



Would Oliver Stone really have killed Nixon? "I was angry. I was very lonely. The war was raging, and there was a lot of revolutionary talk... As a vet I kept thinking: Let's get serious. Cut the bullshit. Let's do something." p. 46

Mother Jones

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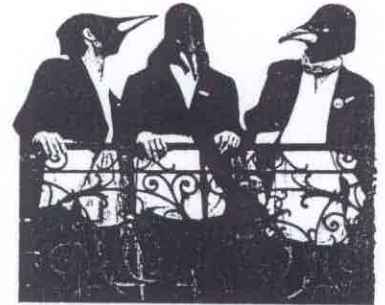
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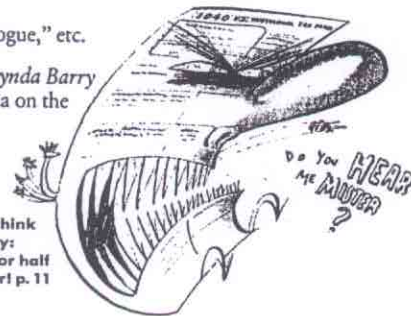
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From Vietnam to
Jim Morrison,
OLIVER STONE
keeps telling
America his
personal history.
Does he tell it
like it was?

60s something

HEARD THE FIRST DOORS ALBUM ON ACID IN VIETNAM," OLIVER Stone says, flashing his famous gap-toothed grin. "I liked their apocalyptic vision, their sense of dread, their eroticism."

LSD in a rock 'n' roll war. Combat psychedelics. I can't imagine anything more hellish. Trips were strange and overpowering enough on the home front. Why risk chemically induced paranoia in the jungle? Why enhance the surreal violence of the killing fields? "It was crazy," answers the forty-four-year-old director. "But so was the war."

Stone sits behind an empty desk, sipping bottled water in a starkly anonymous room in a west Los Angeles sound studio.

The walls are bare.

Reels of 35-mm film in silver cans

litter the floor. The air conditioner hisses. It's ice cold. He looks pale and drawn—a man who has spent too many hours in

by stephen talbot

Illustration by Philip Burke

dark editing rooms, supervising postproduction work on his latest movie, *The Doors*, another saga of desperate men, this time rock outlaws. "In Vietnam, the Doors spoke to me in a way that other groups didn't," recalls the twice-wounded infantryman, who volunteered for combat and received a Bronze Star for bravery. "I was attracted by Jim Morrison's rebelliousness, his recklessness."

The Doors hooked me early, too. They were a very L.A. band—sexy, self-indulgent, menacing—and I was an L.A. kid hanging out on the Sunset Strip, trying hard to act as hip as Morrison in his leather pants. Like Stone, I often listened to the Doors in a state of altered consciousness, though I preferred marijuana and mescaline to the more staggering LSD. Unlike Stone, I never fought in Vietnam; I joined SDS, not the army. But in 1971, I filmed Vietnam veterans throwing away their combat medals on the steps of the Capitol, and I went to Hanoi during the war to make a documentary, *The Year of the Tiger*, about the devastation of B-52 bombing.

I do not find it contradictory that Oliver Stone, whose finest work deals with the war, would now turn his focus to the wild abandon of the counterculture. The Doors' charismatic, romantically doomed lead singer is a natural subject for the director. Morrison lived flamboyantly and dangerously, died young, and stayed pretty. He played the tortured poet devoured by drugs and alcohol, the shaman who quoted Brecht and Blake. He alternated between the macho exhibitionist and the sensitive soul. And he had the obsessive energy typical of all of Stone's main characters: the greed-driven Gordon Gekko in *Wall Street*, the compulsively verbal Barry Champlain in *Talk Radio*, the coked-up Tony Montana in *Scarface*, the anguished crusader Ron Kovic in *Born on the Fourth of July*.

Like Morrison, the self-styled twentieth-century Rimbaud, Stone has lived a life of extremes: alienation, suicidal depression, violence, exultation, restlessness, enormous success. The son of a Jewish Republican stockbroker and a French Catholic mother, Stone fought bitterly with his parents, quit Yale to fight in Vietnam, and returned home filled with rage and paranoia. He managed to enroll in New York University's film program and study with director Martin Scorsese, then struggled through a dozen screenplays before Columbia hired him to write *Midnight Express* in 1978 for British director Alan Parker. "I'm still very proud of that script. Winning the Oscar was terrific after all those years of beating my head against the wall," Stone says, and, the way he recalls his old frustrations, I'm tempted to take him literally—with visions of an enraged Stone bashing into some immovable object.

Stone identifies closely with his protagonists, as they struggle with their personal demons, torn between self-destruction and salvation. He doesn't have much to say about women. His films explore masculinity: the relationships between men in prison and in war, the conflicts between father and son. If there is a kind of typical Oliver Stone film, it involves a young man—naïve, idealistic, patriotic—who undergoes a trial by fire, a rite of passage that nearly kills him. As a filmmaker, he's never been accused of subtlety. His movies are violent and profane. He drives home points like a riveter. But his Academy Awards for screenwriting (*Midnight Express*) and directing (*Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July*) attest to his undeniable power as a storyteller.

These days Stone has achieved a kind of volatile stability. He's more in control of his private furies and his public destiny. The frustrated outsider has become one of Hollywood's elite direc-

tors. He's been married now for more than a decade to his second wife, Elizabeth, a photographer, and they have a five-year-old son, Sean. Politically, his films have evolved from portraits of vigilante rage, like the crazed Vietnam-vet cop hunting Chinatown gangs in *Year of the Dragon*, to Left-populist critiques of U.S. foreign policy, such as *Salvador* and *Born on the Fourth of July*. He now describes two films that he cowrote, *Year of the Dragon* and *Conan the Barbarian*, as "fascistically inclined," though he claims his intentions as a writer were more benign and he had no control over those movies. Now he receives awards from the ACLU. But on the set, he retains a reputation as a tempestuous force.

With his dark hair and eyes, strong face, and limited patience, it's not difficult to imagine him as an intimidator. Yet in this isolated room, during a break from sound dubbing, Stone at first seems almost nervous. I imagine him bolting at the slightest excuse. But as the initial awkwardness fades, he describes his new work with quiet intensity.

"This film is about excess," he begins. "In Jim Morrison's case, how you can make excess work for you." For Stone, this appears to be a reassuring notion. He is, after all, a director who assaults his audiences. He compels us to watch unbearable scenes of savagery and suffering: sadistic beatings in a Turkish prison, the rape and murder of nuns in El Salvador, the blood and shit and decay of a V.A. hospital. In Jim Morrison he has found an excessive artist whose work and persona have survived death, something Stone finds comforting. A measure of immortality means something to Stone, who narrowly avoided death in Vietnam and found salvation in his work. "People don't remember TV, everything is forgotten, it's all disposable garbage. But Morrison has achieved immortality. They have to clean his grave in Paris every few weeks because of all the graffiti scrawled by visitors. People leave flowers, joints, bottles of liquor. It's nice to know that some kind of immortality is available."

After Vietnam, cocaine wars, and political murders, an Oliver Stone movie about rock and roll seems like a reprieve, and in part it was. "This film was my chance to explore the Dionysian," Stone tells me, animated now, gesturing freely. To his credit, he refuses to fall into line with other "reformed" Hollywood drug consumers. He admits having a serious problem with cocaine, before he quit and wrote *Scarface*, the strongest film yet on the grotesque compulsions of the coke business. But Stone refuses to renounce marijuana and psychedelics. He says that drugs have played an "ambivalent" role in his life, stimulating his creativity and threatening his health. But like his current alter ego, Jim Morrison, Stone believes that psychedelic drugs "taught us a lot." He is concerned that his movie about the sixties rock and drug culture might provoke hostility in the prohibitionist nineties. "But we can't distort history," he insists. "My movie is an accurate depiction of those times." He complains that contemporary puritans are trying to rewrite the past. "This movie may become a test case of revisionism."

"When the doors of perception are cleansed, man will see things as they truly are, infinite," wrote William Blake, inspiring Morrison to name his group the Doors. Ecstasy, revelation, and transcendence were all part of the promise of the sixties, a decade that Stone refuses to relinquish. "It was turbulent, a time of social change, a time of abandon," he proclaims, "and Morrison was this young visionary. He was influenced by the Beats, and he had this drive toward poetry. He was like Dylan Thomas in his boozey excess."

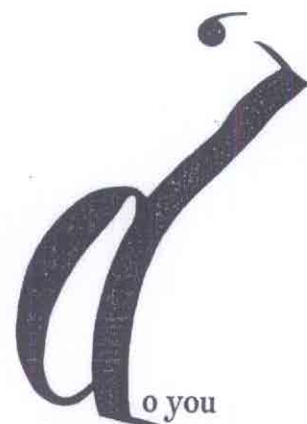
For Stone, Morrison's appeal was his compulsion to "break on through to the other side," regardless of what that side might prove to be. For unlike the Beatles and Motown, the Doors flaunted their darker impulses. They were over the edge, and Morrison's arrest for allegedly exposing himself during a Miami concert in 1969 only confirmed it. Morrison's dangerous persona, and the Doors' distinctive sound—Morrison's sinister baritone and Ray Manzarek's haunting electric organ—resonated seductively for Stone, the twenty-one-year-old Yale dropout under fire in Vietnam.

THE SAME WEEK I INTERVIEWED OLIVER Stone, I spoke to a media class at the University of California at Santa Cruz. I showed *Troubled Waters*, a documentary I made for PBS about resistance to offshore oil drilling in northern California, and I discussed films I had made in southern Africa and Vietnam. My video was popular on that environmentally conscious campus, and a few students active in anti-apartheid work asked about my experiences with Nelson Mandela's ANC. But nearly everyone wanted to know about Vietnam, a subject charged by the threat of a new war in the Persian Gulf.

"How did they survive all the bombing?" a young woman asked. "Did they try to arrest you after you returned from North Vietnam?" a heavysset guy wondered. "What did Jane Fonda do there?" "Did you see any POWs?" "Were the Vietnamese mainly Buddhists?" The questions went on for an hour. There was very little contention or debate—just endless curiosity, and an edge of anxiety. "Do you think a war like that could happen again?" "How long did it take for people to start protesting?" As I responded, sketching the history of the antiwar movement and describing my travels from Hanoi to the DMZ, I suddenly realized that most of the four hundred or so students in the auditorium were about five years old when the war ended. Some of these students will read Neil Sheehan's *A Bright Shining Lie* or William Shawcross's *Sideshow* or one of Wilfred Burchett's classic accounts of life with the NLF guerrillas on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Some of them may see reruns of the PBS series on Vietnam. But more of them will see *Platoon*. And for the nonreading public in the multi-screen shopping-mall theaters, the historical debate pits *Born on the Fourth of July* against *Rambo*.

A commercial-movie maker like Oliver Stone may understandably balk at assuming the burden of rigorous historical accuracy in his fictional dramas. But who then does America rely on? Whether he likes it or not, Stone has become a de facto historian for a generation whose ideas and views are increasingly shaped by movies and TV.

The sixties defined Stone. Vietnam was his crucible, acid rock his sound track. And his movies provide an insider's portrait of that era: war, protest, sex, drugs, and now rock 'n' roll. When I ask him if he is consciously chronicling the sixties, Stone retorts, "No, I follow my heart." And he quickly adds: "I did the eighties, too. In *Wall Street*, I tried to capture that 'Greed is good' zeitgeist of the eighties. And *Talk Radio* is all about those obses-



o you think those kids in the gulf have seen *Born on the Fourth of July*? The question leaves no doubt that Stone wants them to see it, very badly.



sional, Morton Downey-type, just-say-anything eighties programs. Even *Salvador* is set in the early eighties, that period of Reagan's 'evil empire' and the right-wing death squads."

It is, perhaps, more accurate to say that Stone's movies reflect several decades of recent history, but that he always brings to his work a sixties sensibility. The skepticism, the questioning of authority in his films, are welcome relief in an industry of conventional, feel-good placebos. Stone readily describes himself as a "cinematic historian," but insists: "I don't believe in official history. I don't accept the scenario of the JFK assassination we've been given, or the version of Vietnam foisted upon us."

There is a certain inevitability to Stone's next project as a writer-director, a movie on the Kennedy assassination, the seminal sixties nightmare. "No American believes Oswald shot the president," he asserts. "The Warren Commission was bunk." The JFK murder and the allegations of cover-up marked an end of innocence for Stone and my generation, and he has wanted to undertake this project for many years, quietly optioning books on the assassination and doing his own research. "It fucked us all up," he argues. "We're a generation of Hamlet figures."

Stone's visceral skepticism is fine as far as it goes. His alternative, populist versions of recent history are invigorating. But the question for many of us who are equally skeptical about the government's official stories is, how official are Stone's? He sometimes jeopardizes his own credibility when he reshapes the facts into a dramatic structure. His movie *Salvador*, based on the exploits of free-lance journalist Richard Boyle, who coauthored the screenplay, was criticized for exaggerating Boyle's role in actual historical events. I like *Salvador*. James Woods brings a fine, wired madness to the Boyle character, while the film strongly indicts U.S. support for a repressive regime. Boyle's role may be pumped up, but it seems to me that Stone captures the insanity of the Salvadoran bloodshed. At the same time, I get queasy when Stone says that he feels free to alter facts as long as he doesn't "violate the spirit" of a real event, just as I do when *Rambo* distorts the reality of the Vietnam conflict. If anything, I get more upset with Stone, because he is a sixties person, like myself. He was there, an eyewitness, a participant, and, as an insider who now has the rare opportunity to tell his stories—our generation's stories, our movement's stories—in major Hollywood movies, Stone, I think, must be held to a higher standard of honesty and accuracy.

"I feel that movies are not reality, but an approximation of reality, and, in some cases, a wish fulfillment," Stone once told *American Film*. But he also feels confident enough these days to admit, "I'm trying to reshape the world through movies." This custodian of our recent history is not only pursuing the Kennedy murder, he's waiting for a script to begin another political drama: the life of Harvey Milk, San Francisco's first gay supervisor, who was assassinated in 1978 by a homophobic political rival, Dan White. Stone plans to produce this movie, though he will not direct.

Even allowing for artistic license, in- (Continued on page 69)

Second, as equitable as Canada's system is, it doesn't change the bigger equation: in a society that creates poverty, poor people get sick more than rich people. David Schreck, a Vancouver-based health economist explains: "Equal access to health care is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for equality of health status. In all systems, poor people die sooner." He adds, "At least in the Canadian system, people aren't made poor by the cost of medical care."

Third, there are waiting lists for some procedures, and thus an ongoing search for how to shorten them. Mainly in Ontario and British Columbia, there are waiting lists for open-heart and bypass surgery. But because the lists are ordered sensibly, "despite the AMA's rumor-mongering, there is no scientific evidence that even one person has died because of excessive waiting time," maintains Dr. Rachlis. He points out that all health systems, given limited resources, ration their care, but most just don't admit it. "Waiting lists seem preferable to the American system, which limits access," he says. "Poor people are dying because of lack of access."

A few years ago, a national poll found that 61 percent of all Americans said they would favor a system like Canada's, in which "the government pays most of the cost of health care for everyone out of taxes, and the government sets all fees charged by hospitals and doctors." Eighty-nine percent saw their health-care system needing fundamental change. What the AMA and other enemies of our Canadian system seem to be banking on is the notion that people in the United States will turn up their noses at a good alternative if it can be made to seem ideologically impure, somehow un-American. The Americans I've met tend to be smarter than that. Then again, a friend told me a story that I thought made the perfect urban myth; it was even true:

At a council meeting, a group of New England selectmen was considering a proposal by a local veterinarian that the town pay for sterilizing dogs and cats to reduce the nuisance of strays. Members of the council were enthusiastic. Just before passing the motion, they sought opinion from a local lawyer who sat in at meetings. "I don't see any legal problem," he chuckled. "But you realize this is socialized medicine."

Aghast, the selectmen dropped their motion.

Judy Haiven is a Canadian documentary-film maker, and the author of *Faith, Hope, No Charity: An Inside Look at the "Born Again" Movement in the United States and Canada*. Katherine Finch contributed research for this article.

OLIVER STONE

(Continued from page 49) terpreting and dramatizing such controversial historical moments means assuming enormous responsibility. The power of the media to define and redefine reality is nearly godlike. Stone knows it, and he wants to use it to his advantage. "Do you think those kids in the gulf have seen *Born on the Fourth of July*?" he asks me suddenly. The question leaves no doubt that he wants our Desert Shield troops to see it, very badly.

To my mind, the film that everyone thinking of enlisting in the military should see is *Platoon*. As a simulation of a soldier's ground-level experience of jungle warfare—the disorienting sense of gnawing fear and abrupt crippling pain—it has no equal. Politically, *Platoon*'s shortcoming was obvious: the Vietnamese adversaries were only shadows, ruthless ghosts who appeared out of nowhere, killed or maimed Americans, and vanished. That was how U.S. soldiers often experienced their enemy, but it is a deliberately blindfolded view of the war. Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* also limits itself to a powerful evocation of the deranged fury of American technology in combat, and Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* concentrates, at least in the movie's more effective first half, on the psychotic torture of marine basic training.

But the stories of the Vietnamese still remain untold. And Hollywood continues to evade the war at home—the profound conflict in the United States over the war itself, a conflict as wrenching as that over the Depression and the civil-rights struggle. *Born on the Fourth of July*, Stone's movie about paraplegic veteran-turned-protester Ron Kovic, begins to fill that vacuum. But where are the dramas about the antiwar movement or the more than fifty thousand draft-age men who chose exile or prison? As powerful as it is, *Born* is not the definitive statement about war resistance. Two dramatic documentaries—*Berkeley in the Sixties* and *The War at Home*—provide a broader view of opposition to the war. Now someone needs to make those movies for the Hollywood crowd.

Stone is well aware of what the industry has left undone. He has optioned Le Ly Hay-slip's harrowing autobiography, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places*, and talks guardedly of completing his Vietnam trilogy. Filming the story of Le Ly's Buddhist family caught in the fierce fighting of the central highlands would begin to give voice to the Vietnamese in the way that *The Killing Fields*, Dith Pran's extraordinary tale of courage and survival, humanized the Cam-

bodian victims of the U.S. Air Force and the Khmer Rouge. But no one knows more than Stone about the hazards of trying to produce serious Vietnam films in Hollywood. It took him a decade to film *Platoon* and, even after Vietnam proved bankable, everyone in town initially turned down *Born on the Fourth of July*.

"Why did Americans have to wait twenty years to deal with Vietnam?" the director shouts in a burst of passion. "I don't get the amnesia." But his frustration is rhetorical. He knows why: The United States lost, and Americans don't know how to deal with defeat. "Obviously," he mutters, then pauses, thinking. "But we should be larger than defeat. We should have the generosity of spirit to deal with setbacks."

After a long silence, Stone says: "We all run from pain, I guess. When you're older and you've been broken a few times, you realize life is part pain, part pleasure. But the childlike part of myself only wants the pleasure. Maybe we all want to be Chevy Chase. He exudes that cheery self-confidence; it's such an American thing. But I'm sure Chevy has his problems, too."

Stone is free-associating. This windowless, artificially lit room, which he seemed to approach as some kind of interrogation center, now feels more like a confessional. He's talking about his father, with whom he clashed over Vietnam and the cold war. "My father used to tell me, 'I never want to go into an old-age home' and 'I never want to wait in a goddamn line.' He wanted enough money to protect his privacy, and not have to wait. I can understand that. I mean, in Bulgaria, people stand in line for six hours. I couldn't do that. I'm too American."

He's revved up now, his energy level having risen throughout the interview. He laughs and pounds the desk with his fist. "I just returned from Europe, and at the airport I got delayed forever in customs. I always get the worst line. It was like *Life in Hell*. This lady had a very bad attitude. I wanted to kill that customs agent!"

An intimation, perhaps, but no more than that of the volatile, crazed Oliver Stone who once told *Vanity Fair* that if the right people had encouraged him when he was living in a blood-red room on the Lower East Side taking lots of acid, he might, just might, have grabbed a gun and gone to Washington to assassinate Richard Nixon. When I ask if he really felt that he could have killed Nixon, he pauses to consider and answers slowly: "I was trying to describe my state of mind in those days. I was angry. I was very lonely. The war was raging, and there was a lot of revolutionary talk. I was sick of talk. I'd say, 'Let's do it.' We Vietnam vets were tuned to action. If I'd found a revolutionary leader

then who I could accept, I'd have joined. It was a very radical time, and the targets were either banks, the Rockefellers, or Nixon. As a vet, I kept thinking: Let's get serious. Cut the bullshit. Let's do something."

The interview is nearly over. Stone's fidgeting, anxious to get back to work. He springs up suddenly and invites me to watch a bit of his star, Val Kilmer, looping dialogue in George Lucas's state-of-the-art Skywalker Sound studio. The late afternoon sun, filtered through a nasty layer of L.A. smog, is blinding as we emerge from the shadowed room and walk across the parking lot. Stone strides to work. Inside, he introduces Kilmer, the blond actor who costarred with Tom Cruise in *Top Gun*.

The few scenes that I watch look reassuringly authentic. When a groupie approaches him for an autograph at a Sunset Strip disco, Morrison eyes her lasciviously and answers: "Well, I don't know. Where do you want it?" Another loop of work print slides through the projector and the Doors appear on screen, working out the chords to "Light My Fire." But the most encouraging moment comes during a break in the tedious dubbing. I hear what I think is Morrison's familiar voice singing, "Before you slip into/unconsciousness/I'd like to have/another kiss," but, when I look up, I realize it's Kilmer. He's good. Stone can't stand it when actors lip-sync songs ("I can feel it's phony"), so when Kilmer's on camera, you'll be hearing his voice dubbed into the original Doors' instrumental tracks. When the songs play over action, Stone will use Morrison's voice. From what I heard in the studio, it should work.

As he ushers me out, Stone mentions a recent trip to Vietnam. "Every veteran should go back, if he has problems," Stone recommends. "It exorcises the demons." I ask if returning yielded any new insights about the war. "Yeah. We were so involved in our personal dramas, but to the Vietnamese, we were just one of many enemies in a long list of foreign invaders. We came and went. Their lives continue. I felt like we were ghosts on the landscape."

THE SIXTIES WAS A DECADE OF TWO POWERFUL and often contradictory impulses: the drive for political change (civil rights, black power, stopping the war, the beginning of the women's movement) and the explosion of the counterculture (music, drugs, hippies). I confess that I never lost much sleep over this dichotomy. I smoked dope and I demonstrated. Most of my friends did, too. I saw Janis Joplin at the Monterey Pop Festival, and I got teargassed at the Justice Department in Washington. Somehow I figured that it was all part of the same in-

credible upheaval, what we used to call "The Movement."

I don't want writers or filmmakers to sanctify or sanitize the sixties. I prefer my history quirky and my heroes human. But I do want "cinematic historians" like Stone to get it right. It was a messy, exuberant, bloody time, when everything seemed to matter so much. I resent the trivialization of the decade (the neutered sixties rock endlessly used in today's TV commercials), as well as the neoconservative backlash that portrays the political ferment as mere indulgence. Stone is clearly filled with all the passions of the sixties, and treats them seriously,

The war was
raging and there was
a lot of revolutionary
talk. I was sick of talk."

but his films are ultimately about *him*: his disillusionment, his war, his rage, his redemption through art. As far as his vision extends, it's a good one. But it's not the only vision. One wishes that other visions and voices from the sixties and beyond—women directors, black directors, for example—could make themselves seen and heard on those silver screens in the suburban malls. But until that happens, I'm grateful that Oliver Stone shows no signs of succumbing to the Big Chill.

"ONE OTHER THING." STONE WAVES ME back. "When I returned to Vietnam, I went back to the area near my old air base, and I found this GI helmet. It had a bullet hole through it. I took it back to the States. It reminds me how close I came to missing all this."

He shakes hands and then disappears into the studio. I remember the title of the Jim Morrison biography that Stone optioned for his film, *No One Here Gets Out Alive*. It could have been the headline of Stone's own Vietnam obituary, but he escaped with his Purple Heart. I try to picture him there, stoned, listening to the Doors for the first time: "Try to run/try to hide/break on through to the other side." It's a song he's never forgotten.

Stephen Talbot wrote about *Earth First!* in the November/December 1990 issue of *Mother Jones*.

REAL LIFE

(Continued from page 30) down in despair and hopelessness. The guys at corporate headquarters must be patting each other on the back about the profits they're making.

It got bad at the place I work. Too many unhappy people; too much barely controlled anger always close to erupting. A corporate spokesperson was sent from headquarters to listen to grievances. He listened, this quiet, intelligent man who had been to our facility before. I asked some of my fellow workers why they weren't going to speak out. "It doesn't do any good," was the response. "He's been coming for three or four years. Nothing changes." I went; I spoke out; they were right. Nothing changes.

The elderly suffer quietly. They are afraid they will be punished if they speak up for themselves. Most of them can't speak for themselves. They just want to escape this hell. I do too. They need a place to stay; I need a job. We're trapped.

I am one little nurse, in one little care facility, living with this terrible secret. If they knew I was telling on them, I wouldn't have a job. What about my rent? What about my needs? But I need to tell. I confess to my participation in these crimes. I can't keep this secret any longer.

If you have an elderly relative in a facility:

1. Visit at odd hours.
2. Visit at mealtime.
3. Don't believe what the staff tells you.
4. Ask questions.
5. Don't worry if small items are missing. Petty theft is not serious. Abuse is.
6. Make sure your relative is clean.
7. Notice if your relative is losing weight.
8. Check your relative's skin for bruises.
9. Let "them" know you are watching.
10. Be polite to staff, but raise hell with the administrator or the director of nursing. Though they are just employees and will tell you what you want to hear, it's worth a try.
11. Contact local ombudsmen if you can't get results. If that doesn't work, contact the state regulatory agency.
12. Complain to headquarters or whoever owns the facility.
13. Don't allow yourself to be blackmailed by veiled threats of being forced to move your relative.
14. Don't give up; wear them down.

Jill Frawley is a registered nurse and patient advocate who no longer works at the nursing home about which she wrote this article. She is working on a guide for families with relatives in long-term care.