

Earl Warren's Assassins

By David W. Belin

FORMER DES MOINES Chief Justice Earl Warren, one of the great Americans of this century, is being honored on Monday by the issuance of a postage stamp. At one time he was best known for his leadership in breaking down the barriers of discrimination through the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

But today, America's young people know him best as he is portrayed in the Warner Brothers film "J.F.K.": as a liar, an incompetent and as someone who participated in a cover-up of the truth about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

What far right-wing extremists tried to persuade a majority of Americans to believe in the 1960's with their "Impeach Earl Warren" billboards, Hollywood has been able to achieve in the 1990's in its impeachment of the integrity of a great Chief Justice.

Earl Warren is not the only victim. The Kennedy assassination is called a "coup d'état," a "public execution" by elements of the C.I.A. and the Department of Defense, while President Lyndon B. Johnson is called an accessory after the fact — in other words, a murderer.

When the film not only alleges conspiracy but names the guilty parties, it goes beyond just artistic license and entertainment. It crosses the threshold of slander and character assassination — a 1990's version of McCarthyism.

As if telling these lies were not enough, Warner Brothers has now gone one step further, and has helped finance the mailing of 13,000 copies of a "J.F.K. Study Guide" to high school

David Belin is former counsel to the Warren Commission.

A 'J.F.K.' study guide enters the history curriculum.

social studies and college history departments. The text supposedly has been "approved" by Warner Brothers and is accompanied by a film poster and a two-page exercise sheet.

All of this is in the context of a film that professes to speak the truth. "Dedicated to the young, in whose spirit the search for the truth marches on," declares the film at the end. "The truth is the most important value we have," proclaims Kevin Costner as he portrays New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison.

In fact, to incorporate "J.F.K." in any school curriculum misrepresents the truth the same way that Oliver Stone, the film's producer, director and screenplay co-author, misrepresents the most important facts in speaking and writing about the assassination. In a recent letter to *New York* magazine, Mr. Stone used the 1979 report of the House Select Committee on Assassinations as a primary authority for his attacks on the Warren Commission. But he covered up the fact that the panel's ultimate conclusion was that "Lee Harvey Oswald fired three shots at President John F. Kennedy." Two shots hit and one shot missed. That's what the Warren Commission found.

"J.F.K." claims that the shot that killed President Kennedy was fired from the front. The House committee's report directly contradicts this, concluding "that President Kennedy was struck by two, and only two, bullets, each of which entered from the rear." Like the Warren Commission, the House panel also "concluded that a single bullet" passed "through

both President Kennedy and Governor Connally." Will these findings be in the "J.F.K." study guide?

What about the murder of Police Officer J. D. Tippit — the Rosetta Stone to understanding the assassination of President Kennedy? "J.F.K." asserts that Oswald was a "patsy" and did not do it. But like the Warren Commission, the House report concluded "that Oswald shot and killed Officer Tippit."

The committee further concluded that "this crime, committed while fleeing the scene of the assassination, was consistent with the finding that Oswald assassinated the President."

The fundamental differences between the committee's report and the Warren Commission's findings stem primarily from acoustical evidence. The majority of the House committee claimed that this evidence indicated the presence of a second gunman who missed everything. But this evidence was subsequently disproved by the May 14, 1982, report of the Committee on Ballistic Acoustics of the National Research Council, which found no scientific validity for it.

Perhaps the ultimate irony in "J.F.K." is the proclamation of Mr. Costner: "Hitler said, the bigger the lie, the more people will believe it." Warner Brothers, Mr. Stone and Mr. Costner are proving that to be true, making millions of dollars along the way. Furthermore, they want to spread the disinformation of "J.F.K." into our public schools, in effect brainwashing students through the power of a commercial film and re-writing history the Hollywood way. And for this, the film has received eight Academy Award nominations.

For Hollywood to give any Academy Award to this massive misrepresentation of truth and character assassination of Earl Warren would be vivid evidence of the depths to which Hollywood's standards of integrity, truth and justice have fallen. □

Reprinted with permission by The New York Times

In his attack on the Warren Commission reported in the March 10th issue of *Daily Variety*, Oliver Stone did not deny any of the facts about the findings of the House Select Committee on Assassination referred to in my *New York Times* Op-Ed article. Furthermore, in 1975 I filed Freedom of Information Act requests to have all Warren Commission files and all CIA files on the assassination of President Kennedy released to the public.

David Belin
2000 Financial Center
Des Moines, Iowa 50309