
YOUR OPINIONS | Letters

Stone, 'JFK' and Jefferson's 'little revolutions'

New Orleans

Oliver Stone's film in progress, "JFK," has been the subject of negative criticism from Rosemary James and Mel Leavitt, both respected, talented and knowledgeable journalists who were on the scene at the time of Clay Shaw's arrest, trial and acquittal.

This criticism is focused on what many of us believe to be a simple truth: Jim Garrison knowingly prosecuted an innocent man, Clay Shaw, to gain a forum and the power of subpoena to articulate his theory that the assassination of John F. Kennedy was not the act of a single assassin but rather a planned murder hatched by a conspiracy of powerful and ruthless men, in short, a cabal of government officials at the highest levels acting to fulfill their own agenda.

Mr. Stone has occasionally responded to the criticism and stated that he is not making The Jim Garrison Story or the Clay Shaw Story, that the film is not a documentary, that it departs from the trial transcript and that it is not a verbatim re-enactment of the trial of Clay Shaw.

The Garrison-Shaw relationship is a matter of recent history of great local interest and partisanship. But over time, it

will diminish to a mere footnote in history.

There are matters of greater concern that will not. Is there anyone left who still believes that the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy was the act of a single assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald? A majority of the American people believe there was a conspiracy and that the conspiracy included high officials in government acting with the cooperation of intelligence and law enforcement communities.

Other theorists suggest that the Mafia was behind the assassination. The Mafia connection has been the subject of recent books in which the authors speculate that the Mafia could have been involved. The weakness in these speculative conclusions is just that — they are mere speculation and founded on non-existent and/or false premises.

The majority of the American people know that the discredited Warren Commission, in proclaiming President Kennedy's murder to be the act of a lone gunman, was a government-engineered coverup. It is unlikely that the government orchestrated a coverup to protect the Mafia. And the coverup could not have been accomplished without intelligence and law enforcement

complicity.

Recent history persuades that secret governments within governments can and have evolved, peopled by "honorable" men determined that they are better qualified to govern than those elected to do so. It is more probable than not that Kennedy was judged expendable by a cabal of just such persons who, in their minds, were patriots acting in the best interests of national security.

A courageous filmmaker is making a serious, important and provocative film. The innocence or guilt of Clay Shaw, the motives of Jim Garrison in prosecuting Clay Shaw and the opinion of Oliver Stone on either are irrelevant to the film Mr. Stone has in progress. Oliver Stone is the best cinema has to offer. He is making a film about what we were, what we have permitted ourselves to become, and what we can be.

Thomas Jefferson prescribed that a little revolution every now and then would be good medicine for the American people who, from time to time, would find it necessary to rid themselves of elitist members. Armed rebellion is passe. The wrath of the American people is all that is required. Oliver Stone is doing his part.

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