

Dallas relives '63 nightmare as Stone begins filming 'JFK'

DALLAS (AP) — The scene Dallas has spent decades trying to forget — of a president assassinated as his motorcade went past — is being played out again, this time in front of movie cameras.

"JFK," Academy Award-winning director Oliver Stone's account of President John F. Kennedy's 1963 assassination, began filming this week with the re-enactment of the slaying in Dealey Plaza.

Filming, which began Monday, brought out hundreds of the curious, some still fascinated by the slaying.

"I flew in from Maryland to see this because when is it ever going to look like this again?" said Peggy Higgins on Tuesday as she motioned toward the old Texas School Book Depository, where, according to the Warren Commission, Lee Harvey Oswald fired the fatal shots as Kennedy's motorcade passed.

"The amazing thing is that in the 25 or so years since the assassination, the controversy has never gone away," she said.

Go away is just what some in Dallas — which was nicknamed "the city of hate" for a time after the assassination — would like the memory to do.

"You know, Dallas has tried for 28 years to live this thing down and here they are rehashing it," said Jack Cardwell, who was in Dealey Plaza for a

business appointment. "It's something a lot of us would like to forget."

Stone said he's on a mission to keep the assassination in people's minds.

"For me, it was the seminal event of my generation," said Stone, 44. "It shaped the '60s because Kennedy was my godfather. He came into office, and he promised change. He was about to deliver it when he was cut down.

"As a result of that murder, it's my belief that Vietnam came about," he said. "If Kennedy had been in office, Vietnam would not have happened. And as you know, I was swept into Vietnam. . . . It shaped America as it is today."

Stone, a Vietnam veteran, won Oscars as best director for the Vietnam movies "Platoon" and "Born on the Fourth of July."

In "JFK," his attention to detail has turned Dealey Plaza into a replica of what it was on Nov. 22, 1963.

Trees have been pruned, signs have been erected and vintage automobiles, including a turquoise Pontiac four-door, are parked on the streets.

"Everybody's got to be in period clothes," he said. "Every car has to be period."

The movie provoked controversy before filming even began.

It stars Oscar winner Kevin Costner as Jim Garrison, the New

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Orleans district attorney who attempted to prove Kennedy was the victim of a CIA and FBI conspiracy.

Stone battled with Dallas County commissioners for the right to film inside the Texas School Book Depository.

Commissioners refused, then relented. Some said they didn't want the disruption filming would cause at the building that now houses county offices and a sixth-floor exhibit on the assassination.