

# A painstaking effort to re-create history

By Jane Sumner

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It took the Lincoln Continental limousine carrying President John F. Kennedy only moments to turn the corner for that trip into history on Nov. 22, 1963. But for the movie *JFK*, it will take days for an almost identical model to make that same turn.

Filming at Dealey Plaza for the Oliver Stone drama begins Monday. The motorcade scene is to be re-enacted with Dallas actors playing President and Mrs. Kennedy and Texas Gov. John Connally and his wife, Nellie.

The re-creation of the assassination, which will take place from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday until April 30, has drawn national attention, but director Stone warns that the filming may be disappointing to watch.

"I think it's going to be much better in a movie theater, to be honest. Because not only is it going to be done very much like a jigsaw puzzle with a little piece here and little piece there, it'll be confusing.

"And because the plaza is a self-contained unit, a very small, spherical unit, we're shooting it with four or five cameras."

In fact, he says, it's a bit like the concerts he filmed for *The Doors*.

"We're going to be shooting every angle at the same time, which means there's very little space for viewing. Everybody's got to be in period clothes. Every car has to be period. I can't imagine, unless you got to the top of a building across the way with binoculars, that you could really get a sense of what was going on."

Besides, says Mr. Stone, "I find that shooting is exhausting, and I

think there's going to be some rain here in Dallas in April. I have the feeling we're going to have some tough weather. So we have some cover sets, some interiors."

Also he says that while about 300 Dallas extras in period hairstyles and dress will be on the set, Hollywood stars will be absent.

"It's not like Kevin Costner works there more than one day or two days. When Val Kilmer was working in *The Doors*, that was fun because he was singing, and there were thousands of people carrying on. That was something more exciting. This is a car-going back and forth with individual shots of people."

But if big-name actors will be scarce, Mr. Stone's loyal film-making team will be visible. The prematurely gray head near the camera belongs to Mr. Stone's longtime director of photography, Bob Richardson, a veteran of the tropical, financial and rock jungles in Mr. Stone's *Platoon*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, *The Doors*, *Wall Street* and *Salvador*. Hong Kong-born producer A. Kitman Ho is back for his sixth collaboration with the Oscar winner. And Toronto's Gordon Smith, who worked on *Platoon*, *Salvador* and *Born on the Fourth of July*, returns to handle the grim head prosthetics for the assassination scene.

As he did on *Born on the Fourth of July*, associate producer-production manager Clayton Townsend again rides herd on the budget, reported to be \$35 million to \$40 million. And another *Fourth of July* veteran, Randy "Boom-Boom" Moore, will be doing special effects and pyrotechnics.

For the "sniper's nest," Mr. Moore had to find three 6.5mm Ital-

ian Mannlicher-Carcano rifles.

"If you work with Oliver, you need backup," he says. "If I need another gun and don't have it, I might as well load up my truck and go home."

Finding the guns wasn't as hard as acquiring the sights for the rifles.

"Most people threw them out because they were junky," Mr. Moore says. "And because everybody knew we were looking for them, the price shot up to \$250."

Only a privileged few have seen a finished script — and even it remains in flux — but sometime during filming, cameras should focus on Dallas actor Anthony Ramirez as the victim of an epileptic seizure at the Texas School Book Depository shortly before the motorcade arrives; on Dallas County Sheriff's Department fingerprint technician Ray LaPere as home movie maker Abraham Zapruder; and on Dallas actor Errol McLendon as the mysterious "umbrella man" who raises and lowers his umbrella on the sunny fall day.

One local actor with a personal interest in the scene is Dallas' Spain Logue, whose cousin Bill Newman and family were eyewitnesses to the assassination. Photos showed Bill Newman and his wife, Gayle, on the ground shielding their two small children. Mr. Logue plays a Secret Service agent who apprehends eyewitness Jean Hill and takes her photos of the assassination.

Security at the *JFK* shoot will be tight. Location manager Jeff Flach reports that Camelot Productions has hired 30 off-duty police officers and four supervisors, the number required by the city for the length of the shoot at Dealey Plaza.

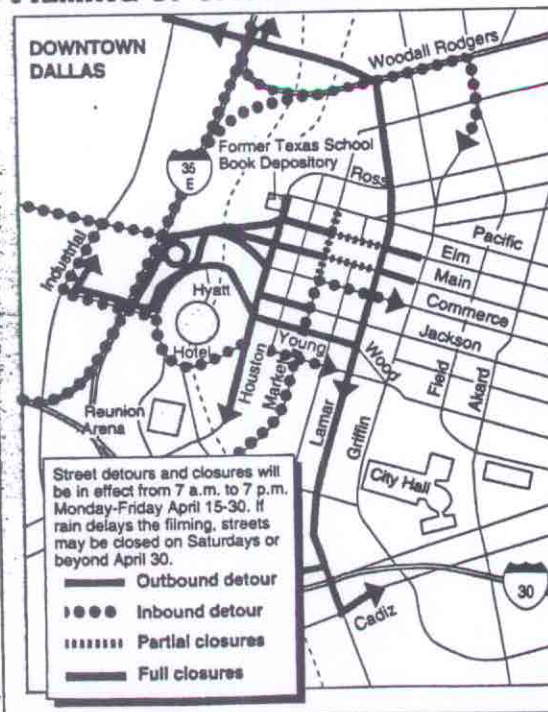
Director Stone originally was denied permission to shoot the assassination re-enactment on the sixth floor of the former Texas School Book Depository. But in a 3-2 vote on April 2, the Dallas County commissioners reversed their decision after an official of Mr. Stone's Camelot Productions assured them that filming would not disrupt The Sixth Floor exhibit there.

Dallas film maker Allen Mondell was one of those who opposed letting the production company take over the sixth floor for *JFK*. But Mr. Mondell, who with partner-wife Cynthia produced the films at The Sixth Floor museum, is pleased that Mr. Stone will get to use the window.

"I have faith he will do it in a responsible way," says Mr. Mondell, who was inspired by *JFK* to join the Peace Corps shortly before the assassination. "That window and its involvement in the assassination is critical in any serious exploration. I do hope the film makes an effort not to just explore who killed John Kennedy, but somehow to put that assassination in a broader perspective — what the '60s meant to us as a society and nation."

Other filming locations include the Texas Theatre on Jefferson in Oak Cliff; St. Joseph's Hospital in Fort Worth, which will substitute for Parkland Hospital; and the Dallas city jail.

## STREETS TO CLOSE FOR FILMING OF JFK MOVIE



The Dallas Morning News