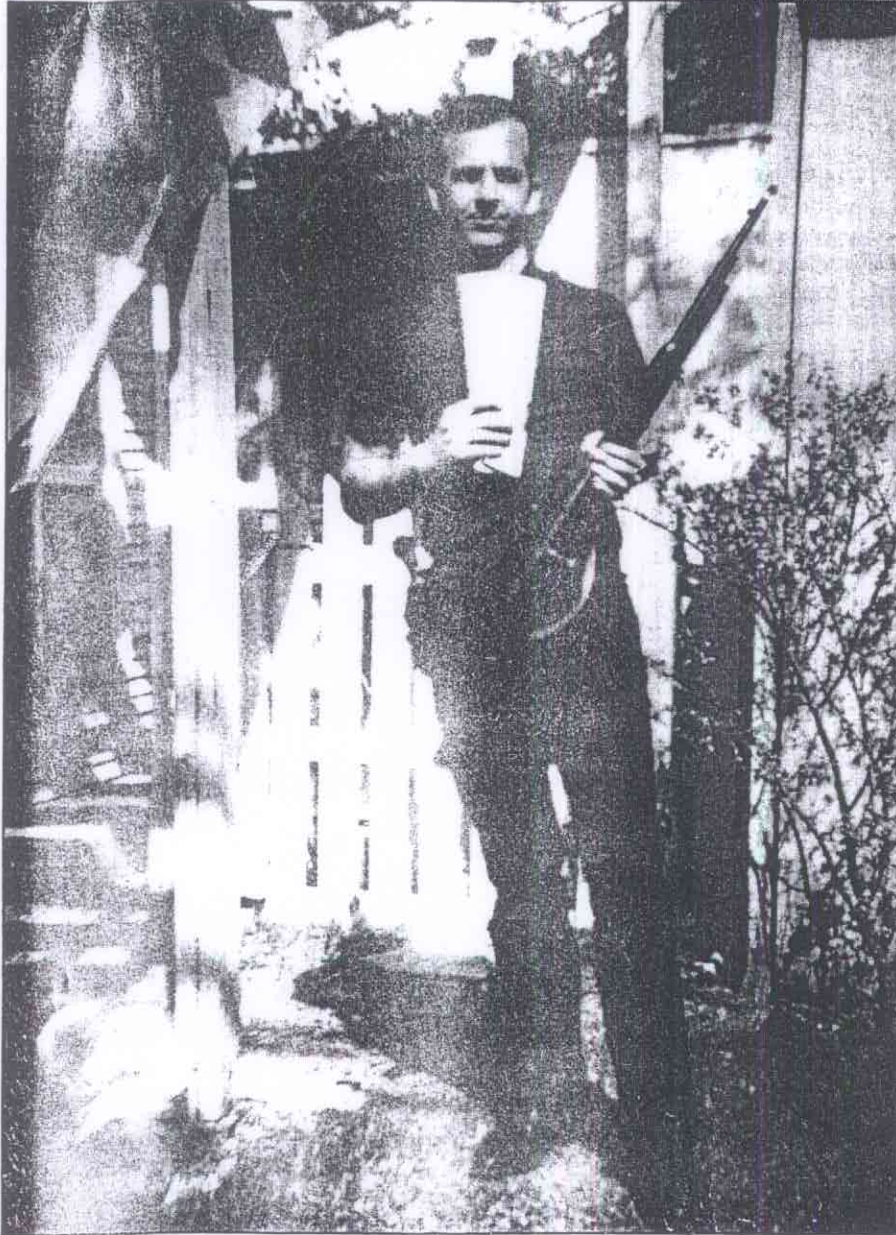


Lies Of Our Times

SEPTEMBER 1991

A MAGAZINE TO CORRECT THE RECORD

\$5.00



Why is the shadow on Oswald's face perpendicular and the shadow on the ground at an angle?

- A. The Warren Commission lied.
- B. Life Magazine lied.
- C. George Lardner lied.
- D. All of the above.

ANSWER: D

Sex, Hollywood Films, and the Same Old Lies

Oliver Stone's "JFK" Under Attack

The Dahmer Case, the San Diego Hooker Murders, and the St. John's Trial

Chomsky Sums Up the Gulf War; More on the Economy

Contents

- 3 **Who Killed JFK? The Media Whitewash** Carl Oglesby
Accomplice to a coup.
- 6 **JFK: The Movie** Herbert I. Schiller
Premptive strikes in movieland.
- 7 **Time Magazine's Continuing Cover-up** Zachary Sklar
Zapping Zapruder.
- 9 **The Age of the Camcorder** DeeDee Halleck
Standing Big Brother on his head.
- 10 **"She Asked For It"** Linda Hall and Peter Rothberg
Accuser abusers.
- 11 **Crimes and Misdemeanors** Ann Nocenti
The police are only "professional killers."
- 13 **Gays Cry Foul Over Dahmer Coverage** Gary Grass
Homophobia rules the news.
- 14 **"Chemophobia"?** Jim Sibbison
No false alarm.
- 15 **Peace Process?** Nabeel Abraham
Baker's cake misses a layer.
- 16 **Letter From Lexington** Noam Chomsky
"Suffer the little children to come unto me" — George Bush.
- 18 **Short Takes** Jim Naureckas and Edward S. Herman
Vegans and wage earners.
- 19 **Jonathan Kandell and the Chilean Miracle**
James Petras and Steve Vieux
Our debt to the neo-liberals.
- 20 **The Politics of Death** Edward S. Herman
Arroused by a dictator.
- 21 **The "Success" of Free Market Reforms** Arthur MacEwan
Sleight of government hand.
- 24 **The Hatchet Man on Wacky Media Watchdogs**
Edward S. Herman, Ellen Ray, and William H. Schaap
Joe Queenan, cynic-at-large.

Cover: Photo which appeared on the cover of *Life* magazine, February 21, 1964, captioned, "Lee Oswald with the weapons he used to kill President Kennedy and Officer Tippit." (Courtesy of Gary Shaw. See page 8 for further information.)

To Our Readers:

After researching the Kennedy assassination for more than 20 years, and having published Jim Garrison's *On the Trail of the Assassins* in 1988, we are, of course, elated that Oliver Stone is making a film based on our book and Garrison's investigation into the murder of President Kennedy (also using Jim Marrs's *Crossfire* and other reference sources). The film promises to expose both the lies behind the "lone assassin" story and the even greater crime against the people—the media cover-up. It stars Kevin Costner as Garrison, Sissy Spacek as his wife Elizabeth, Gary Oldman as Lee Harvey Oswald, and Tommy Lee Jones as Clay Shaw, and with Donald Sutherland, Jack Lemon, John Candy, Walter Matthau, Joe Pesci, Ed Asner, Kevin Bacon, and others.

We hope *LOOT* readers will see it. And, if you haven't read Garrison's book, you can order a copy of our new third printing (see page 6 for details).

Many of the articles in this issue criticize the frenzied disinformation campaign around the making of the film. But, to be fair, there has been some excellent reporting, particularly of the unusual practice of precensorship—attacking a film which has not been finished. In particular, we commend Jay Carr's piece in the *Boston Globe* (August 11), Elaine Dutka's story in the *Los Angeles Times* (June 24), and Richard Bernstein's *New York Times* article (July 28). The *Times* piece was particularly unexpected. ●

Lies Of Our Times

A Magazine to Correct the Record

Published by
Sheridan Square Press, Inc.

Produced and Distributed by
Institute for Media Analysis, Inc.

145 West 4th Street
New York, NY 10012
Tel: (212) 254-1061
Fax: (212) 254-9598
Telex: 650-305-3524/MCI

Executive Editor Ellen Ray
Managing Editor William H. Schaap
Editor Edward S. Herman
History Editor William Preston, Jr.
Columnists and Contributing Editors
Nabeel Abraham, Noam Chomsky,
Alexander Cockburn, Jane Hunter,
Richard McKerrow, Sandra Rattley,
William Worthy, JoAnn Wypijewski
Assistant Editor and Circulation
Brian Tenenbaum
Associate Editors Ann Nocenti,
Nancy Watt Rosenfeld
Research Christopher K. Vacek
Proofreaders Bill Montross,
Jane M. Teller
Interns Marcus R. Bell, Jess Lee

Lies Of Our Times, Volume 2, Number 9,
whole number 20, September 1991,
copyright © 1991, by Sheridan Square
Press, Inc., and Institute for Media
Analysis, Inc. All rights reserved. Indexed
in the *Alternative Press Index*. Available on
microform from University Microfilms.

Lies Of Our Times (ISSN: 1048-7912) is published
monthly (except August) for \$24 per year by
Sheridan Square Press, Inc., 145 West 4th Street,
New York, NY 10012. Second-class postage paid at
New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Lies Of Our Times, 145 West 4th Street, New
York, NY 10012.



To Our Readers

Lies Of Our Times is a magazine of media criticism. "Our Times" are the times we live in but also the words of the *New York Times*, the most cited news medium in the U.S., our paper of record. Our "Lies" are more than literal falsehoods; they encompass subjects that have been ignored, hypocrisies, misleading emphases, and hidden premises—the biases which systematically shape reporting. We can address only a sampling of the universe of media lies and distortions. But, we hope *LOOT* will go a long way toward correcting the record.

Who Killed JFK? The Media Whitewash

Carl Oglesby

Oliver Stone's current film-in-progress, "JFK," dealing with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, is still months from theaters, but already the project has been sharply attacked by journalists who ordinarily could not care less what Hollywood has to say about such great events as the Dealey Plaza shooting of November 22, 1963.

The attack on Stone has enlisted (at least) the *Boston Globe* (editorial), the *Boston Herald*, the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and *Time* magazine, and several other outlets were known to have been prowling the "JFK" set for angles. The intensity of this interest contrasts sharply with 1979, when the House Assassinations Committee published its finding of probable conspiracy in the JFK assassination, and the mass media reacted with one day of headlines and then a long, bored yawn.

How are we to understand this strange inconsistency? It is, of course, dangerous to attack the official report of a congressional committee; better to let it die a silent death. But a Hollywood film cannot be ignored; a major production by a leading director must be discredited, and if it can be done before the film is even made, so much the better.

Garrison's Case

"JFK" is based chiefly on Louisiana Judge Jim Garrison's 1988 memoir, *On the Trail of the Assassins* (New York: Sheridan Square Press), in which Garrison tells of his frustrated attempts to expose the conspiracy that he (and the vast majority of the American people) believes responsible for the murder at Dealey Plaza.

Garrison has argued since 1967 that Oswald was telling the truth when he called himself a "patsy." He believes that JFK was killed and Oswald framed by a rightwing "parallel government" seemingly much like "the Enterprise" discovered in the Iran-contra scandal in the 1980s and currently being rediscovered in the emerging BCCI scandal.

The conspirators of 1963, Garrison has theorized, grew alarmed at JFK's moves toward de-escalation in Vietnam, normalization of U.S. relations with Cuba, and détente with the Soviet Union. They hit upon a violent but otherwise easy remedy for the problem of JFK's emerging pacifism, Garrison believes, in the promotion by crossfire of Vice President Lyndon Johnson.

Carl Oglesby is the author of several books, including *The Yankee and Cowboy War* (New York: Berkley Medallion, 1977), and was the founder of the Assassination Information Bureau, which successfully urged the creation of the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

Stone hardly expected a movie with such a challenging message to escape notice, but he was startled to find himself under sharp attack while "JFK" was still being filmed. "Since when are movies judged," he said angrily, "sight-unseen, before completion and on the basis of a pirated first-draft screenplay?"

The Ignorant Critics

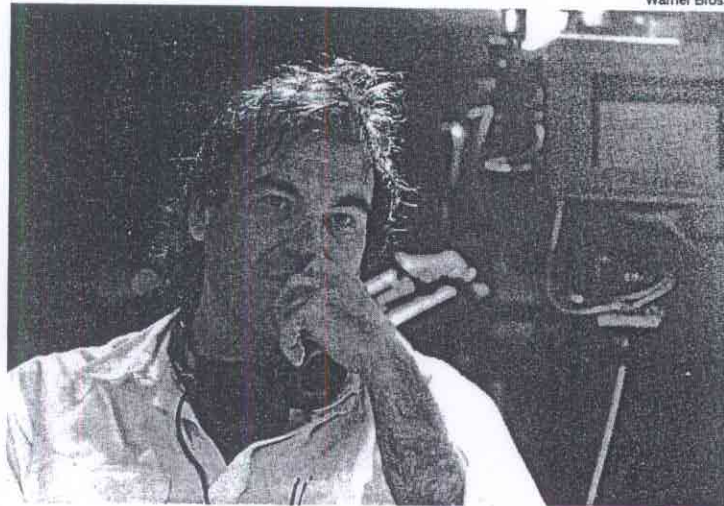
The first out of his corner was Jon Margolis, a syndicated *Chicago Tribune* columnist who assured his readers in May, when Stone had barely begun filming in Dallas, that "JFK" would prove "an insult to the intelligence" and "decency" ("JFK Movie and Book Attempt to Rewrite History," May 14, p. 19). Margolis had not seen one page of the first-draft screenplay (now in its sixth draft), but even so he felt qualified to warn his readers that Stone was making not just a bad movie but an evil one. "There is a point," Margolis fumed, "at which intellectual myopia becomes morally repugnant. Mr Stone's new movie proves that he has passed that point. But then so has [producer] Time-Warner and so will anyone who pays American money to see the film."

What bothered Margolis so much about "JFK" is that it is based on Garrison, whom Margolis described as "bizarre" for having "in 1969 [1967 actually] claimed that the assassination of President Kennedy was a conspiracy by some officials of the Central Intelligence Agency."

Since Margolis and other critics of the "JFK" project are getting their backs up about facts, it is important to note here that this is not at all what Garrison said. In two books and countless interviews, Garrison has argued that the most likely incubator of an anti-JFK conspiracy was the cesspool of Mafia hit men assembled by the CIA in its now-infamous Operation Mongoose, its JFK-era program to murder Fidel Castro.

But Garrison also rejects the theory that the Mafia did it by itself, a theory promoted mainly by G. Robert Blakey, chief counsel of the House Assassinations Committee (HAC) of 1978 and co-author (with HAC writer Richard Billings) of *The Plot to Kill the President* (New York: Times Books, 1981). "If the

Warner Bros.



Oliver Stone, director of "JFK," angered at attacks on screenplay draft.

Mafia did it," Garrison told *LOOT*, "why did the government so hastily abandon the investigation? Why did it become so eagerly the chief artist of the cover-up?"

More important, Garrison's investigation of Oswald established that this presumed leftwing loner was associated in the period just before the assassination with three individuals who had clear ties to the CIA and its anti-Castro operations, namely, Clay Shaw, David Ferrie, and Guy Banister.

Garrison did not draw a conclusion from Oswald's ties to these men. Rather he maintains that their presence in Oswald's story at such a time cannot be presumed innocuous and dis-

About Clay Shaw

It is true that Garrison could not convince the New Orleans jury that Shaw had a motive to conspire against JFK. This is because he could not prove that Shaw was a CIA agent. Had Garrison been able to establish a Shaw link to the CIA, then JFK's adversarial relationship with the CIA's Task Force W assassination plots against Castro would have become material and a plausible Shaw motive might have come into focus.

But in 1975, six years after Shaw's acquittal and a year after his death, a CIA headquarters staff officer, Victor Marchetti, disclosed that Garrison was right, that Shaw, and Ferrie as well, were indeed connected to the CIA. Marchetti further revealed that CIA Director Richard Helms—a supporter of the CIA-Mafia plots against Castro—had committed the CIA to helping Shaw in his trouble with Garrison. What the CIA might have done in this regard is not known, but Marchetti's revelation gives us every reason to presuppose a CIA hand in the wrecking of Garrison's case against Shaw.

George Lardner is not impressed by the proof of a CIA connection to Shaw. He responds dismissively that Shaw's CIA position was only that of informant: Shaw, he writes, "was a widely traveled businessman who had occasional contacts with the CIA's Domestic Contact Service. Does that make him an assassin?"

Of course not, and Garrison never claimed it did. But it certainly does—or ought to—stimulate an interest in Shaw's relationship to Oswald and Ferrie. Is it not strikingly at variance with the Warren Commission's lone-nut theory of Oswald to find him circulating within a CIA orbit in the months just ahead of the assassination? Why is Lardner so hot to turn away from this evidence?

How fascinating, moreover, that Lardner should claim with such an air of finality to know all about Shaw's ties to the CIA, since a thing like this could only be known for a certainty to a highly placed CIA officer. And if Lardner is not (*mirabile dictu*) himself an officer of the CIA, then all he can plausibly claim to know about Shaw is what the CIA chooses to tell him. Has George Lardner not heard that the CIA lies?

—Carl Oglesby

missed out of hand. The Assassinations Committee itself confirmed and puzzled over these ties in 1978, and even Blakey, a fierce rival of Garrison, accepts their central importance in the explanation of Oswald's role.

Lardner Grinds His Axe

The most serious attacks against the "JFK" project are those of the *Washington Post's* George Lardner, perhaps the dean of the Washington intelligence press corps. Lardner covered the Warren Commission during the 1960s, at one point ran a special *Post* investigation of the case, and covered the House Select Committee on Assassinations in the late 1970s.

Lardner's May 19 article on the front page of the *Sunday Post* "Outlook" section, "On the Set: Dallas in Wonderland," ran to almost seven column feet, and by far the greater part of that was dedicated to the contemptuous dismissal of any thought that Garrison has made a positive contribution to this case. Stone must be crazy too, Lardner seemed to be saying, to be taking a nut like Garrison so seriously.

And yet Lardner's particulars are oddly strained.

Lardner wrote, for example, that the Assassinations Committee "may have" heard testimony linking Oswald with Ferrie and Ferrie with the CIA. Lardner knows very well that the committee *did* hear such testimony, no maybes about it, and that it found this testimony convincing. Then Lardner implicitly denied that the committee heard such testimony at all by adding grotesquely that it "may also have" heard no such thing. Why does Lardner want unwary readers to think that the well-established connections between Oswald, Ferrie, and the CIA exist only in Garrison's imagination?

Lardner stooped to a still greater deception with respect to the so-called "three tramps," the men who were arrested in the railroad yard just north of Dealey Plaza right after the shooting and taken to the police station, but then released without being identified. Lardner knows that there is legitimate concern about these men. For one thing, they were in exactly the area from which about half of the Dealey Plaza eyewitnesses believed shots were fired. For another, they do not look like ordinary tramps. Photos show that their clothing and shoes were unworn and that they were freshly shaved and barbered. But Lardner waved aside the question of their disappeared identities with a high-handed *ad hominem* sniff that, even if the police had taken their names, those who suspect a conspiracy "would just insist the men had lied about who they were."

Lardner next poked fun at the pirated first-draft version of Stone's screenplay for suggesting that as many as five or six shots might have been fired in Dealey Plaza. "Is this the Kennedy assassination," Lardner chortled, "or the Charge of the Light Brigade?" As though only the ignorant could consider a fifth or even, smirk, a sixth shot realistic.

But here is what the House Assassinations Committee's final report said on page 68 about the number of shots detected on the famous acoustics tape: "Six sequences of impulses that could have been caused by a noise such as gunfire were initially identified as having been transmitted over channel 1 [of police radio]. Thus, they warranted further analysis." The committee analyzed only four of these impulses because (a) it was short of funds and time when the acoustics tape was discovered, (b) the

impulses selected for analysis conformed to timing sequences of the Zapruder film, and (c) any fourth shot established a second gun and thus a conspiracy. All four of these impulses turned out to be shots. Numbers one and six remain to be analyzed. That is, the acoustics evidence shows that there were at least four shots and perhaps as many as six.

Lardner's most interesting error is his charge that "JFK" misstates the impact of the assassination on the growth of the Vietnam war. No doubt Stone's first-draft screenplay telescoped events in suggesting that LBJ began escalating the Vietnam war the second day after Dallas. Quietly and promptly, however,

A Grand Juror Speaks

The June 15, 1991, New Orleans Times-Picayune (p. B6) contained a letter from a man who had been on the Grand Jury that indicted Clay Shaw. We reprint it here, for its relevance to George Lardner's (and others') claim that Garrison had no case.

I was a member of the Orleans Parish Grand Jury involved in the Kennedy assassination conspiracy probe in 1967. From that perspective, I take exception to what has been printed in the *Times-Picayune* recently about the Clay Shaw conspiracy trial.

This exception has to do with [Shaw's] attorney F. Irvin Dymond's statement, "I don't think he (Garrison) had any case; I think he knew he didn't have any case" (*Times-Picayune*, June 1).

On May 26, a column by Iris Kelso referred to how Oliver Stone was handling the movie version of the Kennedy assassination. She wrote, "But if Stone is going to make Garrison a hero and gloss over the fact that he may have put an innocent man on trial for the crime of the century with shoddy evidence or no evidence at all..."

Both of these statements about not having a case or shoddy or no evidence ignore certain facts about the Clay Shaw affair. They would seem to want us to believe that Garrison acted all alone, with no real evidence against Shaw, that he deliberately concocted the prosecution of Shaw.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Their statements would seem to lead us to believe that a district attorney can do whatever he wants, that there are no protections for the innocent citizen.

Dymond and Kelso know Garrison did not act alone. Many important, respected people concurred with him that there was a case against Shaw.

On March 14, 1967, three Criminal Court judges heard Garrison's case in a preliminary hearing to determine if there was sufficient evidence to hold him for trial. What did they conclude? That there was sufficient evidence.

Malcolm V. O'Hara, Bernard J. Bagert, and Matthew S. Braniff heard evidence over a four-day period. Were they duped by Garrison? I think not.

Garrison then presented his evidence to a 12-member grand jury. We ruled that there was sufficient evidence to bring Shaw to trial. I believe we were impressed by the care with which Garrison and his assistant district attorneys handled the evidence and its presentation to us. Were we duped by Garrison? I think not.

When remarks such as those of Dymond and Kelso are published, they tend to cloud the truth, they seem to impugn the intelligence and dedication of judges and grand jurors, two essential links in our criminal justice system. Garrison did not win the trial, true. But he had every right to go to trial. In fact, once the grand jury returned the indictment against Shaw, he had no choice but to go to trial.

Shaw was found innocent by a jury of his peers. No one quarrels with that outcome. It's the American way. It protects all of us. And Dymond did his usual fine job in defending Shaw.

But just that he won acquittal for Shaw does not mean there should not have been a trial. Neither does it mean there was no real evidence against Shaw.

It does mean that the entire legal system was played out to its fullest. That we should all respect.

Jay C. Albarado

Dann Young Photo



Jim Garrison today, a Judge of the Louisiana Court of Appeal.

LBJ did indeed stop the military build-down that JFK had begun; and as soon as LBJ won the 1964 election as the peace candidate, he started taking the lid off. Motivated by a carefully staged pretext, the Gulf of Tonkin "incident," the bombing of North Vietnam began in February 1965. It is puzzling to see such a sophisticated journalist as Lardner trying to finesse the fact that Kennedy was moving toward de-escalation when he was killed and that the massive explosion of the U.S. war effort occurred under Johnson. In this sense, it is not only reasonable but necessary to see the JFK assassination as a major turning point in the war.

Strangest of all is that Lardner himself has come to believe in a Dealey Plaza conspiracy, admitting that the Assassinations Committee's findings in this respect "still seem more plausible than any of the criticisms" and subsequently restating the point in a tossed-off "acknowledgment that a probable conspiracy took place."

The reader will search Lardner's writing in vain, however, for the slightest elaboration of this point even though it is obviously the crux of the entire debate. My own JFK file, for example, contains 19 clippings with Lardner's byline and several *Washington Post* clippings by other writers from the period in which the Assassinations Committee announced its conspiracy findings. The only piece I can find among these that so much as whispers of support for the committee's work was written by myself and Jeff Goldberg ("Did the Mob Kill Kennedy?" *Washington Post Outlook* section, February 25, 1979).

If the Warren critics were a mere handful of quacks jabbering about UFOs, as Lardner insinuates, one might understand the venom he and other mainstreamers bring to this debate.

But this is simply not the case. The *Post's* own poll shows that 56 percent of us — 75 percent of those with an opinion — believe a conspiracy was afoot at Dallas. And it was the U.S. Congress, after a year-long, \$4 million, expert investigation, that concluded, "President John F. Kennedy was probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy."

The Reluctant Media

So what is it with the American news media and the JFK murder? Why do normally skeptical journalists reserve their most hostile skepticism for those who have tried to keep this case on the national agenda? What is it about Dealey Plaza that not even the massive disbelief of the American people and the imprimatur of the Congress can legitimate this issue to the news media?

As one who has followed this case closely and actively for nearly 20 years—and who has often heard the charge of “paranoia” as a response to the bill of particulars—I find it increasingly hard to resist concluding that the media’s strange rage for silence in this matter presents us with a textbook case of denial, disassociation, and double-think. I hear frustration and fear in the reasoning of Lardner and Margolis and their comrades who constantly erect straw men to destroy and whose basic response to those who would argue the facts is yet another dose of *ad hominem* character assassination, as we are beholding in the media’s response to Stone and Garrison:

—Frustration because the media cannot stop Stone’s movie from carrying the thesis of a JFK conspiracy to a global audience already strongly inclined to believe it.

—Fear because the media cannot altogether suppress a doubt in their collective mind that the essential message of “JFK” may be correct after all, and that, if it is, their current relationship to the government may have to change profoundly.

And perhaps a touch of shame, too, because in the persistence of the mystery of JFK’s death, there may be the beginning of an insight that the media are staring their own greatest failure in the face. ●

JFK: The Movie

Herbert I. Schiller

In the controlled media-cultural atmosphere of the Bush imperial era, image management is a high priority activity. One especially effective and longstanding means of keeping the social order undisturbed is to undermine criticism before it has an opportunity to emerge and circulate in the national arena.

Oliver Stone’s movie production, “JFK,” based on Jim Garrison’s book, *On the Trail of the Assassins* (New York: Sheridan Square Press, 1988), is currently getting this treatment from a bevy of journalists who seem to have no difficulty getting their views inserted into the national media.

The Kennedy assassination was the most spectacular episode of such killing in post-World War II U.S. Although the assassination was the subject of a presidential (Warren) commission of inquiry, few Americans believed the panel’s official finding, *i.e.*, that the murder was the act of a lone, unbalanced, left-leaning gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald. Many speculated, and still

Herbert I. Schiller is professor emeritus of communications at the University of California, San Diego, and author of numerous books, most recently, *Culture Inc.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). This fall he will be teaching at American University.

believe, that the killer(s) had ties that, although never satisfactorily revealed, went very high into the political establishment.

What is involved in the Stone project, however, is not which one of the many theories of the killing is “correct,” or even Stone’s particular take on the matter. The issue is the *right to question* the established and official version of what happened. How that right is used, how realistic or fanciful the theory, what facts are selected and which ones are discarded—these are the choices of the filmmaker. After they have been made and the movie has been completed and publicly screened, the critics and the audience can make whatever judgments they choose about the undertaking.

Attacking a Work in Progress

An altogether different procedure is being applied to Stone’s work-in-progress. One early commentary on the film-to-be, in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* (Rosemary James, “Stone’s Plans for Garrison Movie Are Offensive,” letter, June 20, 1991), noted that George Lardner’s *Washington Post* account was based on information provided by “spies in the Stone camp.” Is this where the secret funds of the CIA go?

The same writer expressed a peculiar concern about the embryonic project. She wrote, “Most of all we are offended that serious money is being wasted giving credence to Jim Garrison’s falsely engineered ‘conspiracy case.’” Can one imagine being offended by Hollywood wasting money? That’s what Hollywood is all about—spending gargantuan sums in the expectation that the public will be similarly induced to consume whatever is being offered on the screen. Could it be that the standard of frugality comes to the fore only for movies that are objectionable to some part of the power complex? The letters column noted that Rosemary James was the reporter who “broke the Garrison investigation to the public,” but did not add that it was a secret investigation she exposed nor that she subsequently wrote an entire book attacking Garrison (Rosemary James and Jack Wardlaw, *Plot or Politics: The Garrison Case and Its Cast* [New Orleans: Pelican Publications, 1967]).

Another journalist, Jon Margolis (“JFK Movie and Book Attempt to Rewrite History,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 14, 1991, p. 19), was even more social-minded in his attack on the Stone film, which was then hardly into production. In this case, the reporter was worried that Warner Books was paying Garrison for the

SPECIAL:

On the Trail of the Assassins

Available Again

Sheridan Square Press has just published a new printing of Jim Garrison’s *On the Trail of the Assassins: My Investigation and Prosecution of the Murder of President Kennedy*, the book upon which Oliver Stone’s “JFK” is primarily based.

To get your copy of this 358-page, hardcover, illustrated, and indexed bestseller, send \$19.95 plus \$2.00 postage to Sheridan Square Press, 145 W. 4th St., NY, NY 10012.

right to re-issue his book in paperback when the movie comes out. The menace of media conglomerate control is suddenly discovered. Warner Books, like Warner Films, is a holding of Time-Warner. Accordingly, the concern is that the book may be reviewed favorably in *Time* magazine and distributed effectively throughout the conglomerate's many divisions and holdings. All this *could* have happened. But, in fact (see next article) *Time* magazine chose to attack the film its sister corporation was financing (June 10, p. 64).

What is remarkable in this report, however, is that the pervasive structural conditions of American cultural production and distribution are only recognized and raised as a matter for general concern when the possibility exists for a critical effort to get through the conglomerate filter and achieve some national attention.

Still another inventive technique designed to undermine Stone's production, practically at its inception, was applied by *Washington Post* national security affairs writer George Lardner ("On the Set: Dallas in Wonderland," May 19, p. D1). That a preemptive strike against the project should be handled by a national security specialist is interesting in itself.

Lardner was given an unusually large amount of space in the *Post* for his demolition work. He ranged over the cast of characters who will appear in the film, the credibility of the witnesses who have been used for documentation, the evidence at the actual scene of the killing, and the views of other assassination buffs and experts who hold opinions different from those allegedly accepted by Stone.

This may seem fair enough, but what script is given such an exhaustive examination for accuracy by a national newspaper *before* it even gets played out before the cameras and before the editing process has begun? And, though it may sound uncouth to ask, when did credibility become a determining criterion in a film, especially in any movie supportive of established views and sentiments?

Oliver Stone summed it up this way in his response to Lardner (*Washington Post*, June 2, 1991, p. D3):

Why [are they] so worried about our movie? ... I can't but feel there is another agenda here. Does the *Washington Post* object to our right to make a movie our way, or does it just object to our disagreeing with its views that the Warren commission was right? I suppose I shouldn't be surprised by a newspaper trying to kill the making of a movie.... But then one purpose of our movie is to see that at least in one instance history does not repeat itself....

Many more perversely imaginative efforts to discredit "JFK" may be expected as the film nears completion and then moves onto the nation's screens. The criticisms have a common objective. It is to defend established orthodoxy's version of what happened in Dallas in November 1963 and at the same time censor or marginalize views that challenge the official account. Since the same institutional forces still play a dominant, though largely covert, role in American life today, Stone's film can be regarded as an effort to open increasingly clogged channels of democratic discussion.

Time Magazine's Continuing Cover-up

Zachary Sklar *did he check book out? How.*

The June 10 issue of *Time* magazine (p. 64) carried an article by Richard Zoglin entitled "More Shots In Dealey Plaza: Oliver Stone Returns to the '60s Once Again With a Strange, Widely Disputed Take on the Kennedy Assassination." For the piece, Zoglin had interviewed, among others, Zachary Sklar, the journalist who edited Jim Garrison's *On the Trail of the Assassins* and co-wrote the screenplay with Stone.

The *Time* article was an unremitting attack on Garrison and Stone. Sklar wrote a response to Zoglin, which was not published. The following is an adaptation of that letter.

Time, Inc., has a shameful history in relation to the Kennedy assassination. It bought and for five years refused to show publicly perhaps the single most important piece of evidence in the case — the Zapruder film. In fact, that film was not released for public viewing until Jim Garrison subpoenaed it for the Clay Shaw trial. When *Life* magazine published still shots from it, crucial frames were printed in reverse order so that it appeared that Kennedy's head was moving forward, indicating a shot from the rear, rather than in the actual order, which showed the head moving backward, indicating a shot from the front. A shot from the front would, of course, directly contradict the Warren Commission findings.

Life also published on its cover a damning photo of Oswald, armed to the teeth and holding copies of the *Militant* and the *Daily Worker*. Photo expert Robert Groden, a consultant to the House Select Committee on Assassinations, subjected this photo to state-of-the-art technical analysis and concluded that it was doctored: Oswald's head had been placed on someone else's body. Such incidents make me very skeptical about Time, Inc.'s role today. [See sidebar.]

Although Zoglin and *Time* still believe that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone, every poll since 1967 shows that most Americans believe there was a conspiracy. The reason for such widespread doubt is simple: Few people can swallow the Warren Commission's official conclusion that a man known in the Marines as a dreadful shooter could possibly get off three shots from a cheap, mail-order, bolt-action rifle with a badly aligned sight in less than six seconds and hit the President with such precision — a feat that the best marksmen in the world have been unable to duplicate under ideal circumstances.

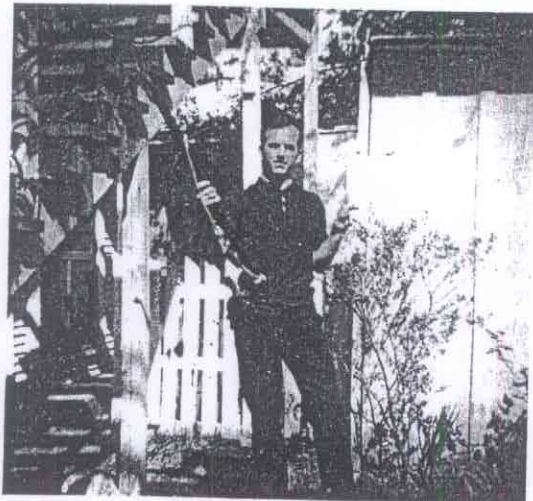
When a writer and director of Oliver Stone's stature decides to make a film exploring the persistent doubts and unanswered questions surrounding one of history's most important events, that is indeed of interest to many Americans and should be treated as news. However, that does not entitle critics to attack an early draft of a script before the film is even shot, let alone

Oliver Stone's response

edited. It is accepted practice 1) to wait for the movie to be made and review *that* (not the script), and 2) not to tell the audience everything they are going to see. Stone pointed this out in his response to the *Washington Post* article.

A few of the specifics in the *Time* piece I object to are: The description of Jim Garrison as "a wide-eyed conspiracy buff" who "is considered somewhere near the far-out fringe of conspiracy theorists." The use of such loaded language defies the standards of journalism that I learned and continue to teach at Columbia University. The passive tense is quite convenient here since Zoglin never tells the reader *who* considers Garrison to be so far out. How far out is Jim Garrison? For 23 years he was an officer in the United States military; he worked for the FBI; he served for 12 years as DA of New Orleans; and he is currently a judge on the Louisiana State Court of Appeal. His investigation in the Shaw case turned up a great deal of evidence that nearly every book on the Kennedy assassination since that time has used.

"Stone appears to have bought [Garrison's] version virtually wholesale." *Time's* supporting "evidence" for this notion is ap-



Another of the series of at least three doctored photographs purporting to show a heavily armed Lee Harvey Oswald holding leftist newspapers (courtesy of Gary Shaw, director of the Assassination Archives in Dallas).

On behalf of *LOOT*, Steven Hager, editor of *High Times* magazine (and author of "Heritage of Stone," an excellent exposition of Jim Garrison's case in its September issue), spoke with two experts on the subject. Robert Groden, author, with Harrison Livingstone, of *High Treason*, noted, "The photo used on the cover of *Life* magazine is definitely a fake. The heights of the man in the picture do not match the measurable ends of the rifle in the National Archives. The height of the man does not match Lee Harvey Oswald. When you enlarge the photo, you notice that the lefthand side of the neck has been retouched or airbrushed. The shadows in the picture are diagonal, except for one under Oswald's nose, which is vertical. At the time Marina said she took the photos, the bush in the background could not have been in bloom." And Gary Shaw pointed out, "The Warren Commission said the photos were genuine, but they also admitted it would be impossible [with the technology of the time] to determine if they had been faked."

parently the choice of Kevin Costner to play Garrison. In fact, the film script does draw on Garrison's book, but it also incorporates information from Jim Marrs's book *Crossfire*, and the separate investigations of Sylvia Meagher, Gary Shaw, Larry Howard, Larry Harris, Robert Groden, Fletcher Prouty, Harold Weisberg, Dr. Cyril Wecht, and Tom Wilson. These serious researchers and scholars are clearly acknowledged in the pirated script Zoglin claimed to have in his possession.

Lardner's assertion that the film explains the failure of the case by "inventing a Garrison aide who turns out to be a mole for the Feds aiming to sabotage the case." There was no need to "invent" such a character, only to condense several into a composite for space reasons. It is well-documented that the Garrison investigation was sabotaged. Every attempt Garrison made to extradite witnesses from other states was rejected in the Shaw case, though not a single such request had ever been rejected before then. Every attempt to obtain sealed evidence (routinely open to DAs' investigations), including intelligence files and tax records on Oswald and photos and x-rays of the President's autopsy, was rejected by federal authorities. Several of Garrison's key witnesses were offered bribes or died under mysterious circumstances.

Garrison himself was offered a federal judgeship on the condition that he stop his investigation. According to documents released under the Freedom of Information Act, the FBI followed Garrison everywhere he went. It tapped the phones of the DA's offices. And all of the files Garrison's staff had assembled were turned over to Shaw's defense counsel before the trial by Tom Bethell, who had "volunteered" to help Garrison. (Bethell freely admits this in his book, *The Electric Windmill*, published by Regnery in 1990.)

"Stone casts doubt even on issues that are relatively clearcut, like Oswald's murder of Dallas police officer J.D. Tippit." It is not surprising that David Belin, former counsel to the Warren Commission, considers the Tippit murder clearcut, but very few others do. Of the six eyewitnesses Zoglin claims identified Oswald as the gunman, five did so at a police lineup where Oswald was the only man with a bruised and swollen face, where he was protesting loudly that he'd been framed, and where he identified himself as working at the Texas School Book Depository, which had already been announced as the site of the assassin's lair.

The witness closest to the murder, Domingo Benavides, would not identify Oswald. Three eyewitnesses *not* interviewed by the Warren Commission said they saw two men, not one, near Tippit's body. In addition, the first police report indicated the murderer was carrying a .38 automatic, while Oswald was arrested carrying a .38 revolver. Finally, the FBI could not identify any of the four bullets taken from Tippit's body as coming from Oswald's revolver. If this is clearcut, what would you call questionable?

Genuine controversy does exist over these issues and will continue to. The film "JFK" does not purport to be a documentary. Nor does it claim to have all the answers. But it has been thoroughly researched and fact-checked. In the end, there exists the strong possibility that some people in powerful positions feel threatened by what the film has to say and have been seeking to sabotage it or influence its content since before it was even shot.

This is his work
does he
search for
to check
parts?

Let's
investigate
to clean

Shaw's
with