

Kevin Costner as New Orleans DA. Jim Garrison in "JFK."

### 'JFK' debate: Reassessing the assassination

IN THE WAKE of Oliver Stone's movie on the Kennedy assassination, Harvard law Professor Alan M. Dershowitz argues for release of all government files on the case.

Examiner columnist Noah W. Griffin, San Francisco Public Defender Jeff Brown and American Spectator editor Emmett R. Tyrrell Jr. also sound off on the movie and the case. [Opinion, A-19]

### re fantasy for the meatheads of A

ble. Something has to be done for ing painful and the facts inscrutatruth, who find the requisite thinkthose who don't want to know the the meatheads. But we have done very little for who want to know what's what libraries and schools for those ramuses. We have built vast needs of this country's ignoone step forward to serve the T IS ONLY right that some-

have no minds. those neglected Americans who Hollywood to serve the needs of Stone has stepped forward from To answer the need, Oliver

the assassination of John F. Kencapitalism titled "Wall Street." toon." He gave us a fantasy about Now he gives us a fantasy about the war in Vietnam titled "Pla-Stone gave us a fantasy about

> nedy titled "JFK," exploiting the murdered president's name.

were "all linked." Martin Luther King Jr. died. Ipso "JFK," it is a fact that the presitwo or three facts. In the movie facto, Stone attests, the deaths dent died, his brother died and member the fantasy, and maybe hordes of conspirators. Just rethe facts, and so Stone's message is been falsified by conspirators, a soothing one, to wit, that the those dolts who can't remember facts don't matter. They have all All of these movies are made for

simple fact, orderly thought or the trust to conduct it. appears that Stone is pretty much ignoramus (and, incidentally, to an ignoramus, too). The ignoramus judge from a a CBS interview and a is too benighted to understand New York Times Op-Ed piece, it Well, there is no arguing with an

dope-fetcher, tells the dopes that rules of evidence. In "JFK," Stone, a practiced

group of New Orleans homosexu-als, Cuban exiles, the FBI, the CIA, of a conspiracy that included a such enormities cry out for rethe American military and the President Kennedy was the victim martyred president's successor, Lyndon Johnson. Stone believes

mission's findings

up and die? powerful just could one so dead? How

cannot imagine whom Stone would all the conspirators in the land, I newed investigation, though, given

committee that investigated the open sealed records of the House Stone says all he wants is to

> much endorsed the Warren Comgunman fired, but otherwise pretty assassination in the 1970s. It challenged the notion that only one

such a milquetoast recommendaand King. Now you should be conspiracy to kill the Kennedys our national evil when you make urging an investigation into the already convinced that there was a way, you and your meatheads are cover-up: part of the conspiracy, and, any-Warren Commission is obviously tion. Any committee so soft on the skimming the surface of low me, I fear you are just R. STONE, if you will al-

die.) But many of Johnson's aides It is hard to believe as powerful a man as Johnson would just up and might want to investigate this, too. least he is reportedly dead. (You Lyndon Johnson, is dead. Or at True, the leader of the cover-up,

chief of the American Spectator. R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr. is editor in are still around, for instance former Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach, former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and former Sancho Panza to President Johnson, Bill Moyers. And where has former Secretary of State Dean Rusk been all these years? An investigation is in order.

Let us have an independent counsel subpoens Johnson's aides and have them testify as to what they saw in those dark days of the 1960s. If Pentagon generals plotted to thwart the good President Kennedy's attempts to end the Vietnam War, McNamara is the man to ask — and is it not interesting that he served both Kennedy and Johnson?

Then there is Bill Moyers. He was Johnson's shadow. What did he know about the cover-up, and when did he know it? Scores of other Johnson aides are all over Washington. An energetic independent counsel could surely dig up the dirt.

ment to act will mean a massive public relations campaign. Fortunately, Stone loves this country. Surely, he will make available all profits from "JFK" for the campaign ahead. Every meathead in his audience believes as much.

EW FILMS AROUSE such passionate controversy as Oliver Stone's "JFK." The film claims

Kennedy's assassination conspiracy by a military-inalist elite, and that former **Including District Attorney Jim** on valiantly strove to expose uth about the killing.

one shrugs off all criticism ays that, if nothing else, his ighlights the many troubling ons about the reliability of /arren Commission Report. t is unconscionable for one laims to be a partisan of truth ort to the misrepresentations uses in portraying such an tant event. You do not exfraud by perpetrating anoth-

ere is nothing wrong with 's challenging the Warren t. There is also nothing new it. Serious, honest people een pointing out its flaws for t three decades. But Stone is to give hero's status to Jim on, who conducted one of ost outrageous, unjust proses in American history.

rrison's "case" began when cal press questioned his use olic funds to investigate the assassination. When reportinfronted him in February he promised to "solve" the

3rown is public defender of rancisco.

assassination in a few days.

He attempted to arrest. David Ferrie, a local gay who dabbled in anti-Castro activities. When Ferrie died shortly after the investigation began, Garrison ordered the arrest of Clay Shaw, a retired businessman, also gay, whom Garrison alleged was Clay Bertrand, supposedly an acquaintance of Oswald's.

A search of Shaw's house turned up whips, chains, hoods and a rope, which Garrison displayed to the press, as if Shaw's lifestyle was in some way relevant.

The "case" dragged on for another two years. Investigators quit in disgust, charging the whole affair was a bogus creation. Witnesses told how the prosecution tried to buy false testimony. One produced a tape of the bribe being offered. Garrison kept promising startling new developments that never materialized.

Garrison relied on witnesses like Perry Russo, a local con artist who, in one of several inconsistent statements, said he had overheard a conversation about the assassination between Ferrie and Shaw at a

A former psychiatric patient who related hearing a similar discussion between Ferrie and Shaw at a party, took the entire court on a tour of the French Quarter in a futile attempt to find the place where the party was held.

Another witness was Vernon Bundy, an ex-con and heroin addict, who claimed that, as he was giving himself a fix, he saw Shaw give money to Oswald.

Garrison's case resembled the treason trials against Henry VIII's enemies, in which incredible conspiracies rested on the claims of unbelievable witnesses.

After 55 minutes of delibera-

Jion, the jury acquitted Shaw. Garrison ordered Shaw charged with perjury for the testimony he gave in his own defense. He charged a defense witness with perjury and indicted a defense investigator for obstruction of justice for having obtained a copy of a prosecution memorandum. It took a federal judge, who found Garrison's actions in bad faith, to finally halt his reign of terror.

ARRISON HAD every right to investigate and to I raise questions about the assassination.

But no prosecutor has a right to charge a person on worthless evidence in order to bring an issue to a public forum. Prosecutions are not sterile exercises in political correctness. They are criminal charges against human beings, horrible ordeals for the people on trial. For his own aggrandizement, Garrison brought a totally unsupportable case that destroyed Clay Shaw.

Jim Garrison's actions should not be heralded. They should be an object lesson in the study of abuse of power. A similar minimum

# **REASSESSING THE DEATH OF A PRESID**

Charlet .. Low and the re-

## ame for the government to give us the

with facts as we know them, but rather with the facts that have surrounding the assassination of ernmental cover-up of the facts claims of national security. full literary license not so much President Kennedy. Stone takes been kept from us by questionable of more than a quarnew film "JFK" is ter-century of govthe inevitable result LIVER STONE'S

involving the CIA, the FBI, the wildly about a massive conspiracy courages the viewer to speculate military and even Lyndon Johnhe calls it a "coup d'etat" — Stone's artistic rendition en-

ney Jim Garrison, there are conhero, New Orleans District Attor-In the mind of Stone's unlikely

of law at Harvard University. Alan M. Dershowitz is a professor

> nections among the assassinations might put an end to the profitable of Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther wars that fuel the defense industry. lently pre-empting any change that dustrial complex" is at work, vioinvisible hand of the "military-in-King and John F. Kennedy. The

answer to soft theones is the best Hard evidence

what is to be expected when the government deliberately keeps its rial for my tastes, but it's precisely none has demanded disclosure of been part of the cover-up, since politically correct and conspiratothe classified files. It's all a bit too crats and four Republicans - have Six presidents - two Demo-

> minds on the basis of all the availcitizens from making up their own able facts.

now has some doubts about wheth-Professor John Hart Ely — a lawer the Warren Commission was vard and then dean of Stanford professor of law at Yale and Harand a law clerk to Chief Justice yer with the Warren Commission CIA and other intelligence agencies misled by intelligence agencies. Earl Warren before becoming a during its "investigation." Even denied crucial information by the The Warren Commission was

existing investigative agencies, cal" to believe that these agencies Commission. information from the Warren might be withholding significant namely the FBI, CIA and military 1964 "one had to be a genuine radiintelligence. He points out that in Warren Commission had to rely on Ely has acknowledged that the

Iran-contra and disclosures about Today - following Watergate,

January 3, 1992 A-19

子 は なな を を

o. Lugar moover's secret files — it . would take a person of unusual naivete to ignore that possibility.

Ely believes the Warren Commission's conclusions were probably right. But he is less confident than he was in 1964. If one discounts the information provided by government intelligence agencies and relies only on independently confirmable facts, the case for the commission's conclusions is hardly more compelling than some kind of conspiracy theory.

There are many unexplained facts, such as acoustical and ballistics evidence suggesting the presence of a second assassin and the deaths - mostly by assassination and "accident" - of many witnesses. Most important is the continued refusal of the intelligence agencies to declassify information that can pose no plausible danger to our national security.

Even the congressional committee that raised questions about some of the commission's conclusions has closed some of its files until well into the 21st century. There is no excuse for such secrecy.

I can easily imagine how the suppressed material could be embarrassing to those who have suppressed it. I can even imagine how it could destroy reputations. But I cannot imagine how it could endanger the national security of the strongest nation in the world, especially since the Cold War is over.

HE TIME HAS come to make full disclosure, to let the chips fall where they may and finally to learn as much of the truth as possible from the stale and incomplete evidence that today remains shrouded by a veil of secrecy.

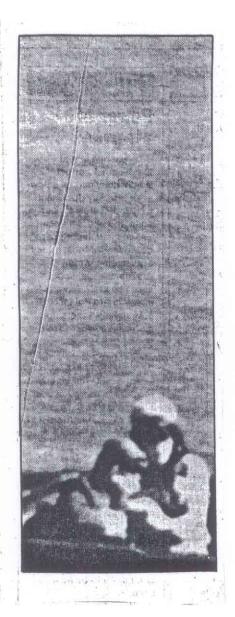
The results of full disclosure may be disappointing. The suppressed evidence may not definitively resolve the "lone gunman" vs. "small conspiracy" vs. "massive conspiracy" dispute. It may simply provide more grist for the various conspiratorial mills. But we the people have the right to make up our own minds, on the basis of all the available evidence, about one of the most transforming events of American history.

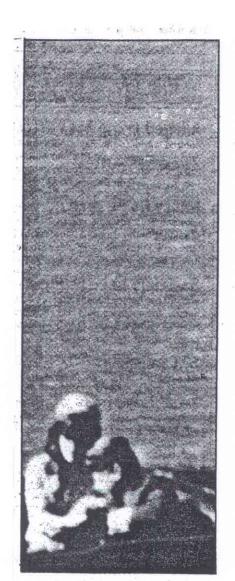
a watter trace entit

No one who favors continued suppression of any available information about the murder of John Kennedy has the standing to criticize Oliver Stone's "JFK." Until history comes forward with facts, art is entitled to paint with a broad brush.

The best - indeed the only - : answer to Stone's soft theories are hard facts. Those hard facts - at least those that have survived a quarter century of suppression are in classified government files. If Stone's "JFK" contributes to the declassification of these suppressed facts, then Oliver Stone will deserve an Oscar for history as well as for cinematography.

The state of the s





and the second s