

"This isn't history, this is movie-making."

—Oliver Stone, to Elaine Dutka,
Los Angeles Times, June 24, 1991

CHAPTER 26

THE OLIVER STONE MOVIE *JFK*

"What this entire, relentlessly didactic and polemical movie does is make one wonder about Oliver Stone. To some observers, there is nothing to wonder about. In their view, Stone's entire cinematic oeuvre—*Platoon*, *Wall Street*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, and the rest—has been marked by dishonest renderings of history, simplistic moral constructs, and a kind of puerile fatuousness about the 1960s," the *Chicago Tribune* pontificated. "The danger is that Stone's film and the pseudo-history it so effectively portrays will become the popularly accepted version. After all, what can scholarship avail against Kevin Costner, Sissy Spacek, Donald Sutherland, et al on the big screen with Dolby Stereo?"¹ Having added its weight to the enormous crescendo that swept the nation about the film, the *Tribune* then said that "it's time that the documents and all the physical evidence from the Kennedy assassination—pictures, films, tissue samples, and the rest—be made public and available for examination. . . . If our history since November 22, 1963, demonstrates anything, it is the cleansing effect of public exposure and the corrosive effect—as in *JFK*—of secrecy."

Now begins the tale of one of the greatest brouhahas in American political, intellectual, and filmmaking history.

Harold Weisberg is the grandfather of assassination research and has now become respected by the same media that used to ridicule him. It is to him that much of the media turns when they have questions about the latest fad or theory put forth by buffs, writers, and others attempting to mine the rich vein of confusion and misinformation surrounding the case. For it is Weisberg, right or wrong, who sits in judgment upon all those charlatans and frauds, upon the earnest but misguided, or those who may have made a truly new discovery.

Weisberg worked with Jim Garrison at first until he was fed up and turned against him. Garrison had written the foreword to Weisberg's book *Oswald in New Orleans*, and otherwise thought highly of Weisberg's work, which was the first published detailed analytical criticism of the evidence in the assassination of the President. Weisberg wrote Oliver Stone.² "I told Stone about Garrison sometime before he started shooting film. I warned Stone in advance," Weisberg wrote me a week before the scheduled release of the forty-million-dollar film, when the hype from Hollywood was reaching a pitch.³ The movie by then had made the cover of *Life* and *Newsweek*, and every newspaper and magazine had written about it.

The day I received this letter from Weisberg, there he was on the *CBS Evening News* with Dan Rather,* who saw the assassination that terrible day in Dallas almost three decades before. Rather started off the program with this: "One of Hollywood's best-paid filmmakers mixes fact, fiction, and theory in a new film about the killing of John F. Kennedy. What happens when Hollywood mixes facts, half-baked theories, and sheer fiction into a big-budget film and then tries to sell it as truth and history?"

Mark Phillips, the CBS reporter, continued: "On a Hollywood sound stage, Oliver Stone, two-time Oscar winner, is adjusting history, creating his version of how and why John F. Kennedy was killed. It's a version that differs dramatically from the Warren Commission account of one deranged gunman acting alone." Phillips explains that Stone says the murder was over Vietnam.

Mark Phillips goes on, videotaping in Weisberg's basement, where Weisberg has scores of file cabinets filled with thousands of FBI documents released to him over the years. "Weisberg says: 'Jim Garrison's investigation was a fraud. And Oliver Stone hasn't produced history as he says, but he created another fiction.'" George Lardner, Jr., had a few weeks before written in the *Washington Post*: "Garrison's investigation was a fraud."⁴ Lardner, though, acknowledges "that a probable conspiracy [in the assassination] took place."⁵

What do people mean by history? The battle is on for *who is going to*

* During a TV broadcast, Dan Rather had reversed the direction of Kennedy's head snap when he was struck with the fatal bullet, saying the head snapped forward rather than rocketing backward, as it does, when he saw the Zapruder film decades before. The television viewer was not allowed to actually see the film; Rather told us what he wanted us to think was on the

define just what that history is. The Warren Report is not writ in stone, not yet "history"—it's still only an opinion or a theory—and history is written by the winners. Nobody has won just yet.

Rather's real purpose seems to be to turn the public away from any criticism of the Warren theory. He used Weisberg, twisting and distorting some of his key points. I agree with Weisberg that Stone does not have the right to change the history of what happened in those years, just as Stone's original script had Jim Garrison waving an autopsy picture of President Kennedy at the jury and saying, "This is the finally released and official autopsy photo." The pictures have never been released. It is this sort of false representation that got Stone into trouble with most of the research community, or at least with those of us whom he either couldn't buy or did not try to deal with. He thereby alienated the very people who might have kept his movie straight, and instead rounded up the usual suspects, the disinformation specialists in the research community, the has-beens.

Was the movie intended to be a vindication of Garrison somehow? Vindicating what? Why make a movie centered on Garrison's personal life? As a vehicle to discuss the conspiracy that murdered Kennedy? As a metaphor, as Stone said—a composite? But if the film doesn't talk about what Garrison's investigation did to a lot of people's lives, in most cases—if not all—those completely innocent of anything having to do with the investigation, what good is it? If it does not talk about Kennedy's life and work, what good is it? Does it describe what Kennedy went through that morning to get out of bed and get into his back brace? The pain he lived with? Instead, they hired a nobody to play Kennedy, and a terrible actor to play Garrison.

Does this movie have any connection with the realities we have touched upon? Stone defies and tries to vindicate Garrison by overlooking the man's serious flaws and what was wrong with what he did. When asked about this, Stone says that he did not have time in a three-hour movie to get into questions of character. Pardon me, but isn't that what movie-making is about, aside from storytelling? Character? A true artist can demonstrate character on the silver screen in a trice.

Dan Rather had one final word at the end of his television news broadcast: "And now the public is going to live with the pain and the uncertainty of that dark day in Dallas once more. For much of Stone's audience, this powerful movie by a skilled artist is the only version they'll know. Call it art or call it history, it's bound to make an impres-

sion." Stone had the last word, saying, "It's only a movie. They can go in and you can either believe it or not."

There are many problems with all of this.

The Problem

The issue has been raised as to whether or not Oliver Stone had the right to make his film without public discussion beforehand, then to release that film and subject it to normal criticism. Most people in the media don't think so, and neither do I.

Stone chose to make various and conflicting public statements beforehand, such as in his *Dallas Morning News* interview,⁶ and an interview in New Orleans.⁷ In Dallas he said that "I am making a movie first and foremost. I'm not doing a school lesson here, and I don't have a documentarian's responsibilities. I have a dramatist's responsibilities to an audience." Wrong. This is what got him into deep trouble with Harold Weisberg, Jon Margolis of the *Chicago Tribune*,⁸ and George Lardner of the *Washington Post*,⁹ who insists that Garrison is a fraud to be with. Who or what that history (of the assassination) is has not been made clear, and that is what we have been arguing about all these years. The real issue is that neither Stone nor anyone else has the right to make composite characters out of Perry Raymond Russo, as he does in the film, "metaphors" out of Jim Garrison, and so on. He has to tell the truth. We make the rules, not him.

"I've taken the license of using Garrison as a metaphor for all the credible researchers," Stone said. "He's an all-encompassing figure."¹⁰ This statement is guaranteed to make enemies of those who do not want to be lumped together with Garrison, and thus discredited. In a sense, Garrison certainly is a metaphor, since we have all had some of the problems he had when the sky fell in on him as a result of his own excesses, but only a few other big-name critics of the Warren Report actually engaged in hoaxes, and to put all together as one composite figure certainly does distort the reality of who and what Garrison and the others really were, each different in their own way, and each just as dangerous.

To renounce a "documentarian's responsibility" is to renounce his integrity, his citizenship, his caring. Perhaps Stone felt trapped, having publicly committed himself to Garrison and Garrison's story, then realizing that there was something wrong with it. It was the Hollywood

mind at work, dealing in images rather than in facts and honesty. And changing course in midstream.

Margolis jumped into the fray with his *Tribune* article headed *JFK MOVIE AND BOOK ATTEMPT TO REWRITE HISTORY*. "Whether or not it is a gift, artistic talent conveys a responsibility. Those who can sway emotions ought to know what they are talking about, lest emotions be swayed toward foolishness," Margolis writes, and what he has to say—in part—deserves reprinting here. "Unhappily, there is no law of nature that ordains that talent will be accompanied by knowledge, much less by wisdom, and the ill-informed poet, painter, musician, or novelist is a commonplace in our time. Most do little harm because art, even popular entertainment, has far less impact than either its practitioners or its critics like to think. People are smarter than artists or critics, and know better than to confuse novels, movies, or plays with reality. . . . Still, some insults to intelligence and decency warrant objection. Such an insult now looms. It is *JFK* . . . based largely on a book called *On the Trail of the Assassins* by Jim Garrison."

Margolis and other critics who wrote about the movie jump on one primary point: "Garrison writes that the less than conclusive testimony of one waitress 'constituted the totality of the witness testimony identifying Lee Oswald' as the man who killed a Dallas patrolman after shooting the President. There were in fact six witnesses who either saw the patrolman get shot or saw the armed gunman running from the scene. All six identified Oswald." Not that that testimony ever held water.

Should I be climbing all over Stone when he is getting across key points in my research such as the fact that the autopsy photos show the head intact when all the medical evidence demonstrated that this was not true, and that there were more than four shots fired?¹¹ Yes, because Stone has an obligation not to trade on other people's research (he does not properly credit them) and to not discredit the case for conspiracy as a whole by deifying Garrison.

Stone says: "I feel I've behaved responsibly. I've done all my homework. I have tried to include all the credible evidence. . . . But we're not doing a documentary. Most of all, I felt a tremendous need to make as many people as possible aware of what really happened that day. For me as a filmmaker, that means doing it cinematically."¹² I assume that this last statement means fictionalizing. The fact is, the film mentions almost no evidence showing conspiracy, and instead presents only the-

ory (in the person of Donald Sutherland and his monologue) as evidence of conspiracy.

The movie, about Jim Garrison, is in fact propaganda. The mixing of a political agenda with art is the most dangerous business there is, even if we agree with what it says because of the power over people's minds.

We are concerned about the means versus the end here, something the big-name writers in the "critical community" often ignore. The facts in the film should be totally accurate. We don't need any Hollywood embellishments with metaphors and alternative myth-making.

"My feeling is that Jim Garrison was an extremely courageous individual who took extremely long odds and pointed a strong finger at government cover-up. That took guts in the 1960s, when the FBI and CIA were sacred cows. And don't forget he had 23 years of military service, was three times elected district attorney of New Orleans, and is now an appellate judge. He's hardly a buffoon. Garrison was the first to see that the JFK assassination wasn't just a matter of trajectories and bullet fragments in Dealey Plaza. He called into question the larger issues, especially the government's willingness to lie to the public—and this was before Watergate," Stone said.¹³ True, but it nevertheless ignores the many other issues that have been raised.

One of those issues is that Garrison's case rested on Perry Russo's identification of Clay Shaw and his claim that he saw Shaw with Oswald. Why was he left out of the movie? Russo's statements would appear preposterous, as they did to the court in 1969, because they were obtained under hypnosis. Stone instead creates a composite character of Russo and other witnesses, indicating that he knows very well that this evidence is fake and he is afraid to present the Russo story for what it was. In other words, Stone is trying to make the trial and the case look a lot better than it was by avoiding historical truth and fictionalizing.

The New Orleans *Times-Picayune*¹⁴ said that Garrison knew his case amounted to nothing, but he cynically pursued it to get publicity. "In short, the accusation is that Oliver Stone doesn't know what he is talking about in his film."¹⁵

The *New York Times* goes on to quote Stone: "I didn't want to make a movie of the Garrison book only. He is the protagonist, but the book ends essentially in 1969, and I wanted to push the movie into the new ground that was uncovered after 1969 and pre-1969—the autopsies, the bullets, the work of other researchers. So I've taken dramatic license. It is not a true story per se. It is not the Jim Garrison story. It is a film

called *JFK*. It explores all the possible scenarios of why Kennedy was killed, who killed him, and why. What actually happens in the movie is that you see different scenarios, different possible conclusions." The film *never* does this at all.

Then Stone gets into what he thinks his movie is about, which bears scant relationship to his script. He claims that it is like the 1951 Japanese epic *Rashomon* in which the same event is seen from several points of view rather than a "straightforward, unequivocal defense of any particular theory." (This is another completely false statement about his own film. He has one idea *only* to sell.)

Of course, without consulting those who are on the cutting edge of this research, how can he know what he is talking about?

"Oliver Stone Fights Back" came the word in Elaine Dutka's article in the *Los Angeles Times*.¹⁶ Aubrey Rike, the ambulance driver who helped put Kennedy in his casket, complained to me about the amount of blood Stone was slinging around the emergency room at Parkland Hospital. I told Dutka about it, and she led off her article with Rike's criticism. Stone told Dutka: "This isn't history, this is movie-making. I'm not setting out to make a documentary."

Dutka wrote: "At issue is not only the artist's responsibility when dealing with a subject in the public domain, but whether these critics—in the press and elsewhere—are curtailing creative freedom by prejudging a work-in-progress."

Stone replied to the pre-judgments by likening them to what happens in an authoritarian state. He said: "It's interesting that the *Washington Post* is applauding the Soviet media for its new openness, its willingness to expose Stalin's mass murders, while impugning my project before the American people can assess it. It's hypocritical, a double standard, ironic at best."¹⁷

Stone asks a cogent question in this article of his own in the *Washington Post*—when he was allowed equal time after Lardner's attack on the movie he had not yet made: "Why is Lardner so worried about our movie? Why is he so concerned that the investigation not be reopened? Lardner admits to a conspiracy, so why is he so afraid people might see it? If I am the buffoon he and Outlook's demonizing cartoon make me out to be, no one will really believe my film. I can't but feel there is another agenda here. Does the *Washington Post* object to our right to make a movie our way, or does it just object to our disagreeing with its views that the Warren Commission was right?"

* * *

We have raised the question as to whose history is being rewritten in the movie. Everyone from Weisberg to Lardner has complained about Stone's tampering with this history. The fact is that the so-called six-witness testimony that Oswald shot Tippit never held water, and is as thin as Garrison's charges against Shaw. The plain fact is that Oswald's handgun had not been fired and no one has ever offered evidence that it had been.

Margolis, who calls Garrison bizarre (twice)—Lardner calls him “zany”—points out that in the first Stone script he has Lyndon Johnson behind the plot to kill President Kennedy. Needless to say, this is *prima facie* crazy. Some evidence has been put forward by Johnson's former mistress and a lawyer, Craig Zirbel, in a book called *The Texas Connection*, but it is unreasonable to suppose that Johnson planned Kennedy's murder or ordered it. “To remember Lyndon Johnson is not to love him. But the suggestion that Johnson would stoop to murder, stupidly plotting with men he knew enough to distrust, is even less credible than was Johnson at his worst.”¹⁸

Margolis concludes by saying: “Simple-mindedness has always been Stone's weakness. . . . None of his other movies posed the danger that millions of young people, ignorant of recent history and influenced by Stone's technique, may henceforth believe that a president of the United States got the job by having his predecessor bumped off. There is a point at which intellectual myopia becomes morally repugnant. Stone's new movie proves that he has passed that point.” The problem with Margolis and others of a like mind is that they make clear that they reject conspiracy theories and claim that Stone is therefore rewriting history, or what they *think* is history, according to the Warren Report. In fact, the history of the assassination was rewritten by Congress when they found in 1979 that there *was* a conspiracy in the crime. The large majority of the public believes this. They don't need to be protected by journalists on that score.

Stone told the *Los Angeles Times* that we have a “Fascist security state running around this country.”¹⁹ This is the kind of excessive statement that both Garrison and Stone are known for, which defames the nation and which is simply not true. Stone wonders why the media is dumping on him. It doesn't occur to him that his own big mouth, like Garrison's, is getting him into this trouble. More especially, it doesn't occur to them that when they make public statements like this, *everyone* has a right to scrutinize them, as they have become very public and what they are doing legitimately concerns everyone. We have a perfect

right to criticize the critics. This is a democracy, and it is *our* history. A film is as open to scrutiny as were the deliberations of the Warren Commission. There are fundamental issues of ethics and journalistic responsibility involved.

At times in its past, our government has overstepped its authority and impinged on our freedoms, but it never became a Fascist state and could not. Yes, a certain amount of surveillance exists or existed in the past that went beyond what was required, but Stone's statement is the statement of an extremist and is a valid reason why the press, even the liberal press, would call him to task—the man has so much power to influence opinion here and over the world. Certainly we have a right to investigate when the man appears at times as nuts as the people he wants to expose.

Stone repeatedly told reporters that his film offers several possible conspiracy scenarios. "I hope my responsibility is apparent in the work, but the work cannot be prejudged," he told Jay Carr.²⁰

Controversy sells books and movies. Time-Warner, the company making the movie and reviewing it in their magazine, *Time*, gets to sell it on HBO and Cinemax, which they own. Stone has always hyped up his movies beforehand, explaining what he is going to do as though it were the Holy Grail and he were a New Wave French director in 1956.

Oliver Stone may have thought that he was engaging in the normal hype for a film prior to its release, but in so doing he initiated the very public discussion he now feels is unfair.

"What we're doing is we're sort of acting like detectives," Stone said.²¹ "It's entertaining, it's a thriller," Stone told Forrest Sawyer.²² "I tried to put all the researchers into Garrison's case." No way did we get in there. This was strictly Garrison's theory of the conspiracy, plus some outdated medical evidence exposed by Weisberg and a handful of others. Therefore, the movie did not go any further than what was known in 1967 about the medical evidence.

Stone admitted to Forrest Sawyer that the meeting with Mr. "X" (Fletcher Prouty) did not happen as it does in the movie.

Harold Weisberg described Stone as a "great monster." Stone, in making a film that relies partly on this man's research, must take notice. He is not completely free to do what he wants. Weisberg said that Garrison's investigation "was not in any sense investigation. He was making it up as he went along."²³ William Gurvich, chief aide to Garrison, had quit him abruptly in June 1967 because he believed the investi-

gation had no basis, and went to work for Clay Shaw's defense team.²⁴ He told Forrest Sawyer on ABC-TV's *Nightline* that "I know that there was no evidence."²⁵

"If they can make up a myth, why can't Oliver?" Jack Lemmon said on the way into the premier in Hollywood. What we were treated to in the hoopla that followed were the utterances of the Hollywood mind hard at work on a tough intellectual problem that went right by them.

There is a doctrine of responsible journalism. Not only do alleged facts have to be corroborated, but journalists abide by certain unspoken rules of conduct and ethics. This is even more true where crimes are concerned, as in the murder of President Kennedy. When Stone enters the field of journalism, as he has, he must play by the rules. He is not completely free. If he engages in unethical behavior, he must account for it.

At this point probably every major assassination researcher is against both Stone and his film. Why? He started out praising these people and tried to buy some of them. He has seriously disrupted our work at a key moment. He has wrecked relationships and is making a cartoon of the most serious affair in American political history. The very idea of having famous but weak or silly stars in his film makes a joke of the great tragedy we have suffered and are still suffering. To make it worse, he has Robin Hood playing the key role, dancing with wolves.*

The *Washington Post* and George Lardner, Jr., were trying to tell Stone and Hollywood something of great importance. Other signals should have been picked up when Lardner's by-line read "George Lardner covers national security issues for the *Washington Post*." Alarm lights went on when the same article made it clear that Harold Weisberg had joined forces with the *Post* and given them Stone's script. In fact, every communication Stone made to the *Post* was sent to Harold Weisberg by the *Post* for response.

Harold Weisberg in fact motivated the entire onslaught of the *Washington Post* against the Stone film when he wrote Lardner, and told me that "writing about the Stone movie was not Lardner's idea, not the *Post*'s. I interested them. I gave Lardner the script and access to any of my Garrison records he wanted. He read every word of his story to me before he submitted it, and there is no inaccuracy or unfairness in it.

* Kevin Costner directed and acted in a film called *Dances with Wolves*, and played Robin Hood in another film about the same time. Some writers said that Stone was dancing with facts.

Based on what I gave him and what he could have used, it is understated."²⁶

Stone's lawyers claimed in a threatening letter to numerous people who opposed his script after it was pirated and published, even sold in college film classes, that it was a trade secret. Granted each industry has customs that can govern in a lawsuit and be interpreted as law, Stone has intervened in our business where the rule is one of total disclosure.

Stone signed numerous key witnesses to exclusive contracts right in the middle of our research, killing it, and our own documentary.

As *Time* magazine noted in highly critical articles, Stone interfered in all other documentaries being prepared in this case. "According to Hollywood sources, the director has worked hard to block a movie based on Don DeLillo's 1988 book *Libra*, a fictionalized account of the assassination. 'Stone has a right to make his film, but he doesn't have a right to try and stop everyone else from making their films,' said Dale Pollock, president of A&M films, which has been trying to make the DeLillo movie."²⁷

The *Time* article points out that various scenes in the secret first script, were removed from the film later on, such as a scene depicting David Ferrie being murdered by fantastic (and invented) characters named Bull and Indian whom we later see in the Texas School Book Depository, and the scene depicting the autopsy pictures being held up to the jury. Of course, such crazy and historically inaccurate scenes would not have been removed had the script not been stolen and spread around so excluded critics and experts could point out to Stone (though communication was very difficult) how silly some of it was.

The problem that I and others in the research community have is that we were unable to get any real input into the final product because of the iron secrecy Stone succeeded in imposing. We were all working for the same goal: to have an accurate and correct movie, but Stone did not seek first-class advice.

Then there is Mr. "X" in the film, who is Fletcher Prouty, whose writings were extensively used in the movie. Stone hired Prouty as a consultant, and relied upon him for an exposition of the conspiracy. Prouty is a friend of mine whom I respect for his writing and what he has to say. He has often been the victim of unfair charges, but he sometimes makes mistakes. Stone went to some trouble to make a prop from an old newspaper belonging to Prouty, the *Christchurch Star*, which was published some hours after the AP wire came through con-

taining the news that Kennedy had been shot. Prouty sold Stone on the idea that the newspaper could not have had the information when they had it without it being planted by an intelligence agency.

I called the *Christchurch Star*, which is sixteen hours ahead of Dallas central standard time, in New Zealand and learned the precise hour the wire came through and when the paper went to press that afternoon (November 23, 1963, which was actually the afternoon of November 22). My examination of the information it published about Oswald was nothing that was not in the AP wires within two hours of Oswald's arrest, and it was nothing at all that would not be known to any journalist covering the case, from the preexisting files on Oswald's arrest in New Orleans and the newspaper accounts of his defection to the former Soviet Union, to the police reports.

"I had trouble knowing what was fact and what was not fact," Forrest Sawyer said, referring to the movie. "Stone takes dramatic license by mixing in facts or what he represents as facts with fictionalization. You have Garrison delivering a very powerful speech to the jury that never happened, which were Oliver Stone's words, in large part."²⁸

At the moment the film was released, *Life* weighed in with what was probably the best, though shallow, article of an incredible year, called "Why We Still Care: A New Movie About the Assassination Reopens an Old Controversy." The title was emblazoned on its cover with a black and white photograph of Jack Kennedy sailing his boat. *Life* is owned by Time-Warner as well. Though it failed to mention some of the leading researchers, the *Life* article certainly managed to provide exposure for very many of those who have devoted their lives to bringing out the truth in the case.²⁹ The magazine did not have much of an ax to grind, being more of a picture magazine than one of ideas or news, and did not dig too deeply beneath the surface. It was better than the other articles, not for those reasons, but because it gave more of an overview, with less bias.

Speaking of the CIA, Stone told Mark Seal: "They bring down governments. This is their job. Why isn't it conceivable that an outlaw organization such as the CIA that does this abroad would do it domestically?"³⁰ Some of this statement, of course, is true. But there is an excess of language here, and that is the problem. He defames the CIA by calling it an outlaw. The CIA has done a lot of good, but as an institution, with all its flaws, it did not and could not have killed JFK, as many think.

"They don't kill you anymore," Stone told a reporter, "they poison your food. You get sick. You don't die. You get sick, and you get incapacitated for a year or two . . . and you get strychnine laced in your system. Or else they simply discredit you in the media, which is probably a lot more sophisticated way of doing it, like they did Garrison, you see. They just made fun of him. They ridicule you as a beast. As a monster. As a buffoon. And they do a good job of it. And the movie has to overcome."³¹ A moment later Stone said that "they're into satellite taps now. You don't have to go into the phone system." He had his phone swept for bugs and found nothing. This demonstrates how deep the director's paranoia had gone, and it is a shame—right or wrong as he may be.

Perhaps the answer lies in this observation: "Stone always looks haggard. . . . His entire being exudes exhaustion—the result of his year-long war with a hostile press, combative assassination buffs, and zealous defenders of the Warren Commission, all of whom have attempted to portray Oliver Stone as the biggest assassination buffoon since Jim Garrison. 'There's a thousand and one vultures out there,' groans Stone, 'crouched on the rocks, saying, 'Ah, here comes Stone.' They want to come down and just peck out my eyes and rip my guts out. I'm such a target in a way, because I've attacked big things. And now I've got not only the usual Hollywood vultures on my tail, I've got a lot of the paid-off journalist hacks that are working on the East Coast with their recycled political theories, who resent the outsider, the rebel with a different theory.'"³² The man doth protest too much.

Part of the underlying social or philosophical conflict in this mess stems from the differing mind sets of the East and West coasts. As Rosemary James of New Orleans, one of the first reporters close up to the Garrison affair in 1967, said about the land of the laid-back lotus eaters: "Now comes a gullible from La-La Land with a \$60-million budget who wants to regurgitate all of that garbage . . ."³³ James said in the same letter that "I know for a fact that Garrison deliberately proceeded with a fraudulent case against Shaw," and that Garrison selected a scapegoat for political purposes, then set about destroying one of the most creative business and cultural leaders New Orleans ever produced. Stone responded to this letter by saying that "the truth is that the prosecution was sabotaged by the federal government from day one."

The bottom line of Duane Byrge's review of *JFK* in the *Hollywood Reporter* is that "while Oliver Stone has certainly stirred up the waters,

with good conscience and, in JFK's own parlance, 'with vigah,' most people are likely to regard *JFK* as BS."³⁴

Stone had a double standard. He publicly promoted his notion of morality and pontificated upon virtue and truth. Privately, like so many others in Hollywood, he and his producers ran all over the little people to get what he wanted.

When Garrison, Mark Lane, and Stone made blanket charges that the CIA or the FBI killed Kennedy, they were basically way over the line. First of all, no responsible researcher in this case ever said anything like that. Granted, *whatever* we say is often *distorted* to sound like we've said more than we actually said. If we say a few out-of-control renegades did it, they say we said the *Agency* did it!

Stone did not need to recreate the phony and gory hospital scenes and the murder itself. He could have used the existing footage, but he has made a charade of it by re-creating it. He has a nobody playing John Kennedy and that in itself is objectionable. The point is that our country has a fast-rising level of violence in part because of films and TV shows whose producers revel in such violence, who make life cheap and guns alluring. This film is not at all about John Kennedy as a human being. What can we feel for him when he is shot? What can young people who know little about John Kennedy feel when they see him murdered?

If Stone knew in his own mind what it is he really intended to do, an "entertainment" or a "docudrama," perhaps there would not be so much trouble. If he had not tried to be so secretive, perhaps he would not have so many people against him. But if he intended to make a docudrama about John Kennedy's murder, he had to be *absolutely accurate* about every last detail. That murder concerns this nation to its core. We cannot have assassination as a political instrument in this country, and we cannot have anyone making light of it or making a cartoon of it.

With all his flaws, Jim Garrison deserved better than *JFK*. Garrison was born in Denison, Iowa, and spent his youth in Iowa and Chicago. He always talked like a northerner before Kevin Costner played him with a hoked-up southern accent, which Garrison had never acquired. The *Washington Post* had this to say about Costner's performance: "Stone's dramatic efforts are dulled by Costner. As Garrison, he's a dead, vacant performer. Perhaps the milquetoast casting is ironically appropriate: the real story's about Kennedy. Someone with a personal-

ity would only get in the way."³⁵ More like a timid dweebe, to use Costner's highschoolese. Garrison deserved a great impersonator.

Stone says that the murder of John Kennedy was a seminal event for him and for the country. "It changed the course of history. It was a crushing blow to our country and to millions of people around the world. It put an abrupt end to a period of innocence and great idealism. . . . The movie is not, as Lardner suggested, the 'Jim Garrison story.' It does use the Garrison investigation as the vehicle to explore the various credible assassination theories, and incorporates everything that has been discovered in the twenty years since Garrison's efforts. It does not purport to 'solve' this murder mystery. What I hope this film will do is remind people how much our nation and our world lost when President Kennedy died, and to ask anew what might have happened and why. In the words of Thomas Jefferson, 'Eternal vigilance is the price of Liberty.'" Stone then points out how the *Washington Post* has steadfastly stuck to the Warren Report, in spite of all reason.

Fine words, these. But Stone really doesn't do what he says he will do. The film does not remind us of what we lost when Kennedy died because Kennedy is never alive in the film. Those of us who remember don't need Stone. The film cheapens our memory. Those of us who thought there was a conspiracy have always asked what happened and why. *JFK* tries to tell young people what to think without giving them anything with which to back up their ideas. As for a piece of vigilance, it is more like vigilante justice.

The Reviews

The movie was premiered in Hollywood on December 18, 1991, in Dallas the next day, and in New Orleans and the rest of the nation on the twentieth. Days before the premier, *Newsweek* and *Time* hit the stands with their appraisals,³⁶ and in the case of *Newsweek* the cover of the magazine proclaimed "The Twisted Truth of *JFK*: Why Oliver Stone's New Movie Can't Be Trusted." Three frames from the movie, parallel to the corresponding frames of the Zapruder film, show Jackie on the trunk of the limousine retrieving part of her husband's head.

In one of several articles in the *Newsweek* story, David Ansen ends withudging praise: "What [Mr.] 'X' tells us may be more than many people can or want to swallow. No one should take *JFK* at face value: It's a

compellingly argued case, but not to be confused with proof. But my hat is off to the filmmaker—and Warner Bros.—for the reckless chutzpah of the attempt. Make no mistake: this is one very incendiary Hollywood entertainment. Two cheers for Mr. Stone, a troublemaker for our times.”

The most violent attack on the film came from George F. Will of the *Washington Post*. He called it a cartoon history, and wrote: “In his three-hour lie, Stone falsifies so much, he may be an intellectual sociopath, indifferent to truth. Or perhaps he is just another propagandist frozen in the 1960s like a fly in amber, combining moral arrogance with historical ignorance. He is a specimen of the 1960s arrested development, the result of the self-absorption encouraged by all the rubbish written about his generation being so unprecedentedly moral, idealistic, caring, etc. He is one of those ‘activists’ who have been so busy trying to make history, they have not learned any. . . . Intellectually, Stone is on all fours with his mirror images, the Birchers, who, like Stone, thought Earl Warren was a traitor. Stone and they are part of a long fringe tradition, the paranoid style in American politics, a style ravenous for conspiracy theories.”³⁷

Will goes on with one more slam: “Why is actor Kevin Costner lending himself to this libel of America? Is he invincibly ignorant or just banally venal? Nothing else can explain his willingness to portray as a hero Jim Garrison, who, as New Orleans district attorney, staged an assassination ‘investigation’ that involved recklessness, cruelty, abuse of power, publicity-mongering, and dishonesty, all on a scale that strongly suggested lunacy leavened by cynicism. . . . *JFK* is an act of execrable history and contemptible citizenship by a man of technical skill, scant education, and negligible conscience.”

Vincent Canby’s *New York Times* review entitled “When Everything Amounts to Nothing” said that the movie clarified nothing and that the conspiracy “remains far more vague than the movie pretends. . . . *JFK*, for all its sweeping innuendos and splintery music-video editing, winds up breathlessly running in place. The movie will continue to infuriate people who possibly know as much about the assassination as Mr. Stone does, but it also short-changes the audience and at the end plays like a bait-and-switch scam. . . . It builds to a climatic courtroom drama, the details of which it largely avoids, to allow Kevin Costner, the film’s four-square star, to deliver a sermon about America’s future with an emotionalism that is completely unearned.”³⁸

Canby says that the film did succeed in presenting the case for the

idea that there actually was a conspiracy, but "beyond that, the movie cannot go with any assurance. . . . The only payoff is the sight of Mr. Costner with tears in his eyes. . . . The film's insurmountable problem is the vast amount of material it fails to make coherent sense of. . . . Mr. Stone is Fibber McGee opening the door to an overstuffed closet. He is buried under all the facts, contradictory testimony, hearsay, and conjecture that he would pack into the movie.

"By the time *JFK* reaches the Clay Shaw trial, most uninformed members of the audience will be exhausted and bored. The movie, which is simultaneously arrogant and timorous, has been unable to separate the important material from the merely colorful. After a certain point, audience interest tunes out. It's a jumble.

". . . The movie remains an undifferentiated mix of real and staged material. Mr. Stone's hyperbolic style of filmmaking is familiar: lots of short, often hysterical scenes tumbling one after another, backed by a sound track that is layered, strudellike, with noises, dialogue, music, more noises, more dialogue. It works better in *Born on the Fourth of July* and *The Doors* than it does here, in a movie that means to be a sober reflection on history suppressed."

Canby ends by saying: "When Walter Matthau turns up for a brief, not especially rewarding turn as Senator Russell B. Long, *JFK* looks less as if it had been cast in the accepted way than subscribed to, like a worthy cause. The cause may well be worthy; the film fails it."

Desson Howe writes in the *Washington Post* that "despite its three hours, *JFK* is absorbing to watch. It's not journalism. It's not history. It is not legal evidence. Much of it is ludicrous. It's a piece of art or entertainment. Stone, who has acknowledged his fusing of the known and the invented, has exercised his full prerogative to use poetic license. He should feel more than mere craftsman's satisfaction at the result."³⁹ Howe writes that the first order of business in this film is *entertainment*. "As such, Stone creates a riveting marriage of fact and fiction, hypothesis and empirical proof in the edge-of-the-seat spirit of a conspiracy thriller."⁴⁰

Howe also tells us what the message is: "Kennedy angered right-wing elements by trying to pull out of Vietnam and by not liberating Cuba during the Bay of Pigs incident. Messing with the war machine was his fatal flaw. This wasn't just a conspiracy. It was a junta."

Stephen Hunter wrote that "the movie is ultimately incoherent—~~it~~ never makes sense out of the New Orleans angle to the conspiracy—and seems to veer in strange directions to accommodate all sects

of assassination dialectic. Assassination scholars will be somewhat dumbfounded at the cavalier method by which the movie credits all 'discoveries' to Garrison and his team, though much of the information was developed later by others."⁴¹

Hunter, writing in the *Baltimore Sun*, goes on to say: "Yet still and all, *JFK* is entertaining, if only because the cast of characters in the New Orleans underground is so bizarre . . . though Stone comes dangerously close to homophobia in his insistence of camping up the sexual orientation of some of the characters." (Gay and lesbian groups were deeply offended. He edited out scenes that would offend the city of Dallas, his host for much of the filming.)

Hunter continues: "The movie is curiously at its worst when it needs to be at its best—and it's also at its most reprehensible. It offers up as heroic and admirable Garrison's decision to prosecute Shaw, though even on the evidence the film itself offers, he had no case at all. The case, of course, was dismissed in an hour. When a prosecutor ruins a man in order to get himself his own day in court, and a film director canonizes him for it, that seems to me the biggest proof of an American coup d'état and evidence that indeed, the Fascists have taken over."

Some Facts

Unfortunately, *Time's* extensive coverage of the film falsified many statements.⁴² For instance, we find this comment: "The bullet that hit Kennedy's head was found in the limousine, and tests indicated that it came from Oswald's rifle. Moreover, frame 313 of the Zapruder film clearly shows brain matter spraying forward." Nothing is too clear in Z 313, and no bullet was found in the limousine, only fragments. There is no way that a fragment can be linked to a rifle.

Time gropes on: "Neutron activation tests indicate that the fragments in Connally's wrist did come from the bullet in question." This is a completely false statement. The tests were not conclusive, and there was more metal in his wrist than is missing from the "Magic" Bullet.

In a more serious example of double speak, another trick is being played on the unsuspecting when *Time* says: "The Evidence: Over the years some witnesses have come forward to say they saw the alleged conspirators together at parties and at a rally in rural Louisiana. This was Garrison's key contention in his 1969 trial of Shaw, but the jury rejected it. [We have here the mixing of two different groups of wit-

nesses. The Clinton, Louisiana, witnesses, for instance, have been acknowledged by the House Assassinations Committee to be correct in having seen the men together.] Even many conspiracy theorists doubt the credibility of the witnesses." Which witnesses? We accept the credibility of the townspeople of Clinton that they saw Lee Harvey Oswald and David Ferrie together with either Clay Shaw or Guy Banister. What is not to be believed was the testimony of Perry Russo, but *Time* has done its dirty work by linking researchers with skepticism of *all* witnesses.

Time tells us that Stone is saying: "Open your eyes wide, like a child's. Look around. See what fits. And Costner's summation is right out of an old Frank Capra movie in its declaration of principle in the face of murderous odds. Lost causes, as Capra's Mr. Smith said, are the only causes worth fighting for."

Time's reviewers gave grudging respect and praise to the film. They had to in order for their parent company, Time-Warner, to get their money back. *Time* ends its review with this: "To Stone's old enemies, *JFK* may be another volatile brew of megalomania and macho sentiment. To his new critics, the film may seem deliriously irresponsible, madly muttering like a street raver. But to readers of myriad espionage novels and political science fictions in which the CIA or some other gentlemen's cabal is always the villain, the movie's thesis will be familiar high-level malevolence. *JFK* is *Ludlum* or *le Carré*, but for real. Or—crucial distinction—for reel. Memorize this mantra, conspiracy buffs and guardians of the public respectability: *JFK* is only a movie. And, on its own pugnacious terms—the only terms Oliver Stone would ever accept—a terrific one."

The View from on High

The film is a kaleidoscope of cascading, fast-changing images with everything jam packed so tight that nothing of substance has any meaning. You get one message: *There was a conspiracy*. It is a kind of *Hard Rock* impressionism—a product of our culture and era, and it demeans and degrades the message. But it is fair to report that other longtime researchers in the case such as Gary Shaw liked it, and felt that the film accomplished what we have not been able to do in twenty years of trying to revive interest in the Kennedy assassination. There was a run on libraries for books on the case, and many editions sold well in stores.

My partner, Mark Crouch, had a private interview with Oliver Stone in which Stone explained his motives. He wanted "to counter the Warren Commission myth with our own myth—to create an alter myth to give the kids of the new generation." He put it this way to *Time*: "I'm giving you a detailed outlaw history, or countermyth. A myth represents the true inner spiritual meaning of an event."⁴³

I find this language deeply disturbing, that Stone would call a conspiracy a myth. I suppose in a very distorted fashion whatever is presented in story form could be called a myth, true or not, but for us it is the truth, not a myth. (I am not speaking, of course, about anything having to do with the Shaw trial, but the outlines of the conspiracy itself, on a high level. How else could the autopsy evidence be faked?)

Sadly, the major networks and magazines repeated many of the falsifications of the evidence in the case.

For instance, several points were brought out on ABC's *Nightline* and other shows: That "atomic" testing proved that the "bullet" found in the car, or the "bullet" found in Connally's leg came from Oswald's rifle, 2) that the bullet fell out of Connally's leg and was found on his stretcher, 3) that there was scientific proof that the jet effect worked on human heads, which would go backward if hit from behind, 4) that *Nova* and certain tests proved that the trajectory of the "Magic" Bullet could have struck both men at the same time.

One bullet might have struck both men at the same time by some miracle considering how they were seated, but it certainly would not come out of Connally in almost pristine condition after striking his bones. The media ignored all the tests that prove that the official story could not have happened.

With regard to the Parkland bullet, the crew that found it made it clear that it was on the stretcher of a small boy and could not have been on Connally's—meaning it was planted there. In addition, the autopsy surgeon, Dr. Humes, testified that the bullet had to have come out of John Kennedy's back, and therefore could not have been the same bullet that struck Connally. Humes also made it clear to the Warren Commission that he knew that fragments had been found in Connally that prima facie demonstrated that they could not have come from the pristine, nearly undamaged "Magic" Bullet.

The so-called jet effect has been dealt with at length in Chapter 17. None of the so-called experiments conducted was with living human heads, nor were they attached to bodies. Films of executions show that a human head moves rapidly backward when struck with a bullet from

the front. In addition, the statements made by Forrest Sawyer on ABC-TV about the jet effect assumes an exit hole in the front, as he said that matter was expelled from such an exit hole. He assumes the front exit hole because that is where it appears in the Zapruder film. This is a far cry from the neuromuscular reaction we hear about more often causing the backward head snap. It's also a far cry from a large exit hole in the back, which would have caused, according to this distorted reasoning, the head to go backward. There wasn't any exit hole in the front that would have caused such a reaction.

Former President Gerald Ford defended his findings on the Warren Commission, albeit after carefully couching his language to make it clear that they "*did not find* [author's emphasis] evidence of conspiracy." Ford has always left the door open with that language, knowing that three of the other seven men on the commission never agreed with what the most conservative members of the commission wanted. Ford said, "that Stone nor anyone had produced another identical gunman, nor another gun, nor any new bullets. The Garrison approach is pure fiction. There was a neuromuscular reaction that made his head go backward when he was hit in the neck."⁴⁴

This shows how crazy, uncaring, inattentive, and incompetent Ford is. The so-called back-of-the-neck shot he speaks of was not the fatal head shot.

As for the so-called atomic testing, I dealt with this in *High Treason* when I discussed the neutron activation analysis tests.⁴⁵ Suffice it to say that the tests were never released by the Warren Commission because they did *not* prove that the fragments that were found were from the same lot of lead as that of the "Magic" Bullet found at Parkland. The fragments could only be shown to be similar. Millions of bullets might have been made from the same lot of lead, so it would be impossible to prove that they came from a particular weapon. The bullet found at Parkland was clearly a piece of frame-up evidence planted there so that it would connect to the alleged Oswald rifle when found. But the bullet did not actually go through a body or hit bone, or it would not look so perfect.

This is the gist of the counterattack launched on this film by the journalists, parroting the official line put out by David Belin, Arlen Specter, and Gerald Ford, the resident defenders of the Warren Report.

The End

It is worth ending this chapter with what Robert Spiegelman, a professor of mass communications and sociology, had to say. He was an advisor on the film, and says there is a lot more at stake than the fate of this film. "This outcry is a continuation of the assault on the 'L word,' the liberal values and tradition which Camelot and Kennedy—and these days Oliver Stone—symbolize. And it constitutes a very dangerous precedent. Films critical of the official version of history aren't abundant as it is. If Stone's work can be targeted, imagine the chilling effect it can have on others without his clout and financial backing."⁴⁶ Important and predictable words these, emanating from an L.A. junior college, except that they carry all the myopic vision of an academic who misses the point of the conflict. Stone certainly chilled the other films that were being made. Of course, it takes a lot of power, money, and ferocious drive and determination to make a big film, and people will even kill to protect their interests, and certainly sweep aside anyone who gets in their way or asks questions.

Some in this research say that whatever is necessary to keep the case alive, even if hoked up, they will do. I draw the line at falsification of anything, and I have spent years investigating the claims of other researchers whom I find have perpetrated a fraud. We make enough mistakes as it is. I hope that the Stone film will rekindle interest in the case, and possibly open it up again.

Stone could have cut all of the Garrison part in the movie and shown us the boardrooms of America—Brown & Root that built Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam, and Bell Helicopters—shown us what really happened after that murder, the mad borrowing of the Treasury to raise money for the war, the bodies coming back from Vietnam, the release of Carlos Marcello from charges the day Kennedy died, the Mob having a field day making money in rackets, the accelerated conglomeration of companies that has ruined much of the social and economic structure of this nation. Man, there was one hell of a movie there, even with a fictional character to hold it together, but he blew it. He took for his hero someone all the media of the United States were down on and tried to canonize him, tried to use him for his vehicle. That's like going to a junkyard, digging up a scrapped car from the bottom of the pile, and trying to fly with it.

The film has a line in it when the prosecution of Clay Shaw is in trouble and the police officer who booked Clay Shaw is not going to testify that Clay Shaw told him his alias was Clay Bertrand. "That's our case!" Garrison says in a panic. Stone admits here that Garrison had nothing but that to go against Shaw, not enough to indict someone in conspiracy to murder the President. Even Dean Andrews admitted that he made up the name and persona of Clem Bertrand.⁴⁷

The whole point of John Kennedy's assassination and that of other leaders in the sixties was to get rid of those knights on white horses. No more leaders of great honesty or charisma will be allowed to enter the political arena because it is against the wishes of those who actually govern and who have found a way, with gun in hand, to get around the idea of honest elections and true democracy. No more strong leaders, only weaklings who are front men for a committee that governs us behind the scenes. The power behind this does not want anyone whom the public can look to for real leadership, and in a way Stone's film serves this purpose. But he wrote *finis* to the case in 1969 as though nothing did in fact happen after that. He did not help us get out our new evidence, which he knew about. After many promises about what he was going to do with the new developments in the case, what we got was a presentation of conspiracy theory according to "Mr. X" as evidence. Theory is not evidence.

Scott Van Wynsberghe, a prominent Canadian assassination researcher, wrote me and said this: "I wonder if *JFK* the movie is beginning to divert too much energy away from *JFK* the assassination. It's now an issue on its own—which, sadly, is what became of the Garrison affair, and we know what damage that did to *JFK* research."⁴⁸

Sure enough, there was a powerful reaction to the film, and everybody and his brother came forward to step into the limelight and mislead the public. New York City was absorbed for a week by the statements of a Mob lawyer, Frank Ragano, who claimed that "Hoffa Had *JFK* Killed" and that Jimmy Hoffa, former head of the Teamsters union who disappeared, had Ragano tell Carlos Marcello and Santos Trifante (both major Mob bosses) to kill Kennedy.⁴⁹ Ragano, facing imprisonment on tax charges, must have figured to curry favor with the government and came out with his wholly unsubstantiated and misleading interpretation of the conspiracy that killed Kennedy. Not that I am trying to protect the Mob. They certainly were marginally involved.

All sorts of people came out of the woodwork to get into the act: G. Robert Blakey, former chief counsel of the House Assassinations Com-

mittee said that Ragano's story "is the most plausible, most coherent [assassination] theory."⁵⁰ The article goes on to say that the report of the Committee "concluded that Trafficante, Marcello, and Hoffa all had the motive, means, and opportunity" to kill Kennedy. We have heard this distortion and falsification of the findings of his own Committee over and over by Blakey since 1979, and it is tiresome. *JFK* the film has provided him one more opportunity to mislead the public.

That statement is being taken out of context by everyone who seeks to deflect attention from the fact that there was an entirely different conspiracy, and point at the Mob as the culprit. We are not being told what the conclusions were about possible Mob involvement. The Committee had this to say: "It may be strongly doubted, therefore, that Hoffa would have risked anything so dangerous as a plot against the President. . . ." It further states that he "was not a confirmed murderer" and was known to counsel against violent death as a solution to anything.⁵¹

After a massive investigation of organized crime, the committee, while noting that Marcello and Trafficante had the means, motive, and opportunity to assassinate the President, in fact discounted the possibility and stated clearly that "it is unlikely that Marcello was in fact involved in the assassination of the President,"⁵² noting that Marcello was successful because he was very prudent and not reckless. "He would be unlikely to undertake so dangerous a course of action as a Presidential assassination."⁵³ With regard to Marcello, the Committee concluded that "Trafficante's cautious character is inconsistent with his taking the risk of being involved in an assassination plot against the President. . . . It is unlikely that Trafficante plotted to kill the President."⁵⁴

No, the Mob did not have the means, motive, and opportunity to forge the autopsy evidence of the President.

In the fourth week of its release, ABC's *Primetime* launched another powerful attack on *JFK* with much sophistry.⁵⁵ Gerald Ford made an appearance. Ford said, as many others did, including Louis Stokes, the former chairman of the House Committee on Assassinations, and Senator Edward Kennedy, that all the secret records should be released. The former president claimed to know what was in them and that he had nothing to fear and that the records would add nothing whatsoever to our knowledge of the case.

* * *

People will go on believing there was a conspiracy, as the majority has done through most of these years, but they are being told by the media and by many prominent people that nothing will be done. There is no action that the public can be stirred to by this movie. There will be no street demonstrations or marches.

If the movie had been made honestly and not taken up the story of Jim Garrison, it might have caused the case to be reopened. But it seems to me that this film had the real intent of co-opting the major new evidence of forgery.

We have stupid and uncaring leaders. Our government is weak, led by puppets of a bankrupt and corrupt business and financial establishment. We cannot expect them to truly look at the evidence in this terrible murder, or to be honest. For the plain truth is that for the same reason that Oliver Stone lacked the integrity to make an honest movie, this country's leaders lack the integrity to conduct an honest investigation.

The King truly is dead.

25. Garrison, *Trail*, p. 251.
26. Jack R. Payton, *St. Petersburg Times*, December 26, 1991.
27. Garrison, *Trail*, p. 228.
28. Gary Rowell, *The Continuing Inquiry*, November 1981, and *The Third Decade*, January 1991.
29. Garrison, *Trail*, pp. 236-37.
30. State of Louisiana v. Clay Shaw.
31. I am indebted to Mark Crouch for this imagery, though he was referring to certain prominent researchers.
32. James and Wardlaw, p. 40.
33. Lardner, *Washington Post*, June 2, 1991.
34. James and Wardlaw, p. 41.
35. James and Wardlaw, p. 46.
36. James and Wardlaw, p. 47.
37. James and Wardlaw, p. 47.
38. James and Wardlaw, p. 47.
39. Jones, *Forgive My Grief III*, p. 38, 41, 43, 45.
40. James and Wardlaw, p. 49.
41. Interview on WDSU-TV, February 24, 1967; Orleans, Weisberg, *Oswald*, p. 237; James Phelan, *Scandals, Scamps, and Scoundrels*, p. 152; Kirkwood, p. 144; *Counterplot*, Epstein, p. 48.
42. Weisberg, *Oswald*, p. 237; Phelan, p. 152; *American*, Kirkwood, p. 144; Epstein, p. 48. James and Wardlaw, see also Van Wynesberghe, *The Third Decade*, May 1988, p. 4.
43. Phelan, pp. 152-53; Kirkwood, pp. 144-45, 205; G. Robert Blakey and Richard N. Billings, *The Plot to Kill the President* (New York: Times Books, 1981), p. 50; Van Wynesberghe, *The Third Decade*, May 1988, p. 5.
44. Jack R. Payton, *St. Petersburg Times*, December 26, 1991.
45. Groden and Livingstone, Chapter 7.
46. Weisberg, *Oswald*, p. 237; Phelan, p. 152; Kirkwood, p. 144; Epstein, p. 48; Van Wynesberghe, *The Third Decade*, May 1988, p. 4.
47. James and Wardlaw, p. 81.
48. Van Wynesberghe, *The Third Decade*, May 1988, p. 5; Kirkwood, pp. 353-59.
49. Garrison, *Trail*, p. 234; *True*, April 1975, Victor Marchetti, p. 324, *On the Trail of the Assassins*, note 234.
50. Bird, "Clay Shaw Is Dead at 60"; Phelan, p. 174; Bernard Fensterwald, p. 454.
51. Clinton witnesses; *Report*, HSCA, 142-43, 145; 4 HSCA 482, 484; 10 HSCA 4, 114, 132, 203; Fensterwald, pp. 298-99.
52. Van Wynesberghe, *The Third Decade*, May 1988, pp. 12-13. Sources for the first, second, and third statements are as follows: Mark Lane, *Rush to Judgment* (New York: Dell, 1975), p. xxvii; Fensterwald, pp. 298-99, Clinton witnesses: *Report*, HSCA, 142-43, 145; 4 HSCA 482, 484; 10 HSCA 4, 114, 132, 203; Kirkwood, pp. 314-15, 370-72, 407.
53. Letter to the author, December 12, 1991.

Chapter 26

1. Editorial, *Chicago Tribune*, December 26, 1991.
2. Letter of Harold Weisberg to Oliver Stone on February 8, 1991.
3. Letter to the author, December 12, 1991.
4. *Washington Post*, May 19, 1991, D1.
5. *Washington Post*, June 2, 1991, p. D3, last paragraph.
6. *Dallas Morning News*, April 14, 1991.
7. *Times-Picayune*, June 9, 1991.
8. *Chicago Tribune*, May 13, 1991.
9. *Washington Post*, May 19, 1991.
10. *Hollywood Reporter*, August 15, 1991.
11. *Hollywood Reporter*, August 15, 1991.
12. Jay Carr, film critic at the *Boston Globe*, writing in *Hollywood Reporter*, August 15, 1991.
13. Carr, August 15, 1991.
14. *Times-Picayune*, June 9, 1991.
15. *New York Times* quoting *Times-Picayune*, June 12, 1991.

16. *Los Angeles Times*, June 24, 1991.
17. *Washington Post*, June 2, 1991.
18. *Chicago Tribune*, May 13, 1991.
19. *Chicago Tribune*, May 13, 1991.
20. *Hollywood Reporter*, August 15, 1991.
21. *Nightline*, December 20, 1991.
22. *Nightline*, December 20, 1991.
23. *Nightline*, December 20, 1991.
24. Rosemary James & Jack Wardlaw, Pelican Press, 1967 p. 149.
25. *Nightline*, December 20, 1991.
26. Letter to the author, December 19, 1991.
27. *Time*, Hays Gorey and Martha Smilgis, June 10, 1991.
28. *Nightline*, December 20, 1991.
29. *Life*, December 1991.
30. *Texas Monthly*, December 1991, p. 166.
31. *Texas Monthly*, p. 166.
32. *Texas Monthly*, p. 164.
33. *Hollywood Reporter*, December 16, 1991; and letter of Rosemary James to the *Times Picayune*.
34. *Hollywood Reporter*, December 16, 1991.
35. *Washington Post*, December 20, 1991.
36. Both *Newsweek* and *Time* articles are dated December 23, 1991.
37. George F. Will in *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 27, 1991; *Washington Post*.
38. *New York Times*, December 20, 1991.
39. Desson Howe in *Baltimore Sun*, December 20, 1991.
40. *Washington Post*, December 20, 1991.
41. *Baltimore Sun*, December 20, 1991.
42. *Time*, December 23, 1991.
43. *Time*, December 23, 1991.
44. *Nightline*, December 20, 1991.
45. Livingstone, pp. 60, 62, 64-65, 200-201, 331.
46. Elaine Dutka in *Los Angeles Times*, June 24, 1991.
47. *Times-Picayune* December 15, 1991.
48. Scott Van Wynesberghe, letter to the author, December 31, 1991.
49. *New York Post*, January 14-15, 1992, p. 00.
50. *New York Post*, January 15, 1992, p. 7.
51. Report, HSCA 178. See also 174-79 with regard to a known discussion Hoffa had about an assassination attempt.
52. Report, HSCA 172.
53. Report, HSCA 172.
54. Report, HSCA 175.
55. *Prime Time*, January 16, 1992.

Chapter 27

1. Delaney, *Lancaster Intelligencer-Journal*, March 10, 1978.
2. 2 H 360.
3. 2 H 141.
4. 7 HSCA 13.
5. Interview of May 26, 1991.
6. Interview of May 26, 1991.
7. Interview of September 21, 1991.
8. *Maryland State Medical Journal*, March 1977, p. 74.
9. 7 HSCA 249.
10. Interview of September 23, 1991.
11. 2 H 351-2.
12. 2 H 140.
13. 7 HSCA 11.
14. Interview of May 20, 1991.