

TV specials pay homage to JFK

25th anniversary of assassination

By Rick Du Brow
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On Nov. 22, 1963, Walter Cronkite suddenly broke into CBS' daytime programming to announce that President John F. Kennedy had been shot.

Starting tonight, with a rerun of the miniseries "Kennedy" on KTLA-Channel 5, television presents a month of special programming marking the 25th anniversary of the slaying of JFK. He would have been 71 years old last May 29.

The upcoming flood of Kennedy specials — from drama to documentary to revived charges of conspiracy in the killing — come from such diverse sources as Dan Rather, columnist Jack Anderson and Geraldo Rivera.

Tonight's KTLA "Kennedy" broadcast stars Martin Sheen as JFK and launches the three-day miniseries, which dramatizes the late president's White House years.

On Nov. 2, the first of several documentaries charging conspiracy — "American Expose: Who Murdered JFK?" — will be presented by Anderson on KCOP-Channel 13.

The two-hour program promises "evidence proving that JFK was assassinated by underworld hit men with connections to the Third World."

Those interviewed include former President Gerald Ford and a onetime CIA operative who took part in plots to kill Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

On Nov. 6, pay-TV channel HBO offers an hourlong documentary, "JFK: In His Own Words," in which Kennedy's voice is heard

speaking of his life from childhood and school days through the presidency.

The possibility of conspiracy is raised again in KCET-Channel 28's Nov. 15 hourlong "Who Shot President Kennedy?"

Focusing on new technology that examines whether Lee Harvey Oswald alone killed Kennedy, the broadcast includes enhancement of a pivotal photo of JFK after he was shot.

"Experts at Polaroid and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology were able to enhance part of the image for the investigation," says KCET.

KCET also has a second JFK documentary Nov. 15 — "Kennedy v. Wallace: A Crisis Up Close," a 1963 broadcast that offers an intimate view of the president during a civil rights crisis.

The confrontation centered on the integration of the University of Alabama, and the principals were JFK and George Wallace, governor of the state.

On Nov. 17, Rather will anchor a two-hour "CBS Reports" special drawn from 53 hours of coverage seen 25 years ago. It begins with the Cronkite bulletin.

Hal Holbrook is the host of another two-hour broadcast, "America Remembers John F. Kennedy," which airs on KHJ-Channel 9 on Nov. 20.

And KCET comes back with the hourlong documentary "JFK — A Time Remembered" on the eve of the anniversary, Nov. 21. Rather appears on this program as well, saying, "The sense of Kennedy when he was alive was not of greatness, but of potential greatness."

On Nov. 22, the Arts & Enter-



Portraying President John F. Kennedy is Martin Sheen in the three-day miniseries "Kennedy," beginning tonight on KTLA.

tainment cable service presents an extraordinary offering — 4½ consecutive hours of NBC News coverage exactly as it appeared the day of the killing, and starting at precisely the same moment, 1:56 p.m. Eastern Time.

Arts & Entertainment will add another 90 minutes, condensing coverage that followed on the evening of Nov. 22, 1963. The entire six-hour program will be anchored by former NBC newsmen Edwin Newman.

The night of Nov. 22, NBC will have an hourlong broadcast, "JFK — That Day in November," featuring remembrances by the public and reporters.

And the same night, KTLA starts a two-part Rivera special that adds new footage to a heralded Showtime cable program, "On Trial: Lee Harvey Oswald," which presented real eyewitnesses.

Two shows related to the JFK anniversary are also on tap. On Nov. 1, KTTV-Channel 11 airs "Kennedys: The Next Generation," an hourlong look at the young members of the family.

And in February, ABC presents the miniseries "The Kennedys of Massachusetts," a dramatization of half a century of family history culminating with JFK's election as president.