Dealey Plaza, as Lardner asserted."

Aside from the incorrectness of "behind" and "other side," "behind" meaning north when you are referring to west and "other side" referring to a block west and more than two blocks south, and the inaccuracy of saying those men were hobos when they weren't, were arrested when they were not, you have swallowed and retailed a Garrison invention that he was about to magnify into another national scandal and disaster when, as part of my prevention of it, I had two independent investigations made.

Quite literally, Garrison was about to charge Robert Perrin, who had killed himself 15 months earlier in Garrison's own jurisdiction, with being one

of the alleged assassins on the Grassy Knoll, and with him, after compromising with his staff over their firm objections, a single one of those alleged "tramps" Garrison insisted was Edgar Eugene Bradley, then the west coast representative of the right-wing Cape May, New Jersey, preacher, Reverend Carl McIntire.

Alarmed at the utter insanity of all of this and unable to persuade Garrison to abandon it, two members of his staff asked me to help. By doing what the to you demon investigator, Jim Garrison, did not deign to do, I went over the few reports filed by a central figure in your script, Bill Boxley, and Louis Ivon, then Garrison's chief investigator, sent his investigators out to conduct a few investigations for me that Garrison had not made.

This left without question the fact that Perrin had killed himself no matter how convinced Garrison was that his corpse was an assassin.

It also made clear that Boxley, in his misplaced loyalty to Garrison, had gone out and made up "proof" of what Garrison had himself made up.

I have my copy of the report and analysis and the evidentiary documentation that led Garrison to fire Boxley.

I had done nothing about all those many Garrisonian "identifications" of those "tramps" because it simply wasn't possible to investigate and debunk all the dreams, whims, notions, fabrications and nightmares you refer to as "credible assassination theories." They have been "identified" as Watergaters E. Howard Hunt and Frank Sturgis; a right-wing, west-coast talk-show host; the convicted murderer, Charles Harrelson; and among many other nonsensical "identifications," even Lyndon Johnson's farm manager.

With this additional national disgrace impending, I sent sets of those so-called "tramp" pictures to my friend Henry Wade, former FBI agent and then the respected Dallas District Attorney, and to Paul M. Rothermel, II, also a former FBI agent and then H. L. Hunt's chief of security.

Wade had a professional police investigator on his staff conduct an investigation. Rothermel conducted his own. These two independent investigations, neither knowing that the other was being made, reported exactly the same thing to me:

The men were winos. They were boozing in a parked boxcar on the track behind the Central Annex post office, 217 South Houston Street. It was an hour and a half after the assassination. They were walked past the Book Depository and photographed there only because that was the only way they could be walked away and to police cars.

Knowing nothing at all about the fact and caring even less about it, you unload Oscar-earning indignation over the police failure to record the names of innocent men they did not arrest, charging "negligence" and that "at such a critical time."

It was indeed "such a critical time." So critical that the police would have found it impossible to do anything else if they had booked and charged every drunk.

Aside from questions of civil rights in which I believe you profess belief.

It happens that the set of pictures I sent Rothermel was incomplete. He told me, "My old boy at the post office says there were more - three men. These pictures show only two." The "old boy" was correct. His correctness confirms that he did have personal knowledge.

If you had even glanced at those pictures instead of swallowing Garrison's fiction so uncritically, you would have seen that the men were in no sense dangerous. They were not handcuffed. Not a single policeman had his pistol out.

Do you really believe that suspected assassins would not have been handcuffed, that the police would have had their pistols holstered?

Did you, personally, pay any attention to those pictures at all or did you just make up a convenient time for them to have been taken?

If you had examined them with the sharp eye of a movie-maker, you would also have found it obvious, from the clear shadows, that the pictures had to have been taken at least an hour and a half after the assassination.

Did you win those Oscars without having the common sense or intelligence to ask yourself what assassins, after killing the President of the United States, were doing hanging around in a cul-de sac where even the most perfunctory search would get them captured?

(Wanna buy the Brooklyn Bridge - real cheap?)

You were not ^{un}aware of what I did to save Garrison from Garrison, not to save him from Boxley, his misrepresentation in his book. I went into it in my letter to you.

You "improved" Garrison's "improvement" of reality by making Boxley an assistant district attorney and on Garrison's staff when Garrison began his adventures. The truth is that Garrison hired him a half-year after embarking on his exploits, over staff objections and paying him from private funds.

This makes Garrison look like less the chump than he was and is another example of your hiding his phoniness for your personal profit and exploitation.

(I could have sent you an FBI record "proving" that the "boxcar" was "about a mile away" but, like so much based on recollection, this recollection was wrong. It also says the boxcar was "down the tracks from the Depository." That 1968 investigation was prompted by another misuse of those same pictures as relating to the King assassination! If you would like a copy, the identification is 44-1986-Sub E, 1681, Memphis to Baltimore and Dallas, 8/21/68.)

Rothermel was willing to provide this help because, with the assistance of a member of Garrison's staff, I took him a copy of the manuscript of a fake book that has the marks of French intelligence all over it. Garrison had gone for this fabrication so completely, so lustily, that he even prevailed upon the French spook, who used the name "Herve Lamarre" and the pen name "James Hepburn,"

to change the title from "L'Amerique Brule" (America Burns) to "Farewell America."

One of your "credible" sources, Jim Marrs' Crossfire, actually lists this and another fake book as legitimate in his bibliography.

Rothermel is among those who established for me that Lamarre was a French spook well known in Dallas as a petroleum expert, among other skills.

Were this not enough of a reflection of the dependability of your hero/protagonist/author whose shameless rewriting of his own history is the basis of your "higher truth," I add that, even after Steve Jaffe, the amateur investigator Garrison sent to France to investigate, had returned with the report that Farewell America was a spook disinformation, Garrison was about to endorse a movie version of it when I was able to abort that, too.

Having come back with this knowledge, Jaffe was nonethelss accompanying Lamarre when he had the professed expectation of getting Garrison's endorsement of that phony film!

(Is it only a coincidence that ^{he} and your publicist have the same name, Jaffe, and that she ordered two of my books he did not have?)

There is much more to this incredible stupidity and self-deception by your Pink Panther basis of your "higher truth" but I now restrict myself to pointing out that there is the well-known relationship between the CIA and its French counterpart, one possible explanation of the large effort the French made and the not inconsiderable amount of money they invested in those projects that Garrison's own staff recognized as the great hazard to him that it was, but you could not use it, could you?

Made him a fool, didn't it?

You'd have had nothing left for your "higher truth" and your movie, would you?

Are you beginning to see that, had the Post intended to ruin you and your assassination fantasy as you said and want believed, there was ever so much more available to it that it did not use?

There are other untruths and misrepresentations in your statement. I now refer to only a few more because it is apparent that fact means nothing to you in your concept of what is "higher truth."

You say that in his May 19 article Lardner "even makes Weisberg - supposedly his ally - out to be anti-conspiracy ..." (your emphasis) What Lardner actually wrote is that I have "little patience for the many assassination theories that keep popping up." He did not write what you say he did. It does not mean what you say it means. It does not represent me as believing that there was no conspiracy in the JFK assassination, and I do not. The well-known fact is that, to the degree time and health permitted, I have tried to debunk the irrationalities, fabrications, fantasies, overt frauds, shams, sometimes nonsensical and always unproven theories palmed off on the still-suffering people as truthful accounts of how their beloved President was killed, why and by whom, words you used to describe your movie.

"... our film is having to rely on bits and pieces of information" because "the Warren Commission" records are allegedly not available. Aside from the fact that what remained of the Commission staff once it published supervised their transfer to the National Archives for them to be made available under law and regulation, which began rather rapidly considering the work entailed, the next year, you have not had to "rely on bits and pieces" because, in addition to what I made available (and you declined), the FBI and the CIA have public reading rooms that are used regularly by scholars and writers, and they give access to what those agencies have disclosed.

I emphasize that you and your so-called "experts," whose expertise, like your interest, is limited to these zany and unproven theories rather than fact, knew that a quarter of a million pages of them were available to you from me.

You now say that your film is "an entertainment project" intended to "educate the public" but "does not purport to 'solve' this murder mystery." This is the exact opposite of your launching your self-promotions by saying, in your words, not mine, that you were going to tell the people "who" murdered their President, "how" and "why."

Or, as you still cling to this while beginning to modify and moderate it when interviewed by the New Orleans Times-Picayune - after Lardner's story appeared - your intent "in a realistic light" is "to get on with the story, which is why Kennedy was killed, and how we think it was done and who did it."

in the words of the old TV show, and a TV show is not appropriate for what you are up to and have said, "Will the real Oliver Stone please stand up?"

If, Oscars and all, there is one.


You are, as I warned you, a Mack Sennett producing a Keystone Kops with a Pink Panther star making a Mardi Gras of one of the greatest of our national tragedies.

In this, as in all such previous exploits, you give aid and comfort to those you claim you want to expose. I have innumerable records in which they pick and choose part of these theories they can disprove most easily and paper the government with memos attesting that, as always, this is another of the many efforts to prove them wrong that prove them right.

With your reputation and skills and Warner's millions, you will reach an Oscar-earning high with misinformation and disinformation; will bury truth even deeper; will protect the errant in government and in the crime; and will mislead and confuse the people even more.

I am truly sorry that this is what the Oliver Stone of "Platoon" is doing with that most subversive of crimes that turned the world around and to his own reputation.

Sincerely,


Harold Weisberg