

'JFK' Director Condemned

Warren Commission Attorney Calls Stone Film 'a Big Lie'

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa—Oliver Stone's new movie "JFK," the story of a conspiracy in President Kennedy's assassination, is "a big lie that would make Adolf Hitler proud," said a top investigator for the Warren Commission.

David Belin said Stone deliberately overlooks evidence that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone when he killed Kennedy and a Dallas policeman.

"I didn't specifically say that Oliver Stone is an assassination whore," Belin said. "I'm saying I would lay out the facts and let a jury decide whether this is artistic license or whether it is a prostitution of the assassination by deliberately telling lies."

Stone responded that Belin was a name-calling "frustrated prosecutor."

"In spite of his bitterness, I wish he had not talked in terms of Hitler and prostitutes. The American people would be better served by a discussion of issues raised by 'JFK,'" said Stone, who directed "Platoon" and "The Doors."

Belin, a senior partner in one of Des Moines' largest law firms, previewed the film last week. It opens nationally Friday.

Belin was one of two Warren Commission attorneys assigned to investigate who shot Kennedy and Officer J.D. Tippit on Nov. 22, 1963.

The commission—headed by Earl Warren, then chief justice of the United States—concluded Oswald committed both crimes. Two days after the assassination, Oswald was killed by Jack Ruby, who the

commission said also acted on his own.

In the movie, Kevin Costner plays Jim Garrison, once a New Orleans district attorney who prosecuted a businessman on charges he conspired to kill Kennedy. After a two-year investigation and a 34-day trial, a jury took less than an hour to acquit the businessman.

Garrison maintains he was right, and Stone has said the government sabotaged the prosecution.

"The common denominator with all of the conspiracy movies, including 'JFK,' is that Ruby was the final act of the conspiracy. That's why they never show Postal Inspector Harry Holmes," Belin said.

Belin interviewed Holmes during the commission's investigation.

Holmes said he showed up unexpectedly at the Dallas police station on the Sunday after Kennedy was killed. At the investigators' invitation, he spent about half an hour questioning Oswald. On his way to another cell after that interview, Oswald was shot by Ruby.

Minutes earlier, Ruby had been in a nearby Western Union office. A time stamp placed him there at 11:17 a.m.

"If Harry Holmes would have just continued on to church that morning, the interrogation session would have ended and Oswald would have been transferred long before Jack Ruby ever got to the Western Union office," Belin said. "Obviously if Jack Ruby had been part of the conspiracy, he would have been downtown at least a half-hour earlier."

Belin said conspiracy theorists dismiss Ruby's denial of a plot and the lie detector test he took.

"JFK" and other conspiracy stories suggest that more than one gunman was involved. Kennedy was shot from the rear but his body jerked backward.

Belin said pathologists believe the jerking was caused by an enormous neurological reaction, duplicated in tests on goats. Further, he said, there was no evidence of a bullet from the front and no place for such a gunman to hide.

Evidence is conclusive that bullets from Oswald's gun were the only ones fired, he said.

"I believe there has been what I call the prostitution of the assassination to make a buck. It is my observation that it most closely approaches the techniques of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels in using the media to perpetrate the big lie," Belin said.

"They didn't try to find out the facts. It's character assassination."

Belin has written two books on the Kennedy assassination, relying extensively on testimony taken by the Warren Commission and other panels. In his 1988 book, "Final Disclosure," Belin worries about the public's willingness to be led astray. He wrote:

"If the American public can be so readily deceived on such black-and-white issues as who killed Officer Tippit and who killed President Kennedy, then they can also be deceived by a small cadre of people about issues that can be far more directly related to the survival of a country—those of war and peace."

Belin said moviegoers should demand Hollywood produce a movie dramatizing the truth.

"The truth has a long fuse and ultimately prevails," he said.