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The True Scope of the Hollywood

Oliver Stone is in the doghouse over his movie "JFK." He stands accused of trashing history, of glorifying a dangerous lunatic, New Orleans prosecutor Jim Garrison, and of polluting the minds of a generation too young to remember the real events. His message: America is controlled by a vast conspiracy in the government and media, of which Lee Harvey Oswald was just a minor player and possibly an innocent dupe.

But the problem goes far beyond Oliver Stone. He is just a minor player, and possibly an innocent dupe, of a conspiracy to twist the truth that includes virtually all of Hollywood. The media, I'm sorry to report, are involved in this conspiracy as well. How else to explain their obsessive focus on Oliver Stone and "JFK," while more dangerous malefactors escape unscathed? Is it just a coincidence that Oliver Stone is vilified for glamorizing Jim Garrison, while Warren Beatty gets nothing but praise for glamorizing the far more odious figure of mobster Bugsy Siegel?

To be sure, the hero of "Bugsy" kills a couple of people. But who can hold that against such a charmer and visionary? "He's classically heroic, in a way," explains Beatty's co-star Annette Bening, accurately capturing the movie's viewpoint. "He has a fatal flaw—he has hubris." Says Meyer Lansky in the movie itself: "He isn't even interested in money.

He's interested in the idea." Sex and ideas: a veritable Gary Hart.

Bugsy, writes the New York Times approvingly, is "the archetypal American dreamer." In the movie, standing in the middle of a barren desert, Beatty/Bugsy imagines Las Vegas. "It came to me like a vision, like a religious epiphany," the character says. In fact, according to "Little Man," Robert Lacey's recent biography of Meyer Lansky, Siegel didn't even come close to inventing Las Vegas. There were already two large luxury casino-hotels on the Las Vegas "strip" before his. Even the Flamingo Hotel itself wasn't his idea. He invested in it after construction had started and later forced out the real founder in the usual unsavory manner.

"Bugsy" makes much of Siegel's alleged patriotic desire to assassinate Mussolini. In fact, according to "We Only Kill Each Other," a 1967 biography of Siegel by Dean Jennings, Bugsy actually did business with Mussolini. The dictator sent him \$40,000 as an advance on delivery of a new kind of explosive in which Siegel—visionary as ever—had invested. Only after the failure of a demonstration—for which Siegel went to Italy, socialized with Mussolini (plus Goebbels and Goering) and notably failed to assassinate him—did relations deteriorate.

Clearly, then, Warren Beatty and the New York Times are involved in a conspiracy, along with the rest of the entertainment-informational complex, to

Conspiracy

destroy the American Dream for generations too young to remember where they were the day Bugsy Siegel was shot. By glamorizing bloody criminals, they are poisoning children's minds against real American heroes like Lee Iacocca and Robert Stempel.

But "Bugsy" is not this conspiracy's darkest achievement of late. That encomium belongs to Walt Disney Studios' vicious misrepresentation of "Beauty and the Beast," which distorts several key episodes, makes up new characters out of whole cloth and dangerously undermines the psychological structure of the tale.

Psychiatrist Bruno Bettelheim discusses "Beauty and the Beast" in his classic book on fairy tales, "The Uses of Enchantment." If I've got this right, the tale is really about the healthy transformation of a child's Oedipal attachment to a parent into romantic love for a more suitable object. When Beauty's love turns the Beast into a handsome prince, this "foreshadows by centuries the Freudian view that sex must be experienced by the child as disgusting as long as his sexual longings are attached to his parent," but when directed at someone else, "sexual longings no longer seem beastly."

As for the Beast, his side of the story is about "an evolution from a self-centered, immature [phallic-aggressive-destructive] sexuality to one that finds

its fulfillment in a human relation of deep devotion." In short, "the marriage of Beauty and the Beast is the humanization and socialization of the id by the superego."

The Disney people mangle all these subconscious themes in ways that inevitably will cause grave psychological trauma to young viewers. If the transferal of affection from father to lover is disrupted, the long-term effect on our gross national product could be severe.

In the movie, Beauty rejects the equation between handsomeness and virtue from the very beginning, thus short-circuiting the tale's crucial moral development. In the original story, Beauty asks her father for a rose. When he breaks one off its stem to give to her, says Bettelheim, it symbolizes her loss of virginity. In the movie, it is the Beast who possesses a rose, wilting in a glass case for lack of love. Goodness knows what tender ids will make of that.

Space limitations prevent full delineation of Hollywood's plot against our nation's future. Clearly "The Addams Family," with its celebration of dysfunctional parents and children, is part of the conspiracy. I'm not saying that "JFK" was intended to distract us from the real danger. I'm just raising the possibility.