

# Dagny

A CONVERSATION WITH

# Oliver Stone

The director of 'JFK' talks about the movie that is bound to open old wounds, spark new controversies and put New Orleans in the spotlight

See Page 18



## MUSIC

Whitney Houston: pop with a bit of soul. PAGE 6

## ART

Boxes and booths that please. PAGE 15

## DINING

The spirited cooking at Mr. B's. PAGE 32



**COVER  
STORY**

► The killing of Kennedy has been an official myth, an official story, for 30 years. Garrison is the antidote to that. ◀

—Oliver Stone

# Oliver's story

Stories by David Baron  
Movie writer

*Slinging a tote bag over his shoulder, a casually dressed Oliver Stone saunters through a hotel lobby en route to the lounge. Easing his rangy frame onto a banquette, the 44-year-old director orders drinks and swaps introductory small talk with the reporter who's come to discuss "JFK," the film Stone will start shooting two days later. His now-familiar face — earnest, open, unassertively handsome — betrays fatigue, but Stone is otherwise in buoyant spirits. He gazes appreciatively at a sweeping view of the Mississippi River many stories below, and recalls his first visit to the Big Easy.*

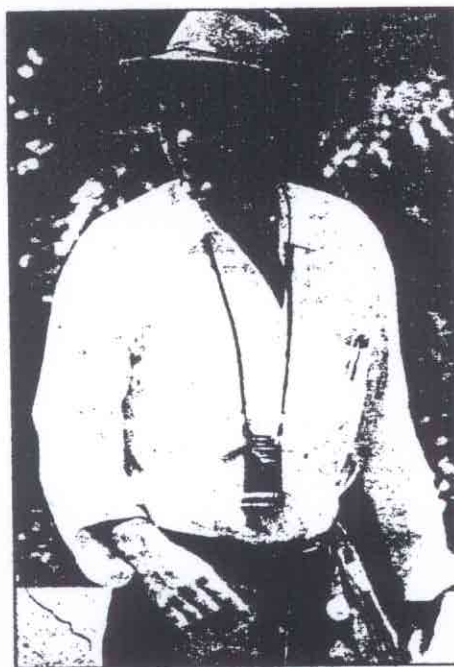


Photo by Roland Neveu  
Director Oliver Stone will be in town through July filming 'JFK,' a movie he calls 'a tale of two cities.'

"I was in New Orleans in 1963, and this is a bizarre story. I was about 16 years old, 17, I had a few bucks in my pocket and I was between classes in spring break. I was in Chicago and I came down here, and I hung out in New Orleans, and it just was a very strange town... I was alone, I didn't know anybody, I was walking the streets, going into strip joints, being sort of like Holden Caulfield in New Orleans, and feeling very alienated. And I thought many years later that Lee Harvey Oswald was here that same summer, (when) so much happened here, and that it's bizarre that I was here as a kid. I may have crossed him on the street."

**Q**... **a**...

Most people, when they think of the Kennedy assassination, think of Dallas. The lion's share of your story though, takes place in New Orleans. Why was it important to come here to recreate as exactly as possible the milieu of New Orleans in '63, and how does New Orleans fit into people's "cosmic consciousness" of that event?

Well that's a big question. ... I love the river here, that's why I came. It reminds me of the Mekong River that flows through Saigon. It's a very strong river, broad strokes, like a python, winding down to the sea, just like the Mekong. I look out the window of my hotel room, and it brings back many memories, the river; it has a very powerful effect on this city. (But) that's an aside. In terms of color and mood, I see the movie as a tale of two cities, Dallas and New Orleans, and



...such a contrast, visually and emotionally and also texturally. I think Dallas is much darker, in some ways, and more austere — my designer, Victor Kempster, calls it "negative space" — and he sees New Orleans in much more burnt amber, hot, choking colors. So you have an aesthetic contrast, which is important to a movie like this, to feel that New Orleans as really an appendage — Dallas was the killing zone, the ambush ground.

But New Orleans provided the only insight, at that time, that we could get — the only hook into the assassination — because Jim Garrison was the only person ever to bring official charges in the case, thereby throwing a hook of doubt into the official Warren Commission explanation. He was the only person to do that. Other searchers were there — Mark Lane and those people — and they did a good job. But they never could get that publicity and at national attention that Garrison got when he brought official charges. And the fact is that the case never went away: Here I am, years later, saying, "Pay attention to what Garrison was saying. I uncovered some truth; he was the trail of something that was overlooked." I'm paying him homage by coming to this city, and saying, "You did right, 28 years ago. You opened up the doorboards, you let the light in on a very dark subject that people wanted closed, like the Vietnam War."

We did not want to talk about the killing of Kennedy as an official myth, an official rite, for 30 years. Garrison is the idiot to that.

**Q. What was your reaction to the assassination when it happened, and has that reaction changed over years?**

I had no idea in 1963 that it would be as important as it is now. No idea. I was a young dwater Republican-type boy, still in school; I had no concept of the depths to which it could change our society. Those questions have become clearer to me with time and hindsight, and it's one of the things I'm trying to illuminate in the movie: Why was he killed, and what happened to him? He was killed. I think the country definitely took a turn, a shift, in the road, with Vietnam; I said this publicly before. I think that Kennedy would never have gone to Vietnam the way Johnson went, no question about it — I believe we have very strong factual evidence of that — that basically our society wouldn't be shaped the way it is if we hadn't gone to Viet-

nam. We'd be in a wholly different pattern. Everything that's going on now, in the '90s, is essentially a reflection of what happened to America in the '60s and '70s. Dan Quayle went through the same '60s you and I went through — his attitudes, all his reflexive actions and his reflexive thinking, were shaped by the '60s — and he may very well be the next president, in the year 2000. Think about that.

**Q. Are you offended by the so-called "revisionist" treatment of the '60s in much of the media these days?**

**A.** The '60s were the seminal decade for our generation, and we're coming into power now, and we're gonna have a choice. We must realize what happened to us in the '60s; we can't run from it.

I don't believe a lot of the clips in the media that try to treat the '60s as just some kind of hippie thing, that was just sort of a passing fad, like a fashion magazine. They miss the point; they miss the roots of all these things, and it trivializes and simplifies it. The '60s was not just about hippies.

They ran down "The Doors" for this and this and this; George Will was going on about it, and (he) debased the '60s as some kind of freaky side show in a circus. It wasn't that, at all. People try to say, "It's in the past, it's gone, why is Stone going back to the '60s?" But it's not history, it's the frontier.

**Q. How did the idea for "JFK" evolve?**

**A.** I read Jim's book ("On the Trail of the Assassins") three years ago, and loved it and saw the possibilities in it right away as a thriller. But I want to emphasize — and Jim knows this — that we moved beyond the book.

We're not shooting a film called "On the Trail of the Assassins." We used Jim's idea — and Jim's opening penetration — as a device on which to make a dramatic film. We added the researches of about 28 years on top of Jim, so I cannot say — I do not say — that this is a true story.

A lot of the evidence that the character of Jim, as played by Kevin Costner, uncovers in the movie is not evidence that Jim (himself) uncovered: It's evidence that we have composited. In other words, we've made Jim Garrison one researcher, as opposed to (depicting) 12 researchers. It's tough to define, because we're dealing with facts that have been unearthed, but I would say that

See STONE, next page

## Films of Oliver Stone

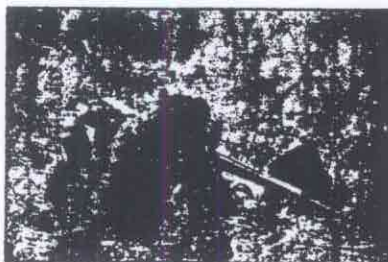
- 1981 *The Hand*
- 1986 *Salvador*
- 1986 *Platoon*
- 1987 *Wall Street*
- 1988 *Talk Radio*
- 1989 *Born on the 4th of July*
- 1991 *The Doors*



Val Kilmer starred as Jim Morrison in 'The Doors'; he's back for an encore in 'JFK.'

Though Oliver Stone is justifiably known as America's foremost cinematic chronicler of the 1960s, his issue-oriented films have touched on a wide variety of controversial subjects from both the '60s and the '80s.

Stone directed his first picture in 1981 — the horror thriller "The Hand," starring Michael Caine — but didn't come to prominence until five years later when "Platoon," an anti-war tale set in Vietnam (where Stone fought from 1967-68), won the Academy Award for Best Picture and Best Director. Stone's film served notice to a wide audience that a radical reassessment of the



Tom Cruise played Vietnam vet Ron Kovic in Stone's 'Born on the Fourth of July.'

American legacy in Southeast Asia was overdue.

Earlier that same year, Stone had released "Salvador," a drama of Central American politics (with an Oscar-nominated performance by James Woods) that confirmed the filmmaker's abiding preoccupation with matters of personal and governmental morality.

The ethics of the yuppie generation that made a killing in hostile takeovers on "Wall Street" was the target of Stone's pre-Crash 1987 film of the same name, which won Michael Douglas an Oscar and created a phrase — "greed is good" — that instantly attained household-word status. "Talk Radio," released in 1988, focused on the burgeoning increase in hate crimes as it

examined the murder of a radio talk show host much like slain Denver broadcaster Alan Berg.

Stone's most successful recent project, "Born on the Fourth of July," won the movie-maker his second Oscar for directing. Fast-rising star Tom Cruise headlined as paralyzed Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic, and Stone took America bitterly to task for its callous treatment of those who served in that unpopular conflict.

Earlier this year, Stone's "The Doors" looked into the troubled life of visionary rock 'n' roller Jim Morrison — one of the director's early idols — as it found the admittedly obsessed filmmaker once again focusing on the watershed decade of the '60s.

Along with his directorial credits, Stone has penned the screenplays for "Scarface," "Midnight Express," "Conan the Barbarian" and "Year of the Dragon," and has recently launched an additional career as co-producer, with "Reversal of Fortune" topping his resume in that capacity.



Eric Bogosian and Leslie Hope appeared in 'Talk Radio,' a film about a hate crime.



# MOVIES

## BOX OFFICE

Here are the top movie ticket sales for Friday through Sunday as tallied by Exhibitor Relations, with distributor, number of weeks in release and total gross.

1. **What About Bob?**
  - Disney
  - One week
  - \$9.2 million
2. **F-X 2**
  - Orion
  - Two weeks
  - \$11.2 million
3. **Truth or Dare**
  - Miramax
  - Two weeks
  - \$4.3 million
4. **Switch**
  - Warner Bros.
  - Two weeks
  - \$8.3 million
5. **Stone Cold**
  - Columbia
  - One week
  - \$2.8 million
6. **Oscar**
  - Disney
  - Four weeks
  - \$18.1 million
7. **The Silence of the Lambs**
  - Orion
  - 14 weeks
  - \$117.8 million
8. **Mannequin 2: On the Move**
  - 20th Century Fox
  - One week
  - \$1.7 million
9. **A Kiss Before Dying**
  - Universal
  - Four weeks
  - \$13.7 million
10. **One Good Cop**
  - Disney
  - Three weeks
  - \$9 million

## 'Bob' Opens Summer Movie Season Early

By JOHN HORN  
AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES — Bill Murray's psychiatric comedy "What About Bob?" grabbed first place at the weekend box office with \$9.2 million in ticket sales, according to figures released Monday.

The comedy, pairing a paranoid Murray with Richard Dreyfuss as his unappreciative therapist, made its strong showing a week before the summer movie season's official start. This Friday will be the busiest of the vacation period, with "Backdraft," "Hudson Hawk," "Only the Lonely" and "Thelma and Louise" all set to debut.

In second place, down 30 percent from its No. 1 debut last week, was the special effects sequel "F-X 2." It had ticket sales

of \$3.8 million, Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc. said.

The Madonna documentary "Truth or Dare" placed third, playing well in its first weekend of wide release. It played on 538 screens, up from 16 in its debut last weekend, and grossed \$3.4 million.

In fourth was "Switch," a gender-reversal comedy that netted \$3 million. Former football standout Brian Bosworth's "Stone Cold" made \$2.8 million in its premiere for fifth place.

Sylvester Stallone's failing comedy "Oscar" slipped from third to sixth place on a gate of \$2.1 million. "The Silence of the Lambs" took seventh with admissions of \$1.9 million.

The sequel "Mannequin 2: On the Move" opened very poorly, with sales of just \$1.7 million for eighth place.

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## one

Page 22

To turn the tables for a moment, what about the issue some have raised as to the dissonance of history in films — "Mississippi Burning," for instance — being incendiary events. Do you foresee that being a bone of contention when "JFK" is released?

I told Alan Parker that I felt "Mississippi Burning" was a dissonance, I really did. I felt it at the time because I knew about the case. I mean, when you give credit to the FBI when they're a shoddy civil rights recording the Mississippi era, that's wrong. And Gene Hackman and he should have known better, question about it. Alan happens still to be a very fine filmmaker, and I respect him, give it or not, because he created a great mood for a film; he was how to shoot. But that's a mistake, in my opinion: If you're a black person in Mississippi I would be offended, because those FBI (expletive) never did a thing to

solve that case. They paid an informant 50 bucks, or whatever. ... But I don't see how you can accuse me of that (kind of distortion).

**Q.** You've had a chance to revisit New Orleans four or five times, recently, on location-scouting trips and to hold auditions. What's your assessment of the place?

**A.** I like New Orleans. Besides, you're pretty straight here. It reminds me of New York, a bit. I think people here are very smart, very sophisticated — there's no jive. It's a tough city. There's a lot of feeling, though, about that (Shaw) trial and all.

**Q.** Obviously, there are people in this area who are more sensitive to your film than people elsewhere, either because they knew Clay Shaw or because they had strong feelings for or against Garrison. What would you say to those New Orleanians, who are fearful either of reputations being besmirched or of Garrison

being newly "legitimized?"

**A.** My answer to that is that this is an emotional issue — a very emotional issue — and that ultimately it's a bit like (the question of) the Kennedy family's sensitivities in the matter. There's a much larger story here than the Kennedy family's personal grief about John, or New Orleans' personal grief about being embarrassed about Clay Shaw, or Dallas' personal grief about being the ambush site, or about having a strange police force that acted in a strange manner.

It's beyond those three personal issues: It's a universal problem that stretches into the '90s, and goes to the foundations of our society. As far as I'm concerned, that's much more important than the microscopic issues of New Orleans and Dallas and the Kennedys.

**ELMWOOD**  
734-5815 SHOWS BEFORE 6pm '93

STONE COLD (R)

11:45-1:45-3:45-5:45-7:45-9:45-11:15\*

WHAT ABOUT BOB (PG)

11:30-1:30-3:30-5:30-7:30-9:30-11:15\*

BACKDRAFT (R)

11:00-1:45-4:20-7:00-9:35-12:00\*

ONLY THE LONELY (PG-13)

11:15-1:15-2:15-5:15-7:15-9:15-11:15\*

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"HUDSON HAWK" (R)

12:45-2:45-3:30-7:40-9:50

"SWITCH" (R)

12:45-2:45-3:30-7:40-9:50

"OSCAR" (PG)

12:45-1:30-3:15-7:30-9:45

"F/X2" (PG-13)

12:45-1:30-3:15-7:30-9:45

12:45-1:30-3:15-7:30-9:45

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May 28 ..... WHITNEY HOUSTON—Kiefer UNO Laketron Arena  
May 31 ..... WILLIAMS BROTHERS—Pontchartrain Center  
June 1 ..... RAMPART RAMBLE '91—Saenger Theatre  
June 7-8 ..... COORS LITERACY "PASS IT ON PROGRAM"—Saenger Theatre  
June 7 ..... AN AFFAIR AT THE SQUARE—Jackson Square  
June 8-9 ..... REGGAE RIDDUMS FESTIVAL—City Park Driving Range  
June 11 ..... WYNTON MARSALIS—Mobile Civic Center Theatre  
June 15 ..... REGGAE SUNSPASH STARRING MAXI PRIEST—Saenger Theatre  
June 18-23 ..... A CHORUS LINE—Saenger Theatre  
June 21 ..... BUDWEISER SUPERFEST—Louisiana Superdome  
June 21, 22, 23 ..... JUNE TEENTH CELEBRATION—City Park Old Driving Range  
June 21 ..... HALL AND OATES—Kiefer UNO L'Front Arena  
June 5-28 ..... GYPSY—Baton Rouge Little Theatre  
July 6 ..... CLINT BLACK—Mississippi Coast Coliseum  
July 18 ..... JAY LENO—Theatre of Performing Arts  
July 21 ..... BRIDAL GALA—Pontchartrain Center  
July 27 ..... BARBARA MANDRELL—St. Bernard Cult. Center  
Aug. 12 ..... TOM JONES—St. Bernard Cultural Center  
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# MOVIES

## MOVIE NOTES

### Movie imports from Martinique

By DAVID BARON  
Movie critic

The cinema of the French Caribbean island of Martinique has flowered most conspicuously in the work of Euzhan Palcy, a gifted native daughter with two acclaimed films to her credit. Both of those films will be shown next week at the Canal Place Cinema, 331 Canal St., in a mini-fest officially titled "Euzhan Palcy: The Unbearable Freedom of Being," designed to complement the Martinique Festival spearheaded next weekend by the French Consulat General's office.

Wednesday at 7 p.m., Palcy's 1984 debut feature, "Sugar Cane Alley," will be

screened by Cinefests Plus, a local multi-cultural organization dedicated to showcasing the arts of the black Third World. A poignant look back at the plight of black workers in 1930s Martinique (when, though supposedly free, such workers were ruthlessly exploited), "Alley" boasts extraordinary performances by non-professional actors Darling Legitimous and Garry Cadenat, the latter as an intelligent youth who wins a scholarship that may lift him out of the poverty of his forebears. The film's marvelous music is by Malavoi.



Marlon Brando in "A Dry White Season"

Prior to the screening, presentations will be made by a representative from the mayor's office honoring Palcy, the annual Images Caribes film festival in Fort-de-France, and Martiniquan film and television. A free reception will be held immediately afterward.

The following night, also at 7 p.m., Cinefests Plus presents "A Dry White Season," Palcy's gritty 1989 drama about racial injustice in South Africa. Donald Sutherland starred as a naive white schoolmaster who has his eyes opened to the police brutality involved in the death of his black gardener. Marlon Brando, in his first screen appearance after a long sabbatical, dazzled as an anti-apartheid barrister. Susan Sarandon, Jurgen Prochnow, Janet Suzman and Zakes Mokae helped round out the movie's international cast.

### Flicks Canceled

A three-part program of African cinema scheduled to be presented May 27 through June 5 at the East New Orleans regional branch of the public library has been canceled, sponsors said. Call 594-2565 or

## 'Truly' never lives up to its promise

By DAVID BARON  
Movie critic

"Truly, Madly, Deeply," a British serio-comedy written and directed by Anthony Minghella, opens promisingly enough that you think it's onto something big.

A London woman's (Juliet Stevenson) grief for her recently deceased lover (Alan Rickman) has become so debilitating that her therapist's efforts are in vain. The woman isn't merely saddled with pain; she's all but driven mad by sadness and fury. And yet, because Stevenson's a highly controlled actress, her feelings ring true: They aren't overblown and precious, the way they'd appear in a Hollywood version of the same story. ("Ghost," of course, leaps to mind.)

Half an hour into his picture, however, Minghella shows his true colors. He has the dead lover, a cellist, re-materialize (he's still dead, see, but he's there in the flesh for our heroine to cuddle and converse with) along with what seems like half a symphony orchestra of equally dead fellow musicians. The whole gang takes up residence in the woman's modest flat, where they watch VCR tapes of movies they've missed, and the film's focus returns to the necessity of bringing our heroine back to emotional health.

To do that, of course, she'll need to date a live man (conveniently, there's a nice one waiting in the wings). And to do that



Juliet Stevenson and Alan Rickman star as lover and ghost in 'Truly, Madly, Deeply.'

she'll need to get past her attachment to the cellist.

By its second half, "Truly, Madly, Deeply" has become basic Hollywood claptrap; the writing's still better than average, but the sentiments are just as melodramatic. Another disappointment is Rickman's dry performance as the dead man: He's admittedly a capable actor, but he simply isn't very appealing. Maybe Rickman should stick to the villains he plays with considerably more panache; as a ladies' man, I'm afraid, he's a washout.

### TRULY, MADLY, DEEPLY

Starring: Juliet Stevenson, Alan Rickman and Michael Maloney.

Credits: Written and directed by Anthony Minghella. A Samuel Goldwyn release.

Rating: Not rated; merits PG-13 for profanity.

Running time: 105 minutes.

★★

## Stone

From Page 20

alone, and who did it? Which is a larger issue than Jim Garrison's mistakes.

As Garrison himself said to Johnny Carson, or whatever, "You can make me the issue or you can make Kennedy the issue." And (I'm afraid) all the Garrison-bashers and all the CIA agent-journalists — like George Lardner, who's now writing a book bashing Garrison, and The Washington Post, (which) is gonna attack him, and me, and the movie — will wheel out its old, conservative George Will's to smash Garrison again and try to keep the lie going. At the end of the day, it's gonna be a bunch of dead pharaohs in tombs guarding the secrets of Kennedy's grave. In 2039, when (all the statutes of limitation run out and) we get in, they'll have absconded with all the secrets anyway, as they already have with the brain.

**Q.** Do you feel that Garrison's vilification in much of the media suggests that the American press isn't exactly a beacon of independent judgment?

### Outtake . . .

In the midst of a conversation with a reporter, a group of female fans — some of them teen-agers — approach Oliver Stone with a polite but urgent plea for a photo opportunity. Dutifully, Stone obliges. When he rejoins the reporter, he explains why.

"It means more to have a 14-year-old kid say that she loves your work, because a seed is planted in her mind, you know, and that lasts through time, never changes. There's a loyalty there, I find. For example, when I was 14, I loved certain filmmakers. And I don't care what happened in the next 30 or 40 years, I still — because they gave me that pleasure or that enlightenment when I was 12 or 14 — I'll remember it for the rest of my life."



And who were some of those filmmakers?

"At that time? Let's see, there was David Lean and Fellini . . . those two stand out. And Kubrick."

**a.** I think you've certainly hit a main thread of the film on the head. I think Paddy Chayevsky was saying it with "Network" — one of my favorite movies — and I think you can't say it strongly

enough. What the hell happened to the American media? They went to sleep for 28 fucking years. Who owns the media? . . . Ask yourself that. It's scary.

See STONE



## Stone

From preceding page

he's a fictional Jim Garrison who is dealing with facts. And, sometimes, speculation.

**Q.** From the first, then, you envisioned Garrison as the dramatic focus of the movie . . .

**a.** He was always my protagonist. Always. He was the vehicle to move it forward. But Jim did not have the knowledge, in '67 and '68, that we have in the '30s and '90s, so I took the liberty of combining other people's information. The Clay Shaw business is a local and specific business, and it's very emotional in New Orleans, but ultimately I have to tell you that I'm not that concerned about whether he was innocent or guilty. I don't think that Clay Shaw was a particularly important figure in this thing.

He was definitely — we know from information that emerged in the 1970s, from testimony — that he was a CIA-related person. We know that. So Jim was certainly partly right (to prosecute Shaw), and maybe wholly right. But this movie is not about the Clay Shaw trial; it's about a much larger international story. And in that flux, Washington, Dallas and New Orleans all swirl.

**Q.** Are your personal convictions about what really happened allowed to filter through in the script, or do you deliberately leave things open-ended for the audience?

**a.** If an artist puts his signature on a painting, it's only because it deserves to be there. And I'd rather earn your respect for doing (my job) well, and (have you) maybe think about some of my convictions that are there (after seeing the movie),

## Outtake . . .



As they're getting acquainted, a reporter mentions to Oliver Stone that New Orleanians tend to take a wait-and-see attitude toward visiting filmmakers. Maybe, he adds, this is because so few movies have ever succeeded in creating accurate images of life here.

"What's the best New Orleans film?" Stone asks, and the reporter mentions one local favorite, Elia Kazan's vintage thriller, "Panic In the Streets."

"They didn't like 'A Streetcar Named Desire?'" asks Stone.

Oh, sure, but very little of "Streetcar" was actually filmed in New Orleans.

"I love that film, I think it's underrated. It's a well-made movie. Kazan worked in New Orleans twice, didn't he, or three times (counting 'Baby Doll.' He had a touch for it, a feel for it. I liked 'Big Easy,' too — I mean I know it was criticized — but I enjoyed that movie, I thought it was fun."

than announce my convictions up front to you, and tell you, "These are my convictions, therefore you must find them in the movie."

I'd rather that you let the movie envelop you, hopefully, and that you like it, and that (you come away feeling) I've treated the audience with sufficient respect and intelligence

that they will be able to make up their own minds, but hopefully will be swayed by my argument.

"A deft reply," notes the reporter, grinning, and Stone laughs. "Like this river," he says, gesturing at the Mississippi. A little later, the filmmaker invokes the name of Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic, his friend and subject in "Born on the Fourth of July," in talking about what he perceives as Garrison's failings.

I feel that Jim is very close to Ron Kovic, in a lot of ways. There are a lot of flaws with Jim, as there are with Ron and as there are with everybody, and often (when) people are held to account in a very strong spotlight, under a very strong microscope, they cannot ever be as perfect as we'd want them to be.

But dammit, I respect Jim. When I was a kid, because of the media, I perceived him as a caricature. I have since read his two books, and he is a helluva writer. He's also an extremely articulate man, in person — he's verbal, he cuts to the point, he's dignified and he's rhetorical. He reminds me of those ancient Greek Demosthenes-type speakers that could stand up in the Senate.

I think he was a popular D.A., and the people in the street have always given me that feeling when I've talked to them. He was narrowly beaten, because he was so busy fighting the government on a ridiculous set-up by that awful Pershing Gervais, and it (the Shaw trial) was decided in one hour. I think Jim made a lot of mistakes — he had hubris, he had arrogance, he was blind like King Lear was blind, and he trusted too many people. All over the book, you'll see those mistakes.

The question that we had as filmmakers, is do we dramatize all the mistakes, and show him in a realistic light, or do we, in that time period, forget the mistakes and get on with the larger story, which is why Kennedy was killed, and how we think it was

See STONE, Page 22

## Outtake . . .

More than once, Stone alludes to highly placed enemies bent on sabotaging his film projects for political reasons. He's sanguine about the real-world pressures on socially engaged filmmakers.

"Politically, it's been weird (since) 'Born on the Fourth of July,'" he says. "There was a lunatic congressman out in southern California named Bob Dornan, who (heard that) Ron

Kovic wanted to run for office and really was threatened by this poor man in a wheelchair and went after him with a sledgehammer even before (Kovic) announced that he was running. Part of (Dornan's) campaign was to talk to his friends in the media, and pretty soon syndicated columnists who are so-called influential, like Pat Buchanan . . . started jumping on 'Born on the Fourth of July,' quoting me out of context, discrediting me and discrediting Ron. I saw that, and I

(still) see this (business of) trying to politicize me as a filmmaker, when my main concern as an artist — you may not believe this — is to be a good dramatist. I'm a dramatist first and foremost; if I were a historian or a documentarian, I would be doing that; I would be writing books or making documentaries. But I don't do that. It's like I've been attacked for being a filmmaker and doing what filmmakers do, which is condensing, compositing and hopefully staying true to the material."

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