

Warren Panel Findings Should Stir Outrage

To the Editor:

Anthony Lewis's Jan. 9 column is only one in a series of attacks in *The Times* on me and the movie "J.F.K." and, in fact, on anything that questions the Warren Commission's findings on the assassination of President Kennedy. New York Times writers have done no investigation of their own; why do they continue to defend tooth and nail the commission's findings more than a decade after the House Select Committee on Assassinations sharply criticized and documented the deficiencies in the commission's investigation?

Mr. Lewis tells us, for instance, that medical experts told the commission the backward snap of the President's head as seen in the Zapruder film was the result of a "seizure-like neuromuscular reaction" in response to damage to major nerve centers in the brain and not inconsistent with a shot from behind. This is entirely misleading and false.

Mr. Lewis is quoting from the House Select Committee on Assassinations report of 1973. Nowhere in the Warren Commission material is there an explanation of the backward movement of the President's head. Moreover, a Federal Bureau of Investigation "printing error" of crucial Zapruder film frames in the commission volumes gave the impression that the President fell forward — exactly the opposite of what the running film shows. The autopsy photos and X-rays show no damage to the major nerve centers of Kennedy's brain, making such a neuromuscular reaction impossible.

Mr. Lewis champions David W. Belin, former Warren Commission counsel, as "the man who knows more about the assassination than anyone else." According to Mr. Lewis, Mr. Belin has seen "every document, every Central Intelligence Agency file" relating to the assassination. But this is impossible. As Sen-

ate and House committees documented, the C.I.A. and other agencies deliberately withheld vital information from the Warren Commission.

There are many more inaccuracies in Mr. Lewis's column. The bullet fragments, allegedly from the head shot, lack any firm chain of possession or evidence; nevertheless, Mr. Lewis claims they are conclusively linked to Lee Harvey Oswald's rifle. Despite the opinions of 19 medical experts based on autopsy photos and X-rays that all shots came from the rear, there are still more than 20 doctors, nurses and technicians in Dallas who examined the President's body and saw a gaping exit wound in the right rear of the skull.

If there was a plan to kill Oswald during the jail transfer, the plotters would have waited to get Jack Ruby into place before bringing Oswald down, regardless of the surprise visit from Harry Holmes, a postal inspector. And so on. What we're looking at

are discrepancies and contradictions in the Warren Commission's own evidence — problems the Government has never satisfactorily resolved.

Where was *The Times* when it should have been raising these questions? The day after the unindexed 26 volumes of the Warren Commission's hearings and exhibits were published, Mr. Lewis stated on the front page that the volumes "overwhelmingly supported" the commission report, implying he had read and analyzed all 20,000 pages overnight, a speed-reading feat that would make Evelyn Wood woozy.

Your editorial board, less intrepid, took two days to digest the volumes before announcing that the evidence within "brings to a close the inquiry." This is inexcusable on the part of Mr. Lewis and *The Times*, which claims to be a newspaper of record.

Inaccuracies aside, I find Mr. Lewis's charade of civil libertarian concern far more disturbing. Mr. Lewis asserts that Jim Garrison "bribed witnesses to prosecute an innocent man." The "bribed" witnesses all signed affidavits denying the allegations, and Clay Shaw — the "innocent man" — won an acquittal. I do not question that verdict. While Mr. Lewis and you excoriate Jim Garrison for taking a man to trial (after several hearings on the evidence), neither shows remorse in calling Oswald "Kennedy's assassin," though he was

never tried, convicted or even allowed legal representation in Dallas.

In 1964, Mr. Lewis wrote of the Warren Report: "Few who loved John Kennedy, or this country, will be able to read it without emotion." For some, like myself, the emotion is outrage. For Mr. Lewis and *The Times*, it's complacency. OLIVER STONE

Los Angeles, Jan. 9, 1992

Intelligence Files

To the Editor:

"Get the Rest of the J.F.K. Story" (editorial, Jan. 16) suggests a partial disclosure of files from the John F. Kennedy assassination investigation. I am afraid the exclusion of the most sensitive Central Intelligence Agency and other intelligence reports will only deepen the confusion.

For the most likely source of any conspiracy is not the military-industrial complex. Baneful as its influence may be, any such conspiracy would have been exposed by now. To release documents on this topic will only address a faded issue.

A more plausible conspiracy would reflect international conflicts and intrigues. If an example is needed, consider the family of President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam. He was killed a few weeks before President Kennedy, reportedly as a result of some measure or policy that Kennedy approved. The foreign service

and its policies would have been gravely embarrassed and imperiled by the loss of a President as a result of those policies.

If a thorough search was made by the intelligence community and no conspiracy was found, that should be clear from the totality of the documents. But if possibilities were not checked, or if Congressional inquiries were answered by evasions rooted in "national security," that would also be clear.

Among those best qualified to give one of these verdicts are present and retired C.I.A. people. But neither they nor Americans in general are able to study the reports and draw conclusions.

ARTHUR HARVEY
Canton, Me., Jan. 17, 1992