

TV review

'48 Hours: JFK'

By Rick Sherwood

Surprisingly and sadly, CBS' "48 Hours: JFK" examination of the renewed controversy surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy turned out to be more a retrospective than an update, a well-packaged look at history rather than the kind of investigative report we might have hoped for. It was fascinating to watch, but when it was over you didn't know any more than you did when it began.

It had a lot of the flash and some great old footage that brought back a lot of memories, but when you got right down to it there was very little new it had to offer. The special seemed designed more to exploit the current resurgence in interest than to examine it, and ultimately was more an effort to dispel the rumors than promote them. It was definitely a look back more than anything else.

The installment obviously was made only because of the flap surrounding the release of Oliver Stone's "JFK," which in many ways is a marvelous tribute to the filmmaker. Indeed, in one of the show's few new interview segments, Dan Rather sits down with

48 HOURS: JFK
CBS
 CBS News

Executive producer..... Andrew Heyward
 Producer..... Liza McGuirk
 Director..... Eric Shapiro
 Producers..... Nancy Duffy, Jonathan Klein,
 Linda Martin, Mary Murphy, Bernard Birnbaum,
 Rand Morrison
 Associate producer..... Claude Becker
 Writer..... Thomas Flynn
 Associate director..... Ron Flaum
 Coordinating editor..... Joan Turturro
Anchor: Dan Rather

Airdate: Wednesday, Feb. 5, 10-11 p.m.

Stone to discuss the film and his personal beliefs but, like the rest of this project, fails to provide much insight.

To be sure, producers came up with a rather brilliant format here, and it was very well executed by the show's more than capable correspondents. The show culls from what must have been thousands of hours of film footage from the time of the assassination and ensuing years, breaking the footage into tidy little segments that examined the assassination theories; Lee Harvey Oswald, the man and the myth; and conspiracy theories like the Castro connection, CIA involvement and mobster-ordered murders. It looks back at past CBS

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polls, examines evidence, and even occasionally points out some of the mysteries and theories.

The benefit of hindsight provides the segments with a fresh feel, but never a fresh perspective.

Few new interviews were conducted for this program, and the few that were really don't add much. The program is notable as much for what it didn't look at as for what it did. Much to its credit this production never was exploitative; it's just that it was never

very insightful or probing either.

In the end, Rather more or less lays to rest all of the conspiracy theories as "comforting" thoughts about a very discomfoting moment in history. If we had known he was going to do that he should have told us up front rather than dangling that carrot out there.

Then we could have watched the show as the look back at history it really was rather than the smoking gun it turned out not to be. □