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Who shot Kennedy?

By John Hartl

It has been more than 28 years since President John Kennedy's murder, but the debate about who did it and why has rarely been more passionate, as evidenced by the media hoopla surrounding the release of Oliver Stone's "JFK," a \$40 million, three-hour epic about the investigation of the crime.

There is no lack of conspiracy-theory movies and tapes in video stores.

3G Home Video's "Who Didn't Kill JFK" (\$10) was written and directed by Jim Marrs, author of "Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy," who maintains that a complicated conspiracy was responsible for the president's death.

Also available from 3G Home Video is "The Secret Files of J. Edgar Hoover" (\$15), a collection of three tapes about long-suppressed FBI files that includes information about the assassination as well as the Kennedys' involvement with Marilyn Monroe.

Rhino Video's "Best Evidence: The Research Video" (\$15) is a 35-minute video digest of David S. Lifton's 1981 book, "Best Evidence: Disguise and Deception in the Assassination of John F. Kennedy." Using a frame-by-frame examination of Abraham Zapruder's Super 8 movie of the assassination, and interviews with witnesses at the autopsy, Lifton argues that the wounds in Kennedy's head were altered and his doctors lied to conform to the official explanation that he was shot from behind.

"Marilyn and the Kennedys: Say Goodbye to the President" (Key Video, \$20) is a 1986 Brit-

Stone's 'JFK' only the latest in a long line of conspiracy films

ish Broadcasting Corp. documentary that spends 71 minutes examining evidence that John and Robert Kennedy had affairs with Marilyn Monroe, and that Robert Kennedy had something to do with her death in 1962. The ghoulish style of this tape is often pure National Enquirer, particularly when it uses out-of-context clips of Monroe's movie and television appearances to comment on her emotional state.

Although the granddaddy of conspiracy films—Mark Lane and Emile de Antonio's 122-minute documentary, "Rush to Judgment" (1966)—has not been released on cassette, an hourlong film about Lane's theories, "The Plot to Kill JFK," is available for \$30 from Movies Unlimited.

"The Killing of President Kennedy: New Revelations 20 Years Later" (VidAmerica, \$20) is an intriguing update of Lane's ideas, using material about connections between the Mafia and the CIA that was released to the public only in the early 1980s.

"Reasonable Doubt: The Single Bullet Theory" (Movies Unlimited, \$30) is an hourlong tape about the Warren Commission's conclusions. "JFK: The Day the Nation Cried" (Movies Unlimited, \$20) uses television news coverage to recall the long weekend of Kennedy's death and funeral.

Much better is "John Fitzgerald Kennedy: A Celebration

of His Life and Times" (Reader's Digest, \$70), a three-part, three-hour tape that aired on the Disney Channel three years ago and may be the best summing-up of his career. Only 10 minutes is devoted to the assassination.

Also giving a broader view are two well-acted mid-1980s mini-series: "Kennedy" (Prism Entertainment, \$30), with Martin Sheen and Blair Brown as the president and the first lady, and "Robert F. Kennedy: His Life and Times" (RCA Columbia, \$60), with the late Brad Davis as Robert and Cliff de Young as JFK.

The movie that most resembles the all-star "JFK" is "Executive Action" (Movies Unlimited, \$60), a 1973 thriller in which Burt Lancaster, Will Geer and Robert Ryan play powerful right-wingers who conspire to kill the president because they fear the Kennedy dynasty, the president's sympathy with blacks, a possibly early pullout in Vietnam and the nuclear test-ban treaty.

Most of these movies and videos are propelled by an overwhelming obsession with the Kennedy assassination. One that doesn't is "Greetings" (Movies Unlimited, \$60), a cheeky, low-budget 1968 comedy that helped make stars of the young Robert de Niro and director Brian de Palma.

Gerritt Graham plays De Niro's morbid pal, a young man who is consumed with doubts about the Warren Commission's report and can't stop talking about his conviction that JFK was shot by an Army officer. He ends up getting killed by a sniper while on his way to the Statue of Liberty—no doubt the victim of another conspiracy.

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