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Bill Kurtis, still hot on the JFK mystery trail

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'I Witness' to Oswald shooting

The spate of assassination specials spurred on by JFK isn't over yet.
NBC's series of specials, *I Witness Video*, is planning an installment for April on the shooting of Lee Harvey Oswald by Jack Ruby in Dallas.
"We're going back to all the people that were there at the time of the shooting and have them retell the story with the video," says NBC News vice president Jeff Gaspin.

NEW YORK — While Oscar-nominated JFK racks up big bucks at the box office, TV news shows continue to probe the USA's most befuddling murder mystery.
No one has spent more air time this season tracking the assassination of President John F. Kennedy than veteran newsman Bill Kurtis. Consider:
► In September — three months before JFK premiered — Kurtis' weekly A&E series *Investigative Reports* aired the British documentary *The Men Who Killed Kennedy*.
► This week he has been hosting A&E's five-part update

of Showtime's 1986 special, *The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald*. Part 4 airs tonight, Part 5 on Friday (both 10 p.m. EST/7 p.m. EST).

► Kurtis' latest report, *Who Killed JFK? On the Trail of the Conspiracies*, airs Friday night before Part 5, at 9 p.m. EST/6 p.m. PST.

"We think we were the first in September," says Kurtis, "then (JFK director) Oliver Stone came along and really lit the fire. We see ourselves as the ... responsible solution to the dialogue."

In *Who Killed JFK?* Kurtis interviews Robert Blakey, ex-chief counsel for the House Assassination Committee, and former President Gerald Ford,

the last surviving member of the Warren Commission that concluded in 1964 that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing Kennedy.

Kurtis calls his interview with Ford "living history." The former chief executive refutes many of the conspiracy theories. Ford says that Oswald's shooting of Dallas police officer J.D. Tippett "was the Rosetta stone" that proves Oswald acted alone. "The pistol Oswald used to kill Tippett in front of six eye witnesses was from the same mail order house as the rifle used on President Kennedy," Kurtis says.

The former anchor of *The CBS Morning News* was 23 when Kennedy was shot. For

years he believed the Warren Commission. But now he says he has heard enough theories — many he calls "goofy" — in the course of his A&E programs that some of them "throw me off and put that little feeling in the stomach."

Who Killed JFK? also includes an interview with Stone. Ford calls his film "hogwash." Kurtis calls it "wonderful filmmaking," though he would have liked a disclaimer stating it was a docudrama.

Kurtis wants to continue to report on the issue, but he's not sure what is left or where to go. Says Kurtis: "It is the perfect murder mystery for the country. I don't know if it will ever be solved."