

JFK

Dear editors,

We can learn many things from the Establishment's movie critics who have written about Oliver Stone's "JFK." How much patience we have, for instance. I have read many reviews and articles about "JFK," and most remind me of the *Chicago Times'* verdict on Abraham Lincoln's address at Gettysburg in 1863: "Silly, flat, and dishwatery utterances."

None of the bourgeois writers in the big commercial press (with the exception of Belinda Taylor's "Why the attacks on JFK film?," in the Jan. 22 *Oakland Tribune*, seem to be willing to deal with the movie itself—but spend all of their words in attacking the movie's director.

For example, George Will, for a number of years a pontiff in the Washington, D.C., hierarchy of film criticism, spent two big paragraphs of his Dec. 26 article, "Stone film libels America" on the June 28, 1974, attempt to kill the Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand. He then devotes the rest of his article to attacking "JFK's" producer Oliver Stone. He says absolutely nothing about the movie itself, except for calling it "cartoon history" and other negative things.

It's obvious that George Will believes the myths told in the Warren Report, unless he thinks a myth is a female moth. Both Will and former cabinet member Joseph Califano, a close adviser to President Lyndon Johnson, claim the movie shows Johnson as a co-conspirator. Yet Califano admitted he had never seen the film.

I saw it twice, and Johnson was presented as a man the military-industrial complex trusted so much, they didn't have to involve him in the planning of the assassination—just its coverup.

I assisted a private investigator in his search for the truth of who killed J.F. Kennedy, and how and why. I also escorted a witness to District Attorney Jim Garrison's

office in New Orleans four years after Kennedy was shot, and I conferred with Assistant D.A. Jim Alcock and others.

My analysis is that three hours and ten minutes was not long enough for the movie "JFK" to do justice to what Stone was trying to say.

But the film seemed to have two major flaws. One was that it was obvious that too many scenes had been cut before the Clay Shaw trial was presented. The other flaw was that Kennedy really didn't want the United States to withdraw from S.E. Asia. He only wanted to change the steps he had been taking, in an attempt to force the South Vietnamese government and army to reform and to carry the burden of the war.

The movie was far too brief to show that Kennedy, inexperienced politician that he was, made the mistake of telling too many people he wanted to lower the 17.5 percent oil-depletion allowance, as a tax reform, and that he wanted some civil rights legislation and a detente with the USSR that would permit more trade, and a small cut in some useless military expenses.

Those expressed thoughts alone could have gotten almost anyone killed who was president at the time.

I urge everyone to see "JFK" and decide for themselves who the masters of snidery and venom really are—who operate in the dark, smelly corridors of half-truths.

TIM
JANDERS Victor Saxe,
Albany, Calif.