

IN STEP WITH:®

HELENA BONHAM

WHATEVER YOUR theories on just who killed JFK—a nut called Lee Harvey Oswald, working alone, or an Oliver Stone-style conspiracy of powerful officials—next month we'll be offered yet another take, this one via NBC television. The TV movie, *Fatal Deception*, is seen from the point of view of Oswald's Russian wife, Marina, who was a 22-year-old with a couple of kids at the time of the assassination, a foreigner in a hostile land.

The lead role is played by an extraordinary and quite beautiful British actress named Helena Bonham Carter, whom you may remember from those splendid films *A Room With a View* and *Howards End*. When we talked, Helena was just winding up a play that had run on London's West End and then had gone on tour, ending in the lovely old town of Bath. Playing opposite her, I noticed, was an actor named Jason Connery.

"Yes, he's Sean's son with Diane Cilento," she said. "He's about 30, blond and blue-eyed. Doesn't look at all like his father."

As for the Marina Oswald film, Helena said, "It starts off two days later [after JFK's death]. You know, he and Oswald were buried the same day. Then we follow through her experience. She testified for six months, there were threats—by officials as well as just people. 'We'll deport your children unless you testify,' she was told. Later on, and after carrying considerable personal guilt, she begins to rethink what happened and doesn't believe Oswald necessarily did it or acted alone."

Most of the story was filmed on location in Dallas. Except for Ms. Bonham Carter, the cast is American, with Frank Whaley playing Oswald in flashbacks. They also worked for 10 days in Russia, shooting the scenes of Marina meeting the young American Marine who would change history.

The film was shown at this year's Monte Carlo Film Festival. "People were pretty well stunned," Helena said. "It made a big emotional impact."

The Bonham Carter family itself has brushed—rather substantially—against history. Helena's great-grandfather, Herbert Asquith, was British prime

Brady's Bits

After winding up her stage work in Bath, England—"the most beautiful city ever," she said—Helena was due to get one week off and then start a romantic comedy for Granada Television with Rik Mayall. "I play a strip-o-gram," she said, "but it's not salacious at all. She's really very innocent." I confessed astonishment. The great-granddaughter of a British prime minister gets sent out as a greeting card who strips on cue? "People get mixed up between offscreen reality and onscreen image," Helena said. "Even though I've done mostly upper middle class, I don't go around in a corset, you know."

Born:

May 26, 1966, in London, England.

Films:

Include *Lady Jane*, 1985; *A Room With a View*, 1986; *Maurice*, 1987; *The Mask*, 1988; *Francesco*, 1989; *Getting It Right*, 1989; *Hamlet*, 1990; *Where Angels Fear To Tread*, 1991; *Howards End*, 1992.

Television:

Includes *A Pattern of Roses*, 1983; *A Hazard of Hearts*, 1987; *Arms and the Man*, 1989; *Fatal Deception: Mrs. Lee Harvey Oswald*, 1993.



BY JAMES BRADY

CARTER



Eddie Adams

In yet another reading of the JFK assassination theory, Helena Bonham Carter tells Marina Oswald's story

minister at the outset of World War I and eventually was ousted by Lloyd George. Her grandmother, Violet Bonham Carter, was for years a leader of Britain's Liberal Party.

Helena was educated at the Westminster School (where the majority of students were boys) and made her screen debut in 1985 playing Lady Jane Grey, the 15-year-old who became Queen of England in 1553, only to be beheaded soon after.

Ms. Bonham Carter still lives at home with her parents in north London—which shows just how un-Hollywood an actress she is. "How's that working out?" I inquired.

"Fine for me," she said. "I don't know about them."