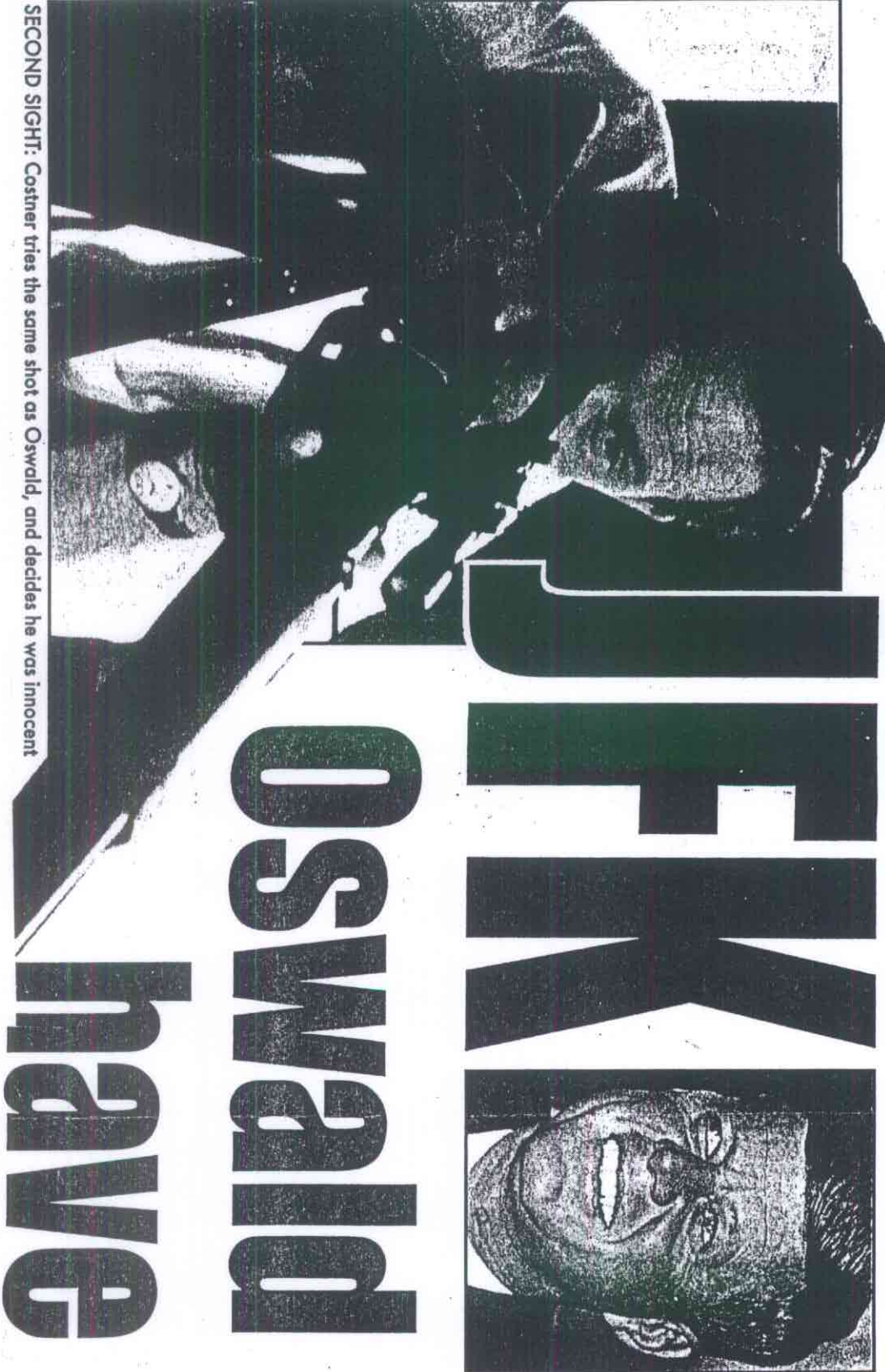


KEVIN COSTNER TALKS OF THE FILM THAT HAS



SECOND SIGHT: Costner tries the same shot as Oswald, and decides he was innocent

CAUSED UPROAR IN THE STATES

Moment

I knew

DOUBT:
The world
was told
Oswald
killed
Kennedy,
but did
he?



could not

killed him

KEVIN Costner squinted down the sights of the rifle at the tree-lined square below – and suddenly knew he had been right to take the biggest gamble of his life.

The Oscar-winning actor had been having serious doubts about his role in the new Oliver Stone movie *JFK*.

He knew that the film, with its controversial account of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, was bound to stir up such a rumpus that he feared his golden-boy image might be tarnished for ever.

But the doubts vanished in one chilling moment when Costner sat by the sixth-floor window of the Dallas Book Depository where loner Lee Harvey Oswald supposedly fired his fatal shots on November 22, 1963.

As he held a rifle like that used by Oswald 29 years ago, Costner knew the movie's message had to be taken seriously ... for he realised the shooting could not have happened the way the world was told.

He says: "I discovered it was not an easy shot – it was plain impossible. And I remember thinking: 'This could never have happened the way they said.' Being there, at that window, made me feel better about doing the movie."

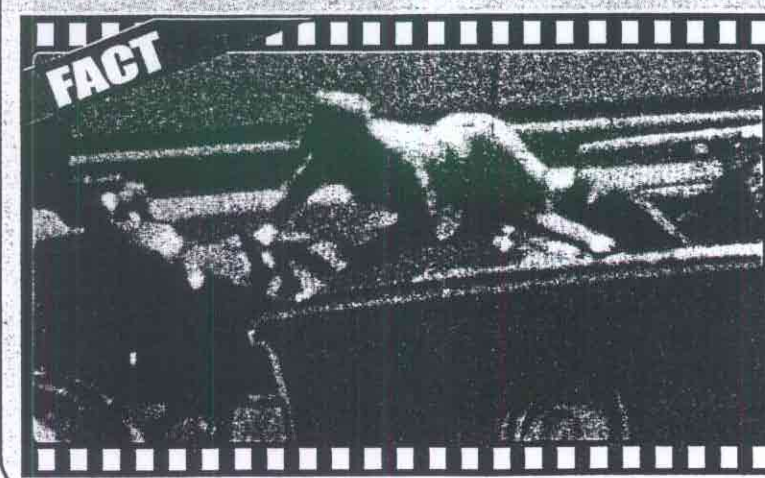
Costner stars as Jim Garrison, a New Orleans district attorney convinced Kennedy was the victim of a top-level government conspiracy. But before that moment in the book depository, the doubts were overwhelming.

● **HE WAS** tortured at the prospect of reopening old wounds for Kennedy's widow, Jackie Onassis, her children and the Kennedy clan;

● **FEARED** the £25 million film might be rubbished by the critics for being a travesty of events, and;

● **KNEW** Garrison was nothing like the hero the film made him out to be.

Costner, who earns £6 million a picture thanks to *The Untouchables*, *Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves* and the



RIDE OF DEATH: The first three pictures show the actual moments of horror as Kennedy was shot. The last is the film version of the event

From IVOR DAVIS in Los Angeles

Oscar-laden *Dances With Wolves*, says: "I knew there would be rocks thrown at me for taking the part.

"I was concerned that I was dragging the Kennedy name across the face of America."

BUT the film, which arrives here on January 24, is already a box-office smash in America.

Hardly surprising as the cast list alone is guaranteed to pull in the crowds. Sissy Spacek plays Garrison's wife and

Tommy Lee Jones is Clay Shaw, the man Garrison arrested and unsuccessfully charged with conspiracy to kill Kennedy.

Jack Lemmon, Ed Asner, Walter Matthau, John Candy and Donald Sutherland also feature, and Britain's Gary Oldman plays Oswald.

But despite the big names, there have already been plenty of accusations that the movie distorts the truth.

And Costner confesses: "I don't believe it's the true Garrison that you see."

The DA was depicted in books and newspa-

pers of the time as a publicity-hungry, stumbling buffoon.

Yet in the film he is turned into a one-dimensional hero, bravely battling a corrupt system.

THIS is one reason why a lot of flak has been aimed at director Stone of *Platoon*, *Wall Street*, and *Born On The Fourth Of July* fame.

The critics accuse him of mixing fact with fiction and using half-baked rumours about the Kennedy murder.

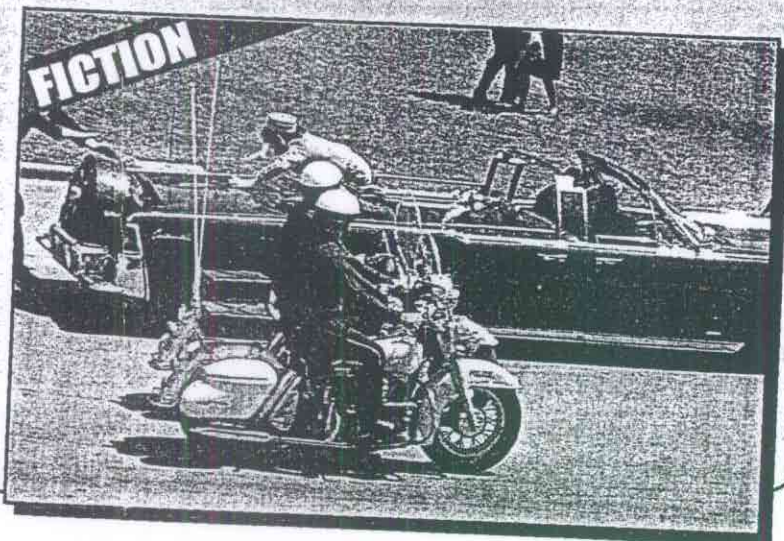
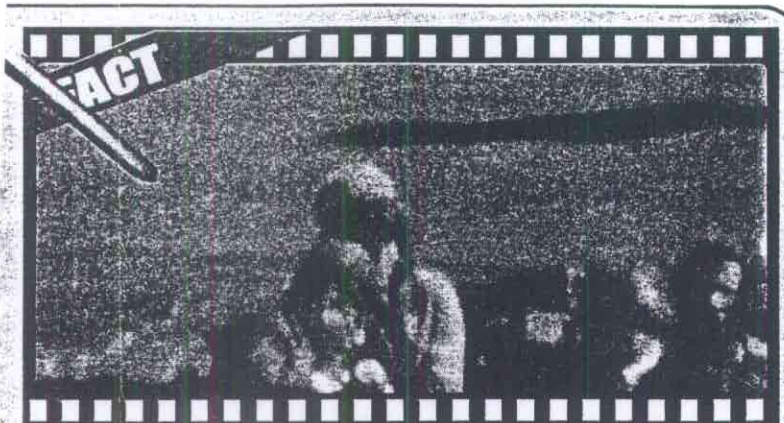
But Stone defends his version – and Costner's depiction of Garrison as a good guy, saying:

"Kevin has a fundamental decency, an integrity I associate with Garrison. He fought the Government and press against long odds. Jimmy Stewart comes to mind – or Gary Cooper."

Costner met Garrison when researching the part. He is now 70 and seriously ill with heart disease. There were fears he would not live to see the film.

But he watched the three hour, ten minute epic at a special screening near his New Orleans home by resting between each 15-minute segment. And he was overcome with emotion when he saw Costner's portrayal of him.

Like Garrison, Stone believes Oswald – shot dead by Jack Ruby be-



fore he could face trial - did not fire the bullets that shattered the President's skull.

The film shows at least three gunmen involved in the killing, flatly contradicting the government-appointed Warren Commission, which reported in 1964 that Oswald had acted alone.

STONE claims the CIA and US military plotted the killing, for fear Kennedy would withdraw troops from Vietnam.

It is a view shared by Oldman, 33 - who, as Oswald, has added to his reputation for portraying life's losers.

The former Royal Sha-

kespeare Company actor, who played Sex Pistols leader Sid Vicious in *Sid And Nancy*, says: "Oswald was the patsy. He was set up. He was 24 years old and gullible. You don't need to be a brain surgeon to work out that there was more than one gunman."

"And when you really analyse the evidence, it's clear that maybe he didn't do it."

After his own visit to the scene, does Costner share the conspiracy theory? He says slowly: "As a teenager, I visited Texas and thought it must have been easy for a gunman to pick off the President."

"But now, I believe our story. I believe there was a conspiracy to cover up the murder..."

The conspiracy theories so far...

BIZARRE theories about Kennedy's death have flourished almost from the moment he was assassinated - and, even before the film, solving the riddle had become a virtual cottage industry.

Did Lee Harvey Oswald act alone? Was he part of a conspiracy? Or was he, as he claimed, an innocent patsy suckered into being in the wrong place at the right time? Here are some of the theories:

- The President was murdered on the orders of FBI boss J. Edgar Hoover, who ran the government's so-called police force with a rod of iron for more than 40 years.

Hoover, a notorious right-wing extremist, hated the liberally minded Kennedy brothers with a passion.

He believed their reforming zeal, such as fighting for racial equality, was influenced by Communism. And he commissioned inquiries into JFK's sex life, believing that a philandering President was un-American.

Hoover was convinced that Kennedy was going to sack him and, rather than go through the humiliation of dismissal, took drastic action.

- Kennedy was killed by the Central Intelligence Agency. The President, interested in more open and friendly relations with other countries, mistrusted the CIA's shady spy-like activities. He feared the agency had become a law unto itself - and discussed bringing it to heel by turning over control to the military. So the CIA bumped off the man who sought to limit its power.

- He was shot by Cuban freedom fighters because he wasn't trying hard enough to get rid of Castro's left-wing dic-

tatorship. This is a favourite of those who believe Oswald was involved in a conspiracy - as before the killing he had been linked to Cuban activists operating in the States.

- Oswald was hired by Mafia bosses worried about Kennedy's declared intention to eradicate organised crime in America. Subscribers to this theory believe that, having killed the President, Oswald was silenced by being shot by alleged Mafia hitman Jack Ruby.

- The film *JFK* suggests a conspiracy involving nearly everyone - the American government AND the military, the FBI and the CIA.

- There's one crazy theory that director Stone hasn't included - it cites the father of actor Woody Harrelson of the hit American sitcom, *Cheers*, as the killer.

According to the US magazine *The Globe*, Charles Harrelson, currently serving a life sentence for killing a judge, successfully fulfilled a CIA contract to assassinate Kennedy.

At first Harrelson apparently admitted his crime ... but although others say they believe him, he's now keeping quiet about it.