



Two sides of 'JFK' debate

Pittsburgh pathologist doesn't buy Stone's conspiracy theory, or single-bullet idea either

PITTSBURGH (AP) — An adviser to Oliver Stone during production of the film "JFK" said he disagrees with Stone's theory regarding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, but he supports Stone's right to present it to the public.

Dr. Cyril Wecht, a forensic pathologist from Pittsburgh, said newspapers that criticized Stone had acted hypocritically.

The movie alleges the Nov. 22, 1963, Kennedy assassination came out of a huge conspiracy involving the CIA, Mafia, media and the military-industrial complex.

Stone has been criticized for attempting to rewrite history in the movie, and Wecht said the criticism was unwarranted.

"It is incredible hypocrisy, it is quintessential hypocrisy for The New York Times and their ilk to be attacking Oliver Stone and his right to make a movie when they can editorially attack anybody, any time on anything," Wecht told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

Wecht is considered an expert on the assassination, but when 20 medical experts reviewed evidence from the assassination 20 years ago, he was the lone dissenter to the conclusion that a single bullet killed the president and wounded Texas Gov. John B. Connally Jr.

In 1972, Wecht spent two days at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., analyzing X-rays, photographs, films, the bullet and bullet

fragments. He said then he believed at least two shooters took part in the attack.

But he told the Post-Gazette he didn't think the conspiracy to kill Kennedy was as massive as the one Stone portrayed in the film.

"I believe it's much more limited insofar as who knew everything," Wecht said. "I think there were probably less than six people.

"Specifically, it was a maverick element, a rogue element of the CIA, the only outfit that could have engineered this."

The single-bullet explanation is flawed, according to Wecht, because the bullet would have been severely deformed after it passed through Kennedy and struck Connally's rib and then hit a bone in the governor's wrist.

The bullet Wecht examined had only minor flaws and had lost only 1.5 percent of its original weight.

Wecht also said the purported path of the "single bullet" included several impossible turns.

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-Dr. Cyril Wecht, Pittsburgh pathologist

unadulterated nonsense," he said.

Wecht believes that for the assassination, gunmen were located in the Texas School Book Depository Building and in a nearby grassy knoll. A third shooter may have fired from behind Kennedy's motorcade, he said.

The motive, he said, was to remove the Kennedys from the White House and keep them out.

Wecht said Stone's film was appropriate since many people don't believe the conclusion by the special investigating commission headed by then Chief Justice Earl Warren — that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in the assassination.

He said the editorials that accused Stone of rewriting history were as opinionated as Stone's movie.

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But Specter stands by theory, claims that the movie deceives American public

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter said many Americans were being deceived by claims in the movie "JFK" that the assassination of President John F. Kennedy was part of a conspiracy.

In an editorial column published in Sunday's editions of The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Pennsylvania Republican wrote that the movie "portrayed to about half of America a false story."

He wrote that he was referring to those in the population who were under 12 years old or not yet born when Kennedy was killed on Nov. 22, 1963.

Specter was an investigator for the Warren Commission, which concluded that Kennedy was the victim of a single bullet from a lone gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald. Oswald was shot to death days later by Jack Ruby, leading some to advance a theory that Oswald did not act alone.

The movie "JFK," which is widely

"If that far-flung conspiracy involving so many agencies and people could be kept secret for more than two decades, it would have been the most successful undertaking of the U.S. government in its 200-year history."

-Sen. Arlen Specter

discredited by historians and media critics, alleges the CIA, the Mafia, the media and others were in a conspiracy to have Kennedy assassinated.

So far, more than 3 million people have watched the film, which was directed by Oliver Stone.

Kevin Costner, playing New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, called Specter a liar in the movie, saying the bullet appeared to zig-zag and make a U-turn if one accepts the single-bullet theory.

In his column printed by The Inquirer, Specter disputed several statements presented in the movie, including one about how the bullet entered Kennedy's head.

The movie said Kennedy had a large exit wound in the rear of his head, suggesting the bullet came from the front, Specter wrote. But the senator said Kennedy had a small entry hole in the back of the head and a large exit wound in the top front, suggesting the bullet came from the rear and above.