

ROBERT P. GEMBERLING

7106 Clemson Drive  
Dallas, Texas 75214  
(214) 348-3906

January 4, 1992

Mr. Burl Osborne,  
Publisher and Editor,  
Dallas Morning News,  
P. O. Box 655237,  
Dallas, Texas, 75265.

Dear Mr. Osborne:

The holidays are now over. The JFK movie has premiered. Now it is time to face reality and the truth about the assassination of President Kennedy. Oliver Stone certainly made his plea for the "truth" in JFK, and expressed hope the young would seek answers about the assassination. JFK contained so many lies, misinformation and distortion of the real truth, Stone can be thankful he lives in a democracy, which he seems to enjoy criticizing. Perhaps he stands to profit from his movie, as he claims the military, business and political forces of our country did from the assassination.

As a Special Agent of the FBI, I coordinated the assassination investigation at Dallas from its inception until my retirement in December, 1976, at the direction of the then Special Agent in Charge of the Dallas FBI office, the late J. Gordon Shanklin. My duties included the making of investigative assignments; reviewing the results for accuracy, completeness and thoroughness; insuring new leads were assigned and covered; and organizing the material into reports to FBI Headquarters for dissemination to the Warren Commission. It was my privilege to work with some of the best trained, extremely dedicated, thorough and meticulous investigators in the law enforcement profession, whose integrity was, and still is, highly respected.

The extensive publicity given to the JFK movie, while being made, and to promote its opening, piqued my interest. As I read the reprint of the article captioned "Kennedy Assassination: How About Telling The Truth", written by former President Gerald Ford, who was a member of the Warren Commission, and David Belin, who was counsel to the Warren Commission, in the Dallas Morning News on December 22, 1991; the article by George Will, on December 23, 1991, captioned "Stone Gives Paranoia A Bad Name"; and the many other articles expressing views, both pro and con, concerning JFK, I reached the happy conclusion that, at last, there is a newspaper giving prominent space to articles written by people who do not believe, or support, the many conspiracy theories being promoted by literary scavengers.

I have seen JFK. No pad or pencil was taken into the darkened theater for note taking. It was obvious to me, however, that many of the scenes and dialogue were contrary to the actual facts developed by highly qualified investigators. I will admit I was concentrating on the content, rather than the artistic performances of the actors, which my wife thought were excellent.

January 4, 1992

Encouragement from friends has prompted me to compile the following factual information to refute some of the lies, misinformation and distortions of the truth in JFK. Time will not permit me to address all the erroneous information portrayed in JFK.

JFK: Garrison (Kevin Costner) makes the statement "Hitler once said the bigger the lies, the more people will believe them", or words to that effect.

Comments: Oliver Stone apparently patterned the entire JFK movie on the philosophy expressed in Hitler's quoted remark. I have little doubt that most Americans, who examine the true facts developed in the assassination investigation, will see JFK as a completely fictionalized story about a tragic incident in the history of our great country. What a shame he didn't promote JFK as such.

JFK: The 6.5 Mannlicher-Carcano rifle could not be fired three times, with accuracy, in the time span alleged by the Warren Commission, by an individual of Oswald's marksmanship capabilities.

Comments: Firearms experts from the FBI and the Infantry Weapons Evaluation Branch of the U. S. Army fired over 100 rounds of ammunition with this rifle without any misfires. FBI firearms experts tested this rifle to determine the speed with which it could be fired with accuracy. The tests established three shots could be fired, with accuracy, in 7.1 to 7.9 seconds, and if either the first or third shots missed, there was a total of 4.8 to 5.6 seconds between the two shots which hit. There is considerable support among the experts that only two shots hit the target. Other tests and examinations of various cameras and exposed film determined approximately 2.3 seconds elapsed between shots. Such experts determined the defect in the scope on the rifle was such it would have assisted Oswald aiming at a target moving away from his location. Oswald qualified as a "Sharpshooter" with a rifle in the U. S. Marine Corps in December, 1956, and as a "Marksman" in May, 1959. He received extensive training with a rifle in the U. S. Marine Corps, and was considered a good shot, or slightly above average, when compared to the average civilian male in the United States, who was considered an excellent shot. As a wounded marine, in the Battle of Iwo Jima in World War II, I am quite familiar with the training and proficiency required to qualify in the U. S. Marine Corps as a "Marksman" or "Sharpshooter".

JFK: There were more than three shots fired at President Kennedy, and some of the wounds resulted from shots hitting him from the front of the head.

Comments: The Warren Report pointed out the consensus, among the witnesses at the scene, was that three shots were fired, although some heard only two shots, and others testified they heard four to six shots. There were three spent cartridges found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building, which were determined to have been fired by the same rifle which fired the bullets which caused the President's wounds. In February, 1976, Dr. John K. Lattimer, a New York physician, said he and his two sons conducted a dozen experiments with a weapon similar to the one used by Oswald. His find-



January 4, 1992

ings were published in considerable detail in the medical journal "Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics". Such findings debunked the theory the shots, which hit the President, came from the front because his head appeared to jerk rapidly backward in the Zapruder film. Dr. Lattimer pointed out the President's head was thrown backward, and slightly to the left, because of "jet engine effect from the heavy brain material leaving the front of the head with explosive force". The Warren Commission concluded there was no credible evidence suggesting the shots were fired from the Triple Underpass, the nearby railroad yards, or any place other than the Texas School Book Depository Building. Passengers in the first few cars of the motorcade thought the shots came from the rear and to the right; some spectators at Houston and Elm Streets saw a rifle being fired in the direction of the President from the easternmost window of the sixth floor on the south side of the building; and other witnesses saw a rifle in this window immediately after the President was hit. Three employees of the Texas School Book Depository, who were observing the parade from the fifth floor, said the shots were fired from immediately above them.

JFK: It was impossible for the same bullet to have struck both the President and Governor Connally.

Comments: Based upon the medical evidence on the wounds of Governor Connally and the President, and wound ballistic tests performed at the Edgewood Arsenal, the Chief of the Army Wound Ballistics Branch, who had spent 17 years in that area of specialization, concluded it was probable the same bullet passed through the President's neck and inflicted all the wounds of the Governor. During a reenactment of the assassination at the scene, using the Zapruder film, the relative positions of the President and Governor in the limousine at the time the President was struck in the back of the neck, it was confirmed the same bullet probably passed through both men. Subsequent to the release of the Warren Report in September, 1964, and after theorists' claims of a "magic bullet", independent tests were made and exhibited on a Nova TV program narrated by Walter Cronkite, with statements from physicians and other experts, which proved it was possible the same bullet caused the neck wound of the President and all the Governor's wounds.

JFK: Oswald did not shoot Dallas Police Officer J. D. Tippit.  
Comments: Oswald killed Officer Tippit approximately 45 minutes after the assassination of President Kennedy. Two eyewitnesses saw the shooting and seven other witnesses heard the shots and saw Oswald leave the scene with revolver in hand. All nine of these witnesses positively identified Oswald as the man they saw. The cartridge cases found near the scene were found to have been fired from the revolver in the possession of Oswald at the time of his arrest to the exclusion of all other weapons. The revolver in the possession of Oswald at the time of his arrest was purchased by, and belonged to, Oswald. Oswald's jacket was found along the path of flight taken by him as he fled the scene of the Tippit shooting.

January 4, 1992

JFK: A Dallas Police Department detective is shown opening a door for Jack Ruby to enter the basement area of the Dallas Police Department at the time other detectives are bringing Oswald from another doorway for transfer to the Dallas County Jail.

Comments: Jack Ruby, after sending a telegram at 11:17 AM, walked down the Main Street ramp to the basement area of the Dallas Police Department while a Dallas police officer, who was stationed at that ramp entrance, had momentarily stepped into the street to direct traffic. The transfer of Oswald would have been completed long before 11:17 AM had it not been for a last minute delay for completion of an interview of Oswald by Postal Inspector Harry Holmes. Both Ruby, and his roommate, George Senator, stated Ruby did not leave his apartment until shortly before 11:00 AM.

JFK: Oswald is shown in Ruby's Carousel Club and is portrayed as knowing Ruby.

Comments: Notwithstanding allegations Ruby and Oswald knew each other, no credible evidence was developed to indicate they knew each other, or were part of any conspiracy, foreign or domestic. Most people interviewed by the FBI, who knew either Ruby or Oswald, were specifically asked if they had any information to indicate Ruby and Oswald knew each other. Although there have been many claims by theorists they were acquainted, to my knowledge, none of them have produced any credible evidence to substantiate their claims.

JFK: Garrison (Kevin Costner) claimed to have received a copy of a teletype from FBI Headquarters to the New Orleans FBI and other FBI offices from a New Orleans FBI clerk. Such teletype was said to have been sent on November 17, 1963, stating an attempt would be made to assassinate President Kennedy at Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963.

Comments: In December, 1967, Garrison was quoted in the news media as saying a final meeting of the conspirators involved in the assassination took place on November 17, 1963, and FBI Headquarters had sent the above described teletype. Deputy Associate Director of the FBI, James S. Adams, in his testimony before the House Judiciary Committee, in 1975, publicly stated that William Walter, a former clerk in the New Orleans FBI office, had told several media representatives, including one from the Dallas Times Herald, he received a teletype message from FBI Headquarters on November 17, 1963, five days before the assassination, which said an assassination attempt would be made on President Kennedy in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963. Mr. Adams publicly stated the FBI had proved, by internal investigation in 1968, Walter was mistaken or lying. An investigation by members of the news media, in 1975, established the Walter statement was without basis, and that his statement about the alleged teletype's content did not fit the format of teletypes utilized by the FBI at that time. Why this young man made such a statement, I do not know. I am confident Mr. Garrison knows.



January 4, 1992

Mr. Burl Osborne

JFK: A photograph of Oswald holding a rifle is exhibited. Oswald (Gary Oldman) remarks it is a fake, and the audience is led to believe the photograph was doctored by representatives of the U. S. Government.

Comments: It is well documented this photograph of Oswald, holding the same rifle used in the assassination, is a legitimate, undoctored photograph. This rifle was shipped to Oswald from Chicago, Illinois, on March 20, 1963. Oswald and his wife, Marina, lived at 214 West Neely Street, Dallas, Texas, from March 2, 1963, to April 24, 1963. On a Sunday, during this period, after Oswald had received the rifle, he asked Marina to take his picture holding the rifle, wearing a pistol, and holding issues of two newspapers. Two pictures were taken by Marina. Their authenticity was established by scientific tests. Marina Oswald identified Oswald's Imperial Reflex Camera as the one used to take the pictures. Analyses of the camera, photographs and a negative of one of the photographs established this camera was used and Oswald's face had not been superimposed on another body.

JFK: Oswald is portrayed as being an informant of the FBI.

Comments: In March, 1964, I was promoted to the position of Supervisory Special Agent in the Dallas FBI Office. I remained in that capacity until February, 1969. During most of this period I was in charge of security investigations, and had access to the confidential files maintained on current and former informants of the FBI in the Dallas area. I know, without any reservation, Oswald was never an informant of the FBI. On the occasions when Oswald was interviewed by the FBI, prior to the assassination, he did not exhibit a cooperative attitude. He did not appear to have information of value, nor did he appear to be in a position to obtain valuable information, unless he was willing to make known to the FBI any contacts made of him by Soviet officials. The recent release of the KGB files on Oswald indicated the KGB did not want to use Oswald as an informant. Neither did the FBI.

JFK: Throughout the movie there appears to be a subtle effort to create a basis for the subsequent acquittal verdict of the jury at the trial of Clay Shaw by claiming interference by U. S. Government agencies and other elements.

Comments: The conspiracy charge against Clay Shaw involved two dead men (David Ferrie and Oswald). Many of Garrison's witnesses lacked credibility. From November, 1966, to March, 1969, Garrison received extensive publicity regarding his assassination investigation. He said arrests would be made and convictions obtained. Clay Shaw was arrested in March, 1967. He was acquitted in March, 1969, on a first jury ballot, which was unanimous. In many JFK scenes, especially the lengthy closing argument by Garrison (Kevin Costner), without any apparent closing argument by the defense, I visualized Oliver Stone standing on a soap box in the park trying to convince a group of people there was a coverup of a conspiracy in the assassination investigation involving the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of both

January 4, 1992

political parties, respected physicians, the FBI, the CIA, other investigative agencies of our government and the White House, who all worked together in the most devious and intricate plot of all time to conceal the real truth. I do not believe anyone, who has thoroughly examined the evidence, believes this to be true. After more than 28 years of questioning the conclusions in the Warren Report, no credible, convincing evidence to support any of the conspiracy theories has been produced.

JFK: There was no mention in the entire movie about Oswald's attempt to assassinate Retired Major General Edwin A. Walker on April 10, 1963, in Dallas, Texas.

Comments: On the evening of April 10, 1963, a rifle bullet was fired from outside Walker's home, which passed near his head as he was sitting at his desk. This shooting remained unsolved until December 3, 1963. During the assassination investigation, a note was discovered which Oswald had left for his wife on the evening of the Walker shooting; photographs were found of the area of Walker's home in Oswald's personal effects; and Marina Oswald testified before the Warren Commission in February, 1964, that when Oswald returned home on the night of the Walker shooting, he told her he had been planning the attempt for two months. He showed her a notebook three days later containing photographs of Walker's home, and a map of the area where the house was located. The condition of the bullet, recovered by the Dallas Police on the night of the shooting, made it impossible to reach a definitive conclusion as to whether such bullet was fired from the Oswald rifle. An independent examination outside the FBI, however, concluded there was a fair probability such bullet was fired from the assassination rifle. Oswald, on this occasion, demonstrated his capacity to attempt to take a human life seven months before the assassination of President Kennedy in an effort to achieve recognition.

JFK: At the end of JFK there was a narrative statement portrayed on the screen to the effect the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) had concluded in 1978 that a "probable conspiracy" was involved in the assassination of President Kennedy. There was a comment that the U. S. Government was withholding release of documents and testimony for 75 years, which would show a coverup.

Comments: There is some good in everybody and everything. JFK encourages people to get the U. S. Government to make public the testimony and records not previously released. I, too, support this effort as long as innocent people and the security interests of the United States are protected. In November, 1977, I testified before the HSCA in Executive Session for almost an entire day. At the conclusion of my testimony I requested, on the record, a transcript of such testimony when the work of the HSCA was completed. No such transcript was forthcoming. Efforts to obtain a transcript in 1980 was unsuccessful. I was told my testimony must remain secret for 50 years. It contained nothing to warrant being kept from the public for 50 years, except it did not support the "probable conspiracy" conclusion of the HSCA, after an expenditure of several million dollars of taxpayer money. Perhaps I will obtain a transcript of my testimony, and its release to the public, with the help of JFK.



Mr. Burl Osborne

January 4, 1992

The City of Dallas was heavily ridiculed throughout the world following the assassination, and its police department was severely criticized. The officers of the Dallas Police Department arrested Oswald 80 minutes after the assassination of President Kennedy and 35 minutes after the shooting of Officer J. D. Tippit. At the time of Oswald's arrest in the Texas Theater, he attempted to shoot Officer M. N. McDonald, again demonstrating his willingness to take a human life to achieve recognition. The alert and dedicated police work, and ultimate sacrifice, of Officer Tippit in approaching Oswald, based on a vague description broadcast on the police radio, has been completely overlooked. The quick and decisive action of Officer McDonald, at the time of Oswald's arrest, when he disarmed him, also has received minimal recognition.

Our "gutless" Dallas County Commissioners were given an opportunity, after viewing JFK, to file a disclaimer if it misrepresented the facts. I saw no disclaimer when I viewed JFK. Does this mean they do not believe JFK misrepresented the facts?

In recent months there has been publicity about errors in newly published history books utilized in our schools. Interested parents and educational leaders have strongly expressed the necessity for such errors to be corrected so our youth will have accurate historical information to study. Young people born since 1963 have been bombarded with publicity about the various conspiracy theories on the assassination of President Kennedy. A continuing education course is offered at the University of Texas at Arlington, which is taught by Jim Marrs, who was the author of one of the books on which JFK is based. Are his students receiving accurate historical information? Or, is a conspiracy theory being promoted for financial gain?

Young people are impressionable. When they are exposed to such garbage as JFK, by an actor of Kevin Costner's stature, many will accept it as accurate information. We have an obligation to give them the true facts. Consider how Vietnam veterans and parents of sons, who did not survive the Vietnam War, must feel, when they realize JFK is telling them their Commander-in-Chief (President Lyndon B. Johnson) was involved in a government conspiracy to kill his predecessor.

For several years after my retirement from the FBI in 1976, I appeared before several civic groups where the majority of the audiences believed there was a conspiracy involved in the assassination. When I would ask for a show of hands by those who had read the Warren Report, the number was minimal. This demonstrated to me that many of the people, who believed there was a conspiracy, were basing their conclusions on the highly publicized stories about various conspiracy theories.

It appears the news media has accepted many of the theories as factual without endeavoring to compare them with known facts determined by well qualified investigators, which facts are so readily available. Such theories usually receive front page exposure. Hopefully, the sale of more copies of newspapers is not the reason for sensationalizing stories about what some illogical theorist says he "thinks", "believes" or "could have happened" on November 22, 1963.


Mr. Burl Osborne

January 4, 1992

The Dallas Morning News, now the only newspaper in town, has an opportunity to be a leader in making sure, before any publicity is afforded any conspiracy theory, that such theory, and its author, are thoroughly investigated, and the content of such theory is compared with known facts. I encourage the use of every available resource so the Dallas Morning News can bring its readers the truth. After all, Oliver Stone, in JFK, started the rally for the truth about the assassination.

This letter is necessarily lengthy. A copy is being sent to Ms. Carolyn Barta, Editor of the very interesting Viewpoints section of your newspaper.

Very truly yours,

  
Robert P. Gemberling

cc: Ms. Carolyn Barta,  
Editor,  
Viewpoints,  
Dallas Morning News,  
P. O. Box 655237,  
Dallas, Texas, 75265.