

Lawrence Sutherland
901 Mill Lake Drive #242
Arlington, TX 76006

90/22/91

Dear Mr. Sutherland,

It is a good analysis. Thanks. But aside from the usual prejudice I think one reason for its rejection could be that it is longer than most publications want reviews and analyses of movies to be.

If you should decide to cut it, I think some of the Marrs content and on badgeman can be removed without hurting the piece a bit.

Stone shot footage in Washington, too.

On page 9 you cite a DMN story quoting Stone as saying that I "helped" him.

He's been trading on my name but I do not have and would appreciate acopy of that.

Not only mine, Neagher's too, and to the Boston Globe, which syndicated that piece, and in LOOT, monthly publication of Garrison's publisher.

Good luck, and thanks,

Harold Weisberg

901 Mill Lake Drive
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October 17, 1991

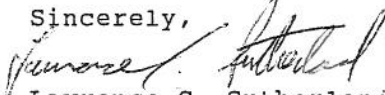
Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21702

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Hope you find the enclosed piece informative and valid. As I indicated in our telephone conversation, the analysis of the movie JFK has been sent to several publications but has not yet been published. Most of the submissions were of a much shorter version. Please let me know what you think of the piece and where I might send it for publication.

Thanks for your help and information for the piece.

Sincerely,


Lawrence C. Sutherland

JFK Movie Analysis
By Lawrence Sutherland
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It seem so strange. Imagine Jimmy Stewart portraying a Joe McCarthy-type character in a Frank Capra movie. Or Kevin Costner doing likewise in an Oliver Stone movie.

Stewart, under Capra's fine direction, played the honest George Bailey in It's a Wonderful Life. In Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, Capra directed Stewart as the naive and courageous Jefferson Smith, who battles crooked politicians as a United States senator. The fictional senator stands in sharp contrast to the all-too-real demagogue and communist-hunting U.S. senator of the 1950s, Joseph McCarthy.

One can hardly conceive of a movie made in the 1990s portraying McCarthy as hero. But director Oliver Stone is about to do the moral equivalent when his latest film is released in December.

Get ready America -- as the new Hollywood twists and reshapes a 1960s-style Joe McCarthy clone into a valiant fighter for justice. A melange of truth and fiction are coming together for yet another round of dubious speculation on the most infamous murder this century in the United States: the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

On December 20 (if current projections hold true) the public will get to view Stone's speculation through his movie tentatively titled JFK. It was filmed this spring and summer in Dallas and New Orleans and stars Kevin Costner as protagonist Jim Garrison. Garrison, now a state appeals court judge, prosecuted Clay Shaw of New Orleans as an alleged Kennedy assassination conspirator. It took a

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whopping 50 minutes for a jury to declare Shaw not guilty in a 1969 trial.

In an April 14 interview in The Dallas Morning News, Stone had this to say about the nature of JFK: "The underlying material starts with Jim Garrison in the '60s, who -- somewhat like a Jimmy Stewart character in an old Frank Capra movie -- undertakes to investigate something that has been covered up."

Stone, of course, as a well-respected film maker (two Academy awards for directing alone) brings the stamp of credibility to any film project. On JFK he'll have a tough time keeping it.

One can start to look at the credibility of JFK by first examining its principal character: Jim Garrison. He ain't no Jefferson Smith or George Bailey.

Charged in 1967 with plotting to kill the president, Shaw finally was tried in New Orleans starting in January 1969. After listening to some of the most bizarre testimony from prosecution witnesses, Garrison's case crumbled and with it his reputation.

The state's "star" witness, Perry Russo, according to Time "did not remember some of the most incriminating details until after he had been hypnotized and shot with truth serum by Garrison's investigators." Russo recanted prior statements that he was at a party in which Lee Harvey Oswald, Shaw and David Ferrie discussed ways to kill President Kennedy. Reporter James Phelan of the Saturday Evening Post uncovered the phony foundation of Garrison's case by examining documents provided to him by Garrison himself, according to Henry Hurt's book Reasonable Doubt.

But Russo paled in comparison to another prosecution witness,

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the inimitable Charles Spiesel, a New York CPA who alleged hearing Shaw conspiring to kill the president at a French Quarter hotel. On cross-examination Spiesel proved to be, well, a bit incredible. Various accounts of the cross-examination brought out that Spiesel believed that as many as 60 people had at times put him under a hypnotic spell just with the flick of an eye, that he had fingerprinted his daughter when she visited him (to make certain someone wasn't merely disguised as his daughter) and that involuntary hypnosis had ruined his sexual relations.

Soon after Shaw's acquittal the nation's press excoriated Garrison.

The New Republic: "...all that emerged was a motley collection of flimsy and perhaps fraudulent claims by some of the least credible witnesses ever heard.... Garrison had charged that behind the actual killers lay a vast conspiracy involving 'former employees of the CIA...' but no evidence was offered to substantiate any of this.... what Garrison has proved is that Louisiana... may now have its most potentially dangerous demagogue since Huey Long."

The New York Times: "One of the most disgraceful chapters in the history of American jurisprudence."

Look magazine analyzed the trial in an August 1969 piece titled "The Persecution of Clay Shaw." It revealed many details of Garrison's faulty case.

The New Orleans Times-Picayune in an editorial said charges never should have been filed against Shaw, while the rival

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States-Item said: "Garrison should resign. He has shown himself unfit to hold the office of district attorney or any other office."

And Garrison's response to the jury's verdict? "The jury verdict simply indicates that the American people don't want to hear the truth," according to an account in Time.

To judge by what was said about Garrison after the trial he clearly was, at 6 feet 6 inches tall, The Big Sleazy in the Big Easy. Oliver Stone sees things a bit different from most folks. To him, Garrison is someone "you could identify with as an outsider." Stone does admit that Garrison "made many mistakes, so he was not a perfect man, by any means." No, neither was Joe McCarthy.

McCarthy in the early 1950s set out to find communists across a wide range of American society, even in the Army. Writes Thomas C. Reeves in The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy: "Perhaps no other figure in American history has been portrayed so consistently as the essence of evil."

In December 1954 the U.S. Senate by a wide margin censured McCarthy for his antics. Garrison was booted out of office as district attorney but later was voted back in as a judge.

Have events since 1969 vindicated Garrison? Stone's film publicists seem to think so. "I think if you look over that information that has come out over the last 20 years, certain things and certain witnesses he (Garrison) had have now been confirmed," says publicist Andrea Jaffe. Ms. Jaffe and other apologists for Garrison like to cite evidence revealed in the

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1970s linking Shaw to the CIA. In his book On the Trail of the Assassins, Garrison cites trial testimony of former CIA Director Richard Helms in which Helms said that Shaw did indeed provide information to the agency's Domestic Contact Division.

Garrison claims that "had the (1969) jurors been aware of Shaw's agency connection, the verdict might possibly have been different." Sure... if Garrison also served as the lone juror.

The link of Shaw to the CIA's Domestic Contact Division, given Shaw's importance as a business leader in New Orleans, is hardly shocking, says assassination researcher Harold Weisberg. "Being connected with intelligence is not ipso facto a bad thing," says Weisberg, who is considered one of the nation's most important conspiracy investigators. Although Weisberg distrusts the CIA on other matters, he told this writer in an interview that he finds no sinister CIA-Shaw link on the assassination.

Such guilt by association on the part of Garrison was also a favorite tool of McCarthy. At the Army-McCarthy hearings in June 1954, the senator sought to link one Frederick G. Fisher to a communist-leaning organization, the National Lawyer's Guild. Fisher was a young lawyer in the same firm as Joe Welch, special counsel for the Army, which was a target of McCarthy.

Welch, in defending Fisher, offered a rebuttal that ranks as a classic. "Until this moment, senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty or your recklessness," Welch responded. He

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went on to defend Fisher and to attack McCarthy, who pressed on against the young attorney. Said Welch: "Senator, may we not drop this? We know he belonged to the Lawyers Guild.... Let us not assassinate this lad further, senator. You have done enough. Have you no sense of decency sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?"

The same question could be asked of Garrison. In his book, Garrison goes after Shaw by alleging that conspirators Shaw and Ferrie sought to pay a criminal named Edward Whalen to have Garrison killed. For some strange reason Whalen didn't testify at Shaw's trial, where Shaw could defend himself. But the allegation does make it in Garrison's book, published more than a decade after Shaw died in 1974.

This writer sent a letter to Garrison seeking an explanation concerning Whalen and to give him the opportunity to discuss what was to be written about the former district attorney in this essay. Garrison did not respond.

Iris Kelso, a political columnist for the New Orleans Times-Picayune, covered the Shaw trial for an NBC-affiliate TV station in New Orleans. "I felt at the time that Shaw was unjustly accused. The evidence was terribly, terribly slim. But based on everything I've read since, I feel like Jim must have been on to something. But I don't believe he ever proved that Clay Shaw was guilty," Ms. Kelso says.

Rosemary James covered the Shaw trial for WWL-TV in New Orleans. She says that Garrison "did not produce one single iota of

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evidence that would convict Clay Shaw of anything."

Apologists for Garrison contend that the jury just didn't get to hear all the evidence it should have heard, such as a police officer who claimed Shaw used an alias of Clay Bertrand. Shaw denied using the alias, and the presiding judge would not allow the officer to testify, doubting the officer's credibility.

But it was one of the very few instances Garrison was refused admission of evidence, as Ms. James recalls. "I don't remember Mr. Garrison being refused any permission to parade a long succession of nuts and fruits in front of a jury."

So how will all of this come out in the movie? Stone is being tight-lipped about details of the storyline. Given Stone's published comments about Garrison, Garrison's own participation in the movie (playing Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren) and Costner's good-guy image, it's safe to presume Garrison as movie character will emerge as a far more favorable person than history warrants. Clay Shaw? He too will be portrayed in the movie, by Tommy Lee Jones. In the movie The Package, Jones played a hired assassin.

Roger Armstrong, unit publicist for Stone's Camelot Productions, was sent a letter seeking information about the "general direction the movie will take" regarding Shaw and Garrison. No response.

Stone's publicists do have a fall back position when reality gets in the way of film portrayal. "This is not a biography, this is a work of fiction. If they wanted to do a documentary

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they could have done that.... We are not going to say it's anything less than a work of fiction," Ms. Jaffe said.

Yes, to be sure, JFK is no documentary. However, it is being held forth as more than just a work of fiction. The movie probes a real event, naming real people and based on what purports to be non-fiction, including Garrison's book and Jim Marrs' Crossfire: The Plot that Killed Kennedy. Stone says his movie will try and deal with why Kennedy was killed. When all of this is considered it's hard to imagine moviegoers viewing JFK as merely fiction, unless Stone goes too far afield with wild conspiracy theories. A recent opinion piece by George Lardner Jr. in The Washington Post indicates JFK could be headed in just such a direction.

Stone and his people at Camelot Productions, if they wanted to, could make JFK a movie that deals responsibly with conspiracy theories, and gain some credible foundation in speculation.

G. Robert Blakey was chief counsel of the House Select Committee on Assassinations. The panel in the late 1970s examined in great detail much evidence of conspiracies in the deaths of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. The committee concluded there was a conspiracy to kill President Kennedy but produced no firm suspects. Blakey points to accoustical evidence recorded in Dealey Plaza and the testimony of witnesses such as Sam Holland to support the likelihood that Oswald could not have been the lone assassin. "We looked at the evidence and let it come out. I went down there (to the House committee) with the

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general assumption that the president had been shot by Lee Harvey Oswald alone and it was unlikely a conspiracy was involved," Blakey said in a recent interview. But Blakey allowed the evidence to dictate the final outcome, he added. Although the committee rebutted several assassination conspiracy theories, it in time built one of its own based on credible witness testimony of a gunman at the grassy knoll and the police recording tape. The National Academy of Sciences later did offer an alternative explanation of the tape not supporting a second gunman.

Blakey has not been contacted by Stone's researchers. Neither, apparently, has Harold Weisberg been contacted. Stone in his Dallas Morning News interview stated that the veteran assassination researcher "has helped us."

Weisberg in mid May said he had written to Stone and offered advice. "In the letter I told them that Garrison's book just wasn't truthful," Weisberg related. Stone, according to Weisberg, has not sought his advice.

Weisberg believes Oswald's Italian-made Mannlicher-Carcano rifle could not have gotten off three shots as rapidly as it allegedly did. He buys a conspiracy theory but not all of the ancillary theories that some have attached to it -- such as many mysterious deaths of witnesses linked to the assassination or a double of someone impersonating Oswald as the man gunned down by night club owner Jack Ruby.

Although Stone is turning to Garrison's On the Trail of the Assassins for resource material, a more important source is Marris' Crossfire.

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If you love conspiracy theories, then you'll love Crossfire. Published in 1989, Crossfire offers the reader a kind of smorgasbord approach -- where one can feast on a wide assortment of conspiracy possibilities.

"I'm not claiming now, nor have I ever, to have this thing solved and know all the answers. What we need is one truthful investigation," Marris said. The Warren Commission, of course, did not satisfy Marris and neither did the House Select Committee on Assassinations. The latter investigated and shot down several theories and ideas put forth in Crossfire.

Marris' book is easy to read and is well organized. He also cautions the reader in the preface to "not trust this book" and "don't trust any one source or even the basic evidence and testimony." In the conclusion of his nearly 600-page book, Marris sets forth a "likely scenario" of who pulled off the assassination of President Kennedy.

"So the decision was made at the highest level of the American business-banking-politics-military-crime power structure -- should anything happen to Kennedy, it would be viewed as a blessing for the nation.... Therefore the decision was made to eliminate John F. Kennedy by means of a public execution for the same reason criminals are publicly executed -- to serve as a deterrent to anyone considering following in his footsteps," Marris writes. Oswald, termed by Marris a "patriotic young man", was set up to be the fall guy -- or possibly his "double" was. "The preponderance of evidence now clearly indicates that the

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Dallas Oswald did not kill Kennedy," Marris informs us. The House Select Committee on Assassinations didn't buy this. "Oswald was the perfect fall guy... and implicated Russia, Cuba and leftists -- drawing attention away from the true right-wing perpetrators," Marris continues.

Ruby, of course, kills Oswald as a "mob directive." The mob carried out the killing of Kennedy, aided by "elements within the federal government of the United States" and "pressure from the top thwarted any truthful investigation."

And so it goes.

But what is the factual basis of Marris' book? Some of the theories appear easy to rebut; others have at least some independent support by experts.

First, there's the matter of the "suspicious" deaths of people in some way associated with the Kennedy assassination. "There's absolutely nothing to that," Weisberg says. Another assassination researcher, Dave Perry of Grapevine, also finds the reports exaggerated in importance.

Marris lists 38 deaths as "particularly suspicious" in his book, all occurring prior to 1972, and all but one of these are associated with the Warren Commission investigation.

Bill Hunter, a reporter for the Long Beach Press-Telegram in California, is cited as one such "particularly suspicious" death. Hunter, who reportedly was in Jack Ruby's apartment the day he killed Oswald, was shot by a policeman in the press room of the Long Beach police department. "There's nothing suspicious

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about it," says George Robeson, a columnist for the paper who worked the police beat with Hunter. Hunter was shot as two police officers were engaged in horseplay. "These guys were a couple of horseplayers with guns. They occasionally had shoved guns in my rib when I was down there," Robeson related. Both officers were fired and later convicted of involuntary manslaughter.

Jim Koethe, a writer for the Dallas Times Herald, also was in Ruby's apartment and his death was reported as mysterious. A suspect was arrested in the murder of Koethe, but nobody was ever convicted. Nevertheless, there are indications his death was not related to the Kennedy assassination but more likely stemmed from a burglary or robbery at Koethe's apartment. Let Marris make the case his death is related to the assassination.

Marris and Garrison don't give up on Clay Shaw even upon his death, which is termed odd by Garrison and falls into Marris' "particularly suspicious" death category.

New Orleans Coroner Dr. Frank Minyard said that Phil Johnson, in 1974 news director at WWL-TV, called him very soon after Shaw died to report receiving a tip from an unnamed "eyewitness" who reported "an ambulance stopping in front of Mr. Shaw's residence and bringing a body out of the ambulance and into the residence and soon after taking a body from the house and putting it into the ambulance." Perhaps this was the local CIA franchise of Bodies R Us. Johnson, now assistant station manager, denied recently he had made such a report to Minyard. Shaw officially died of cancer. Minyard now believes there was no foul play in Shaw's death

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"except for the fact of this telephone call" and he concedes the report of the bodies coming and going "could have been a hoax."

Weisberg offers pungent criticism of those, like Marrs, who see a sinister mystery in the death of cab driver William Whaley, who drove Oswald from near the assassination site to the Oak Cliff section of Dallas. "He was killed in a head-on collision with an 82-year-old man driving the wrong way. You think the CIA has 82-year-old kamikazes?"

There's also the matter of the Oswald double. Marrs suggests there is credence to the theory that the real Lee Harvey Oswald reared in Fort Worth was not the same Oswald killed by Ruby. As Marrs tells it, the Oswald who returned to Fort Worth in 1962 may not have been the same Oswald who defected to the Soviet Union in 1959.

Sound like a plot from a Frederick Forsyth or Richard Condon novel?

If Marrs' conjecture were true, then surely the impostor would have been discovered by two people Oswald lived with upon returning to the United States: his mother, Marguerite and his brother, Robert.

Marguerite had lots to say about her son's innocence in the assassination, and she talked often with reporters. But she apparently never got around to claiming her son was not really her son. Robert Oswald wrote a book in 1967 about his infamous brother and never raised such an issue.

Marrs deals rather ineffectively with this in his book,

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noting that Marguerite sought an exhumation of her son's body in 1967. A news report on the request doesn't suggest she thought there was a "double," but was sought because it might cast doubts on portions of the Warren report, which contended there was a scar on Oswald's body. Marguerite disputed such a notion.

When Oswald's body was finally exhumed in October 1981, after doubts were raised about a double by British author Michael Eddowes, the body was determined to be the same Lee Harvey Oswald who entered the Marine Corps prior to any Soviet defection.

And then there are the witnesses quoted in Marrs' book who claim to have seen shots fired from the grassy knoll or other strange occurrences, such as purported FBI and CIA agents confiscating film. Blakey, too, gives credence to statements about many witnesses who saw or heard shots from the grassy knoll.

But then there are witnesses such as Jean Hill and Beverly Oliver, the so-called "Babushka Lady." Their allegations are met with little or no skepticism by Marrs, although doubts about their veracity would seem warranted.

Ms. Hill told Marrs that "I saw a man fire from behind the wooden fence. I saw a puff of smoke and some sort of movement on the grassy knoll where he was." But in an interview with WBAP-TV and radio very soon after the assassination she said, "I didn't see any person fire the weapon" but did hear shots from the grassy knoll. She declined a request for an interview unless it was cleared with Stone. The director has pledged his consultants not to talk to the press, at least not with respect to the movie.

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Oliver and Hill are consultants on JFK.

Mrs. Oliver, as reported in Marrs' book, used a Super-8 Yashica movie camera to film the assassination in progress from Dealey Plaza. She claims two FBI or Secret Service agents confiscated the film and never returned it. She also claims to have visited Ruby's night club two weeks prior to the assassination, where Ruby introduced a man there as "Lee Oswald of the CIA." She later confirmed the man was Oswald after seeing his picture on television.

Assassination researcher Dave Perry agrees that there was indeed a Babushka Lady who was filming down at Dealey Plaza. "My contention is that there is no evidence that the Babushka Lady is Beverly Oliver," Perry said.

Mrs. Oliver's credibility is called into question for several reasons, Perry says. For one, the Super-8 Yashica was not on the public market in November 1963. The Babushka Lady, according to photographs, had dark hair and Beverly Oliver is a blonde.

An April 10, 1977 article on Mrs. Oliver in the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal quotes her husband, Charles, as disputing the value of his wife's testimony to the House Select Committee on Assassinations. "If she had any evidence that would help solve the assassination, it would have been divulged long ago," Charles is quoted as saying. He adds: "All she knows is somebody took some film away from her who posed as agents from the FBI and CIA. She doesn't know if they really were agents."

Mrs. Oliver, in a recent interview, stood by her claim of

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seeing Oswald in Ruby's night club and insisted her movie film was confiscated by a man she later identified as FBI agent Regis Kennedy. Kennedy died in 1977. She said the camera was not a Yashika but some other Japanese brand, and she claims to have worn a dark brown wig when she went to Dealey Plaza. She and her husband contend the quote attributed to Charles was made up by the reporter.

Other evidence Marrs presents is less easy to refute.

For instance, there's the alleged Nov. 8, 1963 letter from Lee Harvey Oswald to a Mr. Hunt (whom Marrs indicates could be Watergate burglary figure E. Howard Hunt). The letter reads: "I would like information concerding (sic) my position. I am asking only for information. I am suggesting that we discuss the matter fully before any steps are taken by me or anyone else. Thank you."

Weisberg, along with assassination researcher Penn Jones, received a copy of the letter. "I think somebody is just playing a trick on us," Weisberg said. He admits the handwriting on the letter looks like Oswald's.

Handwriting experts with the House assassinations committee examined a somewhat fuzzy copy of the letter and failed to authenticate it as being written by Oswald. If the letter really was written by Oswald so soon before the assassination it's easy to deduce that Oswald was seeking information about his role in the killing of Kennedy and not simply yoga exercises.

Nobody has come forward to admit sending copies of the letter to Jones and Weisberg.

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The Dallas Morning News commissioned three handwriting experts to examine a good copy of the Oswald letter in 1977 and they concluded it contains "the authentic writing of Lee Harvey Oswald and was written by him."

Allan R. Keown of El Paso was one of those commissioned experts. In a recent interview Keown stated there is "no doubt in my mind it (the letter) was written by Oswald." The FBI said it would need the original letter in order to accurately authenticate it, a point Keown disagrees with. Keown said the original letter would be preferred but is not essential. Keown said his background includes some 20 years of handwriting analysis, including work for the U.S. Postal Service and Internal Revenue Service.

Controversy over the alleged Oswald letter is minor compared to some of the photographic evidence Marrs puts forth as pointing to a conspiracy.

Fort Worth assassination researcher Jack White and Marrs have produced a 50-minute video tape, done in a manner simulating a news or public affairs program, purporting to show how a backyard photograph of Oswald holding the assassination rifle was faked. Crossfire devotes five pages to the controversy as well.

In essence, White contends that Oswald's head was cleverly superimposed over the body of someone else holding the rifle in an effort to frame Oswald.

The House assassinations committee had a photographic evidence panel examine the backyard photographs, including the negative for

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one of the prints. The panel may not have disputed every point in White's argument, but on balance it concluded the photos are not fakes.

Possibly the best evidence the photos are not fakes comes from the person who took them -- Marina Oswald. Marrs attempts to downplay her recollection of the event, pointing out how unsure she was about how many photos she actually took. Somehow this doesn't seem so odd to this observer. She likely was paying a lot more attention to the rifle in her husband's arm than remembering how many shots she had taken from the backyard of their residence on West Neely Street in Dallas.

Marina in a November 1988 interview in Ladies' Home Journal revealed that she believes now there was a conspiracy to kill Kennedy, that her husband Lee did not act alone and that Ruby killed Lee as part of a cover-up. Nowhere in the article does she offer proof of such a conspiracy -- only speculation. As such, it would have been an ideal forum in which to publicly dispute taking the backyard photos, or at least raise some doubts about its authenticity. She doesn't.

White expounded his theory of the fake backyard photos at the House assassinations committee but faced counter-arguments from consultants Calvin McCamy and Cecil Kirk, representing the photographic panel. White dismisses the panel's arguments, questioning their integrity. "You can buy an expert witness if you've got enough money, and the government had plenty of money... These people were totally dishonest, even though they had

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professorships and doctorates," White contends. As for his own qualifications to judge fake photographs, White says, "I've been a photographer for about 40 years, and I've got a lot of common sense. You don't have to have a degree to have common sense."

White says that more than 1,000 people have viewed his slide presentation or video setting out his case of fakery, and all have agreed the backyard photos of Oswald holding the rifle are indeed faked.

The video -- which White says is not as convincing as his slides -- was shown to David Wolfe, a photography instructor at Mountain View College in Dallas County. Wolfe's opinion? "I'm unmoved," he said, unconvinced of any fakery.

White's video is, in many respects, impressive, although very one-sided. To a lay person who is not familiar with how shadows and heights can be affected in photographs, White can seem convincing. One has to wonder.

Marrs' book claims there is authoritative proof for the "badge man" photographs, taken by Mary Moorman, a friend of Jean Hill. The badge man, conspiracy theorists contend, is a gunman firing at the president from the grassy knoll. Marrs relates how White had the Moorman photograph studied at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "where the photo was subjected to a sophisticated computer enhancement. They (White and a representative of a national tabloid) were told that, without question, the photo showed a man firing a rifle."

The book claims that the chairman of the MIT department involved

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in the study called a halt to the research.

White, asked about the MIT research, claims that "because of politics, they wouldn't verify it publicly."

Gary Mack, a research associate of White, says that MIT did not confirm the existence of a gunman firing a rifle in the photo. "This is an on-going scientific investigation," Mack adds.

Admittedly, this is a small portion of Marris' book to examine. But it would seem to indicate the nature of the value and direction of Marris' research. He lacks a healthy dose of skepticism when information points to a conspiracy. He tries often to build a case for massive participation of government officials in such a conspiracy.

Marris even quotes from William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and hints at Lyndon Johnson being a Brutus: "One can almost hear the sad spirit of John F. Kennedy whispering from Dealey Plaza: Et tu, Lyndon?"

There's source material from Shakespeare's Hamlet, which paraphrased, more accurately sums up the direction Marris has taken in Crossfire: "The author doth protest too much, methinks."

In a free society -- even one apparently influenced greatly by a cabal of CIA killers and Mafia types -- Marris and Stone are free to write or film whatever they want.

Stone is free to present a distorted view of the Kennedy assassination with all the right-wing bashing he wants and link anyone by name to the plot -- as long as they are dead. Dead folks can't sue for libel or defend themselves.

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But is the public good served by wild speculation on a murder that occurred nearly 28 years ago? Isn't it time to cast aside dubious research on the assassination and start presenting solid facts, or at least information supported by independent confirmation?

A sanitized Jim Garrison and highly questionable scenarios are what JFK is quite likely to present to the public.

In a distorted manner JFK may yet have some similarities to a Frank Capra movie. When the movie is released just give it the following title: It's a Wonderful Lie.

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