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JFK file re-examined

CBS leaves no Stone unturned

By Brian Donlon
USA TODAY

NEW YORK — For the fourth time in 28 years, CBS News will again try to shed some light on one of the greatest mysteries in U.S. history: the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

"The purpose of this is to inform, not to persuade," says Dan Rather, the anchor of Wednesday's *48 Hours* special, airing at 10 p.m. EST/PST.

Oliver Stone's movie *JFK*, which disputes the official finding that assassin Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone, has reignited debate. Stone, unconstrained by the tenets of journalism, makes claims news organizations have been unable to prove.

That should make for interesting debate when Rather interviews Stone in one segment of *48 Hours*; the director has accused the media of a cover-up on the assassination.

"The idea that Dan or anyone else at CBS laid back and became part of a conspiracy is absolutely ridiculous," declares *48 Hours* executive producer Andrew Heyward.

Rather, who was on the scene in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, says of *JFK*: "It is skillfully done — as a film."

Adds Heyward, "I think it is good that it has focused attention on an event that a lot of people are ignorant of."

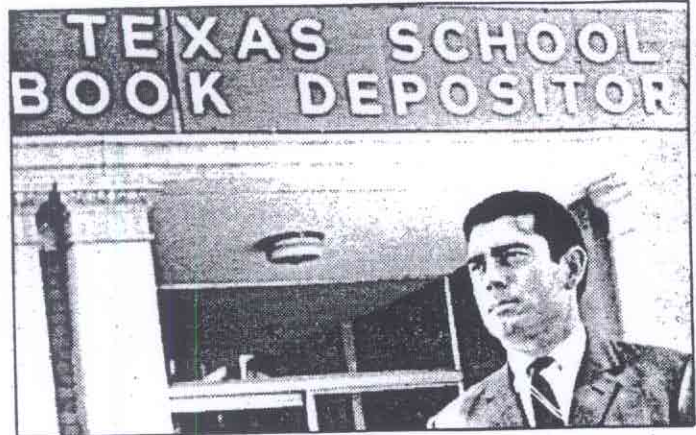
48 Hours will break its assassination report into five parts:

► The shooting, as Rather returns to the scene to report on the hard evidence available.

► Oswald's actions, with correspondent Erin Moriarty following his trail to and from the Texas School Book Depository, where he fired the fatal shots.

► Oswald's life, with Phil Jones reporting.

► Conspiracy theories including those of author Mark Lane, presented by Richard Schlesinger.



ON THE CASE: Dan Rather reports on the assassination from Texas School Book Depository for 'CBS News Inquiry' in 1967.

More on the assassination

Look for a spate of Kennedy assassination reports on TV:

► Bill Kurtis returns to A&E under his *Investigative Reports* banner with two more assassination specials. *The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald*, which originally aired on Showtime four years ago, is a five-part series starting Feb. 24 at 10 EST/7 p.m. PST. It pits lawyers Vincent Bugliosi and Gerry Spence arguing the case before a jury.

When *Trial* concludes on Feb. 28, it will be preceded at 9 p.m. EST/6 p.m. PST by Kurtis' *Who Killed JFK: On the Trail of the Conspiracies*, interviewing former President Ford, a Warren Commission member.

► Wednesday, *Inside Edition*'s Bill O'Reilly reports on the sealed House documents on the assassination. The same day, Geraldo Rivera's syndicated *Now It Can Be Told* interviews Jim Garrison, the ex-New Orleans district attorney who is the hero of *JFK*.

► PBS will rerun the 1988 documentary *Who Shot President Kennedy* Feb. 25.



OSWALD: Officially the lone killer of President Kennedy

► The impact of *JFK*, with Rather one-on-one with Stone on his movie's fact and fiction.

48 Hours will draw from past CBS investigations that aired in 1964, 1967 and 1975.

Still, as CBS promises no conclusions on *48 Hours*, one thing seems evident: We may never know what really happened.

"I personally believe that as

time goes by, it seems less and less (likely)," says Heyward.

But Rather the reporter refuses to give up hope on the story that helped make his career.

"You never say never. I'm going to keep coming. If I could prove Oswald didn't do it or Oswald didn't act alone, it would be the greatest accomplishment of my career."