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3/3/92

What Are They Afraid Of?

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An Inside Look at the Media Smear Campaign Against JFK

"JFK !Are you serious?"

My colleague wrinkled his nose as if he'd just gotten a whiff of the Fulton Fish Market on a ripe summer day. Obviously, I had said the wrong thing. I had dared to suggest in an editorial meeting at a national magazine that I thought Oliver Stone was onto something. *Which?*

"Oliver Stone gives us liberals a bad name!" my fellow editor fumed.

At that moment, my boss -- who is both publisher and editor-in-chief -- intervened, quickly changing the subject. JFK was already a touchy enough issue around our office. For days, I'd been pleading with my boss to let me plug Stone's movie in my column.

"From what I know about that movie," he warned me, "it's not going to enhance your credibility to write about it."

All I wanted was a few harmless little lines at the very end of my column. The column was about the "perennial conspiracy of the mediocre against the best and brightest."

"I suggest you go see the movie JFK," said the offending paragraph. "The film makes a compelling case that our most beloved President of recent times was felled by a cabal of faceless mediocrities. To this day, no one approaching Kennedy's eloquence or dynamism has replaced him. Think about it."

And that was all!

Buried on the last page of an obscure business magazine whose readers thought "politics" meant bitching about capital gains taxes, this innocuous little passage hardly comprised a threat to the New World Order. But in the supercharged media pressure cooker of January 1992, it was apparently too hot to handle. My boss replaced it with a quote from Emerson.

I was luckier than others. Pat Dowell, movie critic for Washingtonian magazine, ended up resigning when editor Jack Limpert killed her favorable review of JFK. "My job is to protect the magazine's reputation," he declared.

"(Limpert) identifies with the Washington elite," Dowell explained to the New York Post, in what is perhaps one of the understatements of the century. *really?*

No! No! Not the JFK Assassination!

Let me assure you that I am not now, nor have I ever been an assassination buff. I also have no idea what I was doing the day President Kennedy was shot. It certainly couldn't have been anything important. After all, I was only four years old.

TOO CURE

But I remember with dreadful clarity the moment when Oliver Stone's JFK invaded my life.

LOOP.

I was standing innocently on the subway platform at Grand Central Station. It began with a flash of color at the corner of my eye. Why did I have to turn my head to look? By the time that black convertible limousine and pink pillbox hat on the movie poster had swung into focus, it was already too late.

VIVID BUT DISGUSTFUL.

I went as rigid as an epileptic on the verge of a grand mal seizure. It was the dreaded "JFK Assassination Response," a massive neuromuscular reflex programmed into every American through years of contradictory tabloid exposés, sensational books, endless drunken arguments in bars and sordid TV documentaries. Its primary symptom is an iron curtain of boredom and confusion that slams shut over the brain, arresting every thought.

For a moment, I almost lost my balance as a sickening blur of pristine bullets, grassy knolls, striptease girls who know too much and obscure Mafiosi whirled in diabolical procession through my mind. I felt myself sinking, sinking into a deep narcosis, a tiny voice inside me crying, "I don't care, I don't care, I don't care..."

I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE YOU HAD SUCH A STRONG REACTION - ESPECIALLY TO SOMETHING YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT.

Then, as quickly as it had begun, the attack was over. My subway rolled into the station. Fully recovered now, I clutched my briefcase tightly to my chest, scoping out the car for potential thieves. To my relief, Dallas 1963 seemed to recede into the distance. My thoughts returned to important things.

"How in hell," I wondered, "are we going to get those damn Japanese to buy more Pontiacs?"

"Obscene, Indecent, Unethical"

But it's shot for nothing they dubbed JFK "the story that wouldn't go away." For the next few weeks, I couldn't escape it. Every magazine and newspaper warned me about Oliver Stone. He was "distorting history." His movie contained "lies." He hated America. His evil, "paranoid fantasies" were akin to McCarthyism. There was nothing "too obscene, too indecent, too unethical" to which Stone would not stoop in order to "exploit" the tragedy of JFK's murder.

WHOSE QUOTE? THIS IS STRONG STUFF.

"My God," said my wife Marie one night, after finishing the eight-page JFK

story which Newsweek's editors had placed on the cover instead of Gorbachev's resignation. Headlined "The Twisted Truth of 'JFK' --Why Oliver Stone's New Movie Can't Be Trusted," the story stopped just short of saying "Don't watch this movie or we'll come to your house and shoot you!"

"And it's not even released yet!" said Marie. "Richard, what's going on?"
We decided to find out. Opening night found us at Loew's Theater in the East Village, where we sat riveted for what seemed like 20 minutes, but was really three hours. Long after the lights came on, we and everyone else in that packed theater sat stunned in our seats, contemplating a world that would never be the same again.

A BIT STRONG. ASMAN'S REVIEW WAS POSITIVE AND IT DID OFFER SOME REASONS CONSPIRACY DATA W/ A "LET'S SEE" ATTITUDE.

"It's great!" we veterans shouted to the JFK virgins lined up on the sidewalk outside. "Unbelievable!"

I hadn't seen such instant rapport between Manhattanites since those innocent days last year when we used to collar perfect strangers on the subways to trade kill figures on Iraqi tanks.

Something important was happening to America that night. You could feel it. We were all in it together.

All of us, that is, except... you know who.

The attacks on JFK only intensified as its box office soared. Each day, the media vomited forth some fresh slander against Stone and his disgusting, treasonous excuse for a movie.

"Maybe I'm not intelligent enough to figure this out," remarked Oprah Winfrey when she interviewed Stone. "I'm really trying to understand why people are so upset."

Poor, brave, innocent Oprah. She just didn't get it. Or if she did, she was too slick to let on.

Propaganda Assets

Let me tell you a story.

Back in 1964, David Wise and Thomas B. Ross wrote an expose of the CIA called The Invisible Government. The CIA was very, very unhappy. So it made a plan. The plan was to use its agents and contacts in the news media -- "propaganda assets," as such people are called in the spy business -- to generate unfavorable reviews which would "lessen the book's impact and... cast doubt on the validity of its claims," as one declassified document put it.

According to The American Police State by David Wise, William F. Buckley Jr. dutifully attacked the book in his newspaper column, writing that its authors verged "close to unpatriotism." Although his readers didn't know it, the

HAS THIS MEMO BEEN RELEASED?
CAN YOU QUOTE FROM IT?

conservative editor penned this column in response to a secret memorandum slipped to him by the CIA. A former CIA operative himself, Buckley had served in the agency's Mexico City station after graduating from Yale in 1950.

Despite all the scheming and plotting, the book went on to become America's number one bestseller.

No one really knows how many "assets" the CIA has in the news media. In 1976, the agency admitted to a Senate investigating committee that it had about 50 agents posing as U.S. journalists or other employees of news organizations. Sharply criticized for this practice, the CIA announced that it would no longer use accredited journalists as agents.

Nevertheless, Carl Bernstein reported in 1977 -- the very next year -- that CIA officials admitted to having as many as four hundred working journalists on the agency's payroll, among them reporters for Time and The Washington Post.

"The agency's penetration of the news media," writes Wise, "...ran counter to the First Amendment... The CIA had polluted the public's major source of information about its government, the foundation upon which democracy rests."

So what does all this have to do with the media smear of JFK?

Consider CIA document #1035-970, dated April 1, 1967. Circulated to CIA stations around the country, along with copies of a particularly rancorous New Yorker article lambasting Jim Garrison, the memo instructed agents on how best to counter critics of the Warren Commission -- like Garrison.

"Discuss the publicity problem with... friendly elite contacts," it says, "especially... editors... Employ propaganda assets to answer and refute the attacks of the critics... reviews and feature articles are particularly appropriate for this purpose."

Get the picture?

Now, of course, that was over 20 years ago. We have no way of proving that the CIA is still using its "propaganda assets" to attack critics of the Warren Commission.

But, let's say, hypothetically, that they are. Let's say that a handful of renowned and knowledgeable journalists on major newspapers, magazines and network news teams all came out at the same time accusing Oliver Stone of a rash of dastardly offenses. How many reporters are going to have time to doublecheck their facts? How many editors are going to stick out their necks by disagreeing with the pundits?

My editor didn't. Like all good journalists, he knew from watching the major news organizations which views on JFK were considered "responsible" and which were not. He's certainly no CIA agent. He's a great guy and all. But, like most of us, he doesn't have time to become an instant assassination buff, so he has to trust

IS THIS
OVERSEAS
COVER OR
REAL
NEWSMEN
ON PAYROLL?

I KNOW
WHO HE IS,
BUT YOU
SHOULD
IDENTIFY HIM.

GOOD POINT!
WHY PLANET
STORIES WHEN
YOU CAN
POINT THE
FUCK IN ONE
DIRECTION?

that the "facts" presented by big-name journalists are reliable. But are they?

Ten Big Lies

For a clue, I analyzed the last four months' worth of media hatchet jobs, searching for a tell-tale pattern. I discovered that ten basic lies form the backbone of virtually every "JFK" smear.

DISTINGUISH BETWEEN JFK AND "JFK!"

Lie #1 -- ~~Stone deliberately confuses fact with fiction through clever editing.~~

Critics accuse Stone of using visual "tricks" to blur the line between fact and fiction.

As an example, Steve Daly in Entertainment Weekly (January 17, 1992) points to the scene in which an assistant shows evidence to hero Jim Garrison that the famous LIFE magazine photo of Lee Harvey Oswald with the murder rifle is actually a forgery. Mind you, the evidence she gives is real. According to experts, the photo probably was forged.

But the critics cry "Foul!" Why? Because while the assistant talks, we see an imaginary X-Acto blade actually performing the forgery.

"We're predisposed to believe this charge, as we've seen it with our own eyes," Daly complains.

According to Daly, JFK doesn't so much persuade us as brainwash us. "The movie is an intricately stacked deck," he writes, "a barrage of visual and aural cues geared not to help viewers reach their own conclusions... but to affect their hearts and minds on a visceral, almost subconscious level."

Like all great art, JFK certainly does "affect the heart." But to suggest that its persuasiveness results from trickery is a lie.

"...It does treat matters that are wholly speculative as fact and truth, in effect, rewriting history," avers Tom Wicker in The New York Times, December 15, 1991.

Which particular "matters," Mr. Wicker? Every time Stone dramatizes a speculative scene, the plot, the dialogue, the development of evidence and the visual context scream out loud every which way from Sunday that you're seeing a hypothetical reenactment.

Granted, it does take a certain rudimentary intelligence to follow Stone's reasoning and weigh conflicting evidence. Anyone lacking these skills will certainly be confused by JFK. They will also find Agatha Christie novels and reruns of Columbo utterly impenetrable.

What really seems to irk these critics is the power and clarity with which Stone presents his facts. Why this should bother them is a question only they can answer.

GOOD PT. MAKE IT CLEARER. "WHY IS STONE'S USE OF STORIES IMAGINE A CRIME? SHOULD HE HAVE AIMED TO CONFUSE?"

Lie #2 -- Stone fabricates evidence.

The accusation that Stone falsifies evidence in JFK has been echoed ad nauseum by the national media.

"In his three-hour lie," writes George Will in Newsweek (December 26, 1991), "Stone falsifies so much he may be an intellectual sociopath, indifferent to truth."

Critic Michael Medved feels the movie is so deceitful that "I'm not sure people should see it unless they're prepared to do the research they need to correct the misimpressions." (Sneak Previews, tk network, tk date)

But Medved is bluffing. The tiny number of Americans who can actually make time to do this research will quickly discover that every shred of relevant testimony, every eyewitness account, even every speculation in the movie is drawn not from Stone's imagination, but from independent investigations and well-documented books, especially Crossfire: The Plot that Killed Kennedy by Jim Marrs. *ALSO. GARRISON'S BOOK.*

I AGREE.

KEY POINT.

To announce so confidently on national TV that Stone's theories are wrong is to claim that you know the truth. Obviously, this is not an honest statement. No one in this country -- at least no innocent person -- knows the whole truth. But Stone has drawn all his ideas from those researchers who've studied it longest and who understand it most clearly.

I AGREE, BUT SOME STILL BELIEVE THE WARNER REPORT IS "THE TRUTH" YOU'D BE ON FIRMER GROUND IF YOU SAID THIS "TRUTH" IS NOT BELIEVED BY 73% OF AMERICANS AND HAS BEEN IN DISPUTE SINCE DAY ONE.

It remains an open question where the George Will and the Michael Medved derive the inside information they claim to have on the subject.

It is true that because JFK is a movie, not a heavily-footnoted 625-page book like Crossfire, Stone sometimes uses dramatic devices like composite characters and fictional dialogue to convey his evidence. An example is the controversial Mr. X scene, during which Garrison meets a mysterious intelligence officer in Washington D.C. who confirms all his worst suspicions of a government plot. This is one of the most pivotal scenes in the movie, containing some of the most damaging evidence. No wonder the media has savaged it like a pack of hyenas.

"Garrison never went to Washington," accused Dan Rather on "48 Hours" (February 5, 1992). "He never spoke to Mr. X."

I USE "MEDIA" AS THE PLURAL OF "MEDIUM."

While true, Rather's accusation was shockingly beside the point. Rather goes far out of his way to bore us with his amateur movie critique, to perplex us with his obsessive need to prove Stone wrong. But he fails utterly to inform us -- his very job as a newsman. Rather is silent as the Sphinx on the subject of Col. L. Fletcher

FAMILIAR METAPHOR.

YOU SOUND PISSED AT RATHER HERE. YOUR STORY IS STRONG ENOUGH TO WORK W/O YOU BLOWING YOUR STACK.

Prouty -- the real-life Mr. X.

A retired Air Force colonel who served as liaison between the Pentagon and the C.I.A. at the time of the Kennedy assassination, Prouty's inside intelligence connections, his long career in covert operations and his experience in presidential security lend weight to his firm belief that America suffered a coup d'etat in 1963.

In the movie, Mr. X tells of buying a newspaper in New Zealand on the day of the assassination. Printed only two hours after the assassination, the paper contained a complete lifestory of Lee Harvey Oswald, including a picture. The time difference between Dallas and New Zealand told Mr. X that this packaged Oswald story must have been ready to go out before the shots were even fired -- compelling evidence of a high-level conspiracy.

I WONDER HOW
WILL KNOWS
THIS TO BE
A "FABRICATION"?

Writing in Newsweek, George Will calls Mr. X's newspaper story one of his "favorite Stone fabrications."

But the story is true. In an interview with the right-wing Washington newsweekly The Spotlight (February 10, 1992), Prouty says that he saved that issue of the Christ Church Star and gave it to Oliver Stone. The paper we see on screen is an exact duplicate.

BE CAREFUL!
FOR BETTER OR
WORSE, "SPOTLIGHT"
IS CONSIDERED A
FRONT PUBLICATION.
YOU MIGHT WANT TO
CALL PROUTY TO
CONFIRM OR
JUST SAY "IN
A PUBLISHED
INTERVIEW."
THIS SOURCE,
FAIRLY OR NOT,
NOT, COULD
WEAKEN YOUR
PLETE.

Because Prouty never actually met Garrison in real life, Stone had to create a fictional meeting between them, or else leave Prouty and his important testimony out of the movie altogether.

It seems that's the only thing that would really have satisfied the pundits.

Lie #3 -- Stone's paranoid theories defy common sense.

"(Stone's is) one of the most dubious of all the dubious conspiracy theories," writes Edward Klein in Vanity Fair (January 1992)

"...if 'J.F.K.' and its wild assertions are to be taken at face value," says Tom Wicker (The New York Times, Dec. 15, 1991), "Americans will have to accept the idea that most of the nation's major institutions, private as well as governmental, along with one of its Presidents, conspired together and carried out Kennedy's murder..."

So what? Those commentators who suggest that the magnitude of Stone's conspiracy makes it ridiculous display an ignorance of history. Conspiracies far more trivial have woven equally complex webs of complicity, coverup and corruption in high places -- such as the nationwide criminal conspiracy of mobsters, corrupt lawmen, and politicians who thwarted Prohibition during the '20s.

The Nazi Holocaust -- a continent-wide military-industrial project affecting

millions --was so scrupulously covered up by people on every level of German society, that had Hitler won the war, no historian would remember it today. Anyone who made a movie on the subject would be called a lunatic.

SOME EVEN CLAIM TODAY THAT IT DID NOT OCCUR.

If Stone's conspiracy theory is really lunacy, then we're experiencing a nationwide epidemic of insanity. Five current bestsellers, two more books reported in the works, the original Garrison investigation, the House Select Committee on Assassinations and the upcoming movie "Ruby" all tell essentially the same story. They all say that the CIA, anti-Castro Cubans, and the Mob worked together on the coverup, if not the assassination itself.

If it's crazy to imagine such an alliance --and the pundits all assure us that it is-- then the Bay of Pigs invasion must have been a psychotic delusion. Not only did this very same Mob/anti-Castro/National Security axis conspire to overthrow Castro, but the partnership proved so cohesive that it resurfaced intact to haunt this nation during the Watergate break-in and coverup.

GREAT! YOU LIVE!

OK. I AGREE W/ YOU BUT SOME WILL SAY "BAY OF PIGS & WATERGATE ERUPTED INTO VIEW WHY NOT THIS PLOT?!"

Jim Garrison posited this same tripartite alliance 25 years ago. Amazingly, the intervening years have only added credibility to his theory.

Lie #4 -- The real Jim Garrison was a fraud.

If there's one thing every journalist seems to agree on, it's that Jim Garrison was an incompetent, unethical buffoon, with zero credibility.

"Garrison's investigation was a fraud." (The Washington Post, May 19, 1991)

Garrison ran roughshod over fairness and common sense," (Newsweek, December 23, 1991)

"...Mr. Garrison and his aides threatened and bribed witnesses, who then lied in court..." (The New York Times, December 15, 1991)

"(Garrison was associated) with organized crime, whose soldiers and capos he rarely prosecuted..." (Esquire, November 1991)

"Garrison was a pernicious figure, an abuser of government power and the public trust..." (GQ, January 1992)

"...Garrison was a roguish con artist..." (Village Voice, December 31, 1991)

"...Jim Garrison... staged an assassination 'investigation' that involved recklessness, cruelty, abuse of power, publicity-mongering and dishonesty, all on a scale that strongly suggested lunacy..." (Newsweek, December 26, 1991)

"Of all the numerous conspiracy theorists... Mr. Garrison may be the most thoroughly discredited." (The New York Times, December 15, 1991)

Geraldo Rivera delivered the coup de grace in his less-than-penetrating study of Garrison, aired on "Now It Can Be Told", (date tk). Rivera sought to unmask the "real" Jim Garrison by interviewing Steve Tyler, a documentarian who'd spoken with Garrison a year before.

DID NEWSWEEK RUN TWO ISSUES THAT WEEK?

WHAT'S TK?

I'D PICK 3 OF THESE QUOTES. (2 'VE CIRCLED THOSE I LIKE).

Rivera: "Do you think he's a nut?"

Tyler: "Certainly those of us in New Orleans who grew up watching Garrison seem to think that that might apply to Jim Garrison..."

Case closed.

Rivera fails to explain why the people of New Orleans reelected Jim Garrison even after the Clay Shaw trial had failed, and despite the fact that the local and national media were screaming for Garrison's resignation. Garrison was the first district attorney ever to be reelected in that city's history.

-ALICE or TWICE?

The media fails to explain why, before the JFK investigation, Garrison was known as a Mr. Clean reformer, who won national publicity by shutting down New Orleans' infamous cathouses. Until ill health forced his retirement last year, Garrison served as an elected state judge in Louisiana.

GOOD,

AGE?

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

Was Garrison a sleeper? Did he simply pretend to be an outstanding lawman for years, only revealing his true colors when the JFK case came along?

The L.A. Free Press quotes former CIA director Allen Dulles as having remarked at a meeting of the Warren Commission: "Don't believe people read in this country. There will be a few professors that will read the record... the public will read very little."

Maybe that's why so many are accepting the Jim Garrison-as-villain story so uncritically. Because if you read Garrison's side of the story, lucidly presented in his bestselling book, On the Trail of the Assassins, you can't help but ask a few questions.

In his book, Garrison describes how reporters who should have known better spread the rumor that he was brainwashing witnesses with drugs and hypnosis, when they knew very well that his use of ~~Sodium~~ Pentothal ("truth serum") and hypnosis was an approved, legal alternative to a polygraph test, which Garrison administered under expert medical supervision to verify the testimony of one witness.

I THINK IT'S "PENTATHOL."

Garrison also alleges that an NBC news team led by one Walter Sheridan deliberately obstructed his investigation, pressuring an important witness in the JFK trial to flee the state without testifying. Sheridan allegedly promised the witness a job, a lawyer and guaranteed protection from extradition -- very curious behavior for an "objective" newsman.

Garrison goes on to describe how, in 1967, this same Sheridan presented witnesses on national TV to prove Garrison's misconduct. These same witnesses later "took the Fifth" or were found guilty of perjury when ordered to repeat their charges before a New Orleans Grand Jury.

Garrison then explains how rumors of his alleged mob connections were trumped up out of thin air, then echoed by the media. Garrison describes in

→ ALL THIS IS GREAT BECAUSE IT COMPLEMENTS MY DISCUSSION OF MARRS. BETWEEN US WE HAVE STONE'S SOURCES FULLY COVERED.

PENTATHOL

I'm on your side, but is Garrison the best witness to his innocence? You should quote others so it's not "Garrison letting himself out of jail."

minute detail how the government's attempt to frame him on charges of taking bribes from pinball gamblers collapsed in court. The government's star witness admitted that he had been forced to lie and a taped conversation of Garrison taking bribes was proved in court to be a clumsy forgery.

Perhaps most telling of all is a disturbing investigative report which CBS's Inside Edition broadcast on February 5, 1992. Inside Edition somehow got a look at sealed documents from the House Select Committee on Assassinations which indicated that the CIA had planted nine agents inside the Garrison investigation "to feed him false information and report back to Langley about what he was finding out."

FASCINATING! WAS THIS REPORTED ELSEWHERE? ARE THESE PAPERS AVAILABLE?

I THINK THIS IS SYNDICATED BUT ON CBS' NYC AFFILIATE.

This revelation certainly ought to cast allegations about Garrison's supposed bad judgment calls and "paranoid" suspicions of government sabotage in a new light. But the broadcast was widely ignored by other media.

DID YOU TAKE THIS? I'D LOVE TO SEE IT.

None of this proves that Garrison is innocent of all charges. But it challenges any fairminded man or woman to stop parroting these charges like an idiot and give the man a fair hearing.

GOOD POINT, BUT YOU'RE OVERHEATING A BIT.

Lie #5 -- Robert Kennedy believed the Warren Commission.

If there was the slightest hint of a conspiracy, Robert Kennedy would have pursued it to his last breath, say the pundits. The fact that he accepted the Lone Assassin theory "proves" that the Warren Commission was sound.

"Robert Kennedy wanted to know who killed his brother," writes David W. Belin in The Wall St. Journal (January 16, 1992). "Surely Robert Kennedy would have wanted every gunman brought to justice. But that common-sense conclusion is never raised in 'JFK'..."

"Why would one believe," asked Dan Rather rhetorically on 48 Hours, "that Robert Kennedy would ever allow such a conspiracy not to be exposed?"

Answer: He didn't.

In Crossfire, Jim Marrs reports that on June 3, 1968, Robert Kennedy confided to close friends: "I now fully realize that only the powers of the presidency will reveal the secrets of my brother's death."

In other words, he would never have the clout to find out the truth until he himself became president. We may infer from this statement that RFK had already run into obstructions in his own quest for the truth. Since RFK was running for president when he said this, it is not unlikely that he intended to pursue the matter from the White House. We'll never know, because RFK was

"NOT UNLIKELY" SOUNDS LIKE A HEAVE HEAVE.

stain two days later. Good.

(ADDS TO SENSE OF OVERLAPPING MESSAGES).

Arthur Schlesinger Jr. -- a special assistant to President Kennedy, as well as a close friend and biographer of both Robert and Jack Kennedy -- wrote in The Wall

St. Journal (January 10, 1992) that RFK "had his doubts" about the Warren Commission findings.

"He regarded it as a poor job but was unwilling to criticize it and thereby reopen the whole tragic business."

Schlesinger also wrote that, "RFK told me that he thought Garrison might be onto something. NBC, he said, was sending Walter Sheridan, a trusted investigator who had worked with him on the Jimmy Hoffa case, to New Orleans to find out what Mr. Garrison had."

Some weeks later, Robert Kennedy told Schlesinger that "Sheridan is satisfied that Garrison is a fraud."

This is the same Walter Sheridan whom Garrison has accused of deliberately obstructing his investigation, as well as bribing and threatening witnesses, a man Garrison says was a former intelligence agent with "unusually high connections" in Washington. If Sheridan's opinion was RFK's principle reason for losing interest in Garrison, then much depends on whom we decide to believe: -Garrison or Sheridan?

YOU MIGHT MENTION THAT SHERIDAN WAS FIRED BY NBC AND NEVER WORKED AGAIN AS A JOURNALIST (IF THIS IS TRUE)

Lie #6 -- Kennedy was a Cold Warrior, not a Peacenik.

Since Kennedy's plan to end the Cold War and pull out of Vietnam forms the motivation for his murder in "JFK", many journalists have bent over backwards to cast doubt on this historical fact.

"(Stone) distorts John Kennedy and he distorts the historical record, making John Kennedy into a peacenik who's about to withdraw us from Vietnam when the testimony of Robert Kennedy and of all of Kennedy's advisors who stayed and made the war is quite different from what Oliver Stone claims to know."

(Michael Medved, Sneak Previews, tk date)

"Much of America's establishment conspired to kill Kennedy because he loved peace and they wanted war. Strange that a society so sick allowed such a saint to be president at all, but this is cartoon history by Stone, who is 45 going on 8."

(George Will, Newsweek, December 26, 1991)

"Stone argues that Kennedy was so progressive, so 'soft on communism' (and on Castro)... that the right-wing establishment was driven to kill him. But this is a romantic, perhaps fantasy, J.F.K.; he can as easily be seen as a cold warrior..." (Time, December 23, 1991)

"...I know of no reputable historian who has documented Mr. Kennedy's intentions (in Vietnam)." (Tom Wicker, The New York Times, December 15, 1991)

But the documentation is voluminous. "Reputable historian" Arthur

CUTE: "SCRAMBLED" WOULD DO, TOO. (SO WOULD "SCRAMBLING")

A LITTLE BIT BESIDE THE POINT.

THESE QUOTES MAKE IT LOOK LIKE YOU DON'T BELIEVE SCHLESINGER. I THINK HE'S A PULITZER WINNER. MENTION THAT.

Schlesinger is one of the strongest defenders of this view. He wrote in The Wall St. Journal (January 10, 1992) that "Oliver Stone's premise ... is far from unreasonable."

According to Schlesinger, Kennedy was indeed moving toward "the liquidation of the Cold War," and "he regarded (the test-ban treaty) as only a first step."

Schlesinger also reveals that JFK "authorized United Nations Ambassador William Attwood to explore the possible restoration of relations with Castro's Cuba."

"...Stone could have strengthened his case by mentioning it," he adds helpfully.

According to Schlesinger, Kennedy ordered Defense Secretary Robert McNamara in 1962 to start planning a phased withdrawal of American advisors from Vietnam. But, he couldn't effect a total withdrawal "until after the 1964 election. Otherwise, he feared, the Republicans might beat him ... over the 'loss' of Indochina..."

Time magazine (December 23, 1991) says, "Kennedy confided to certain antiwar Senators that he planned to withdraw from Vietnam if re-elected; but publicly he proclaimed his opposition to withdrawal."

Not for long, though. On October 31, 1963 -- just 22 days before his death -- Kennedy announced to the nation that, "Our object is to bring home every American technician, helicopter pilot, and military adviser by the end of 1965, permitting the South Vietnamese to maintain themselves as a free and independent country," as reported in William Manchester's One Brief Shining Moment.

Two weeks later, Kennedy announced that the first 1,000 men were coming home.

~~A few~~ ^{TWO (SEE MARCH P. 208)} days after the assassination, President Johnson issued National Security Memorandum 273, "reversing the Kennedy withdrawal policy," in Schlesinger's words.

The real lie that's being told here is that a politician in 1963 had only two choices -- to be "soft on Communism" or to be an anti-Communist hawk. In fact, Kennedy's greatness lay in the fact that he was neither. He held the line heroically against a real Communist threat in Berlin and in Cuba. But he had the wisdom to see when it was time for conciliation.

Lie #7 -- The Lone Assassin theory is still the strongest.

While a few brave souls in the media have ventured to suggest that Castro or the Mob might have killed Kennedy (the CIA is apparently out of bounds), the

THIS SHOULD BE 1 OR 2 PAGES, NOT FIVE. YOU SHOULD MAKE SOME OF THIS LONGER OR THIS WILL READ LIKE A FUNDRAISING LETTER.

WAS THIS A SPEECH OR A PRIVATE CONVERSATION? IF A SPEECH, SAY WHERE. THIS IS A DYNAMITE QUOTE.

BUT THAT WAS NOT TO BE.

A GOOD PT., BUT I WONDER IF YOU'RE LIONIZING HIM JUST A BIT HERE.

ANOTHER DASH OF IMAGINATION!

vast majority of journalists have stuck stubbornly to the Lone Assassin theory. So have President Bush and ^{SEW.} Ted Kennedy (who called it "the most responsible" theory --whatever that means).

"These 28 years... have not buried all the doubts... But we do know a lot and there is much to support the Warren Commission's findings." (Dan Rather, 48 Hours, February 5, 1992)

"The overwhelming [?] weight of the evidence points to Lee Harvey Oswald as the lone gunman." (New York, February 17, 1992)

"When will the responsible leaders of the free press, who owe so much to Earl Warren, stand up for the truth... and fully defend Earl Warren's name from the slanderous charges that have been made against him and the Warren Commission?" (David W. Belin, New York, February 17, 1992)

ARE THESE BOTH BELIN QUOTES? YOU SHOULD SAY SO.

ON OSWALD'S FACE RIGHT GREEN

To point out the many holes in the Warren Commission findings (including bullets collected at Dealey Plaza disappearing from evidence, an overwhelming preponderance of eyewitnesses who saw shots coming from the grassy knoll, a nitrate test which showed ~~Oswald~~ ^{HE} had not fired a rifle that day, the fact that every doctor who examined Kennedy in Dallas saw a gaping exit wound on the back of his head, strong indications that much of the best evidence against Oswald was planted after the fact, etc.) would fill a book. Indeed, such evidence has filled many books, including five current bestsellers.

Because these critiques all come from independent researchers, the media (and the Justice Department) could possibly --just possibly --be excused for ignoring them all these years. What defies explanation is the deafening silence which has greeted the findings of the 1979 House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) that there is a 95 percent certainty of conspiracy in the JFK case.

The HSCA was no paragon of objectivity or zeal for the truth. Important and controversial witnesses were treated with kid gloves in cross-examination. Both the CIA and FBI approved every staff member (and disqualified some). All staffers were required to swear a CIA oath of secrecy before being allowed to see any classified files--a requirement which gave the CIA power to screen all information before release, including investigator's notes.

AGAIN, I BELIEVE IT'S STNDI-CATED.

An exclusive report on CBS's "Inside Edition" (February 5, 1992) revealed that the CIA censored from the HSCA's final report all references to links between Oswald and the CIA, including the fact that David Atlee Philips, the CIA's chief of Western Hemisphere operations, met with Oswald two months before the assassination.

Newsweek reports that in 1978, "the CIA agent assigned as liaison to the HSCA was reportedly fired from the agency after rifling the safe containing the

Kennedy autopsy photos and X-rays .(Newsweek , December 23, 1991)

"I'm not saying the CIA was involved," said Robert Tannenbaum, deputy chief counsel of the Kennedy investigation for the 1976 House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) "But there's no doubt in my mind that the CIA knows exactly what happened." (Newsweek , December 23, 1991)

Despite its glaring inadequacies, the HSCA was nevertheless compelled to conclude a "probable" conspiracy based on acoustic analysis of a Dallas police recording which was made when a motorcycle cop in Dealey Plaza accidentally left his microphone on. The Justice Department (which is itself under suspicion by assassination researchers) quickly challenged these findings. But despite overwhelming press to the contrary, their challenge didn't hold water.

Two sets of experts working independently found there had been anywhere from 4 to 9 shots fired in Dealey Plaza, at least one of which matched the "acoustic fingerprint" of test shots fired from the grassy knoll. The shot from the grassy knoll was preceded by a supersonic "n-wave," proving it came from a rifle bullet.

Although the HSCA asked that the Justice Department open an investigation, to this day, no action has been taken.

Lie #8 -- No conspirators have ever come forward to confess.

"History teaches that as a conspiracy increases in size arithmetically, the chances of it unraveling increase exponentially." (George Will, Newsweek , February 26, 1992).

"...if there was a conspiracy -- particularly the massive conspiracy posited in this movie -- is it imaginable that not a single member of it has cracked? The tug of conscience, the lust for notoriety, even greed for money... would surely have brought someone forward in the past 28 years." (Newsweek , December 23, 1991)

"The wider the conspiracy, the more likely in this publicity-mad age that some survivor on the conspiracy's fringe would sell his memoirs to People magazine for \$10 million. Nothing like this has yet happened." (Arthur Schlesinger Jr., The Wall St. Journal, January 10, 1992)

"Had a conspiracy of such proportions existed, doesn't common sense tell us that at least one conspirator would have made a deathbed confession?" (Stephen E. Ambrose in The New York Times Review of Books , February 2, 1992).

Common sense does so dictate. We would expect that out of such a vast conspiracy, at least one or two low-level operatives would break down and blow the whistle after three decades. Why hasn't it happened?

Answer: It has.

First of all, there have been numerous sensational confessions, the latest,

9! 9 SOUNDS BUSY TO ME. "AT LEAST FOUR" MAKES THE SAME POINT WHO SOUNDING TOO WILD.

I THINK THIS IS DECEMBER 26. (I KNOW THERE WAS NO 2/26 ISSUE).

PICK 3. I'D PROP THE 2ND.

published in the New York Post, from a man who claims he delivered the kill order from Jimmy Hoffa to the mob. The book Double Cross, written by Sam Giancana's nephew, also claims that the notorious gangster admitted to conspiring with the CIA to kill Kennedy.

It's hard to tell what to do with such confessions. They may or may not be significant. But they do exist, despite the disinformation being spread by pundits.

If anyone could have spilled the beans, it would have been Jack Ruby, who survived in prison four years after silencing Oswald. Why didn't he 'fess up?

David W. Belin, a counsel and chief investigator for the Warren Commission, says it's because Ruby had nothing to confess. In an article he penned for New York magazine (February 17, 1992), Belin "proves" that Ruby acted alone by citing such evidence as "Jack Ruby's rabbi... on the basis of his many visits with Ruby in prison, is convinced that Ruby was not involved in any conspiracy."

Ruby also passed a polygraph test to that effect.

With all due respect to New York magazine, that's not going to cut it. While Ruby was not permitted to testify at his trial, he did indicate, when questioned later by the Warren Commission, that he had something more to reveal. Ruby told Earl Warren that his life and his family were in danger, and asked eight times to be moved to Washington, where he would feel safe enough to give his testimony.

WAS HE FORBIDDEN, OR DID HIS LAWYERS KEEP HIM OFF THE STAND TO PREVENT CROSS-EXAMINATIONS?

"I am used as a scapegoat..." he told the Commission, according to Crossfire. "Now maybe something can be saved. It may not be too late, whatever happens, if our president, Lyndon Johnson, knew the truth from me. But if I am eliminated, there won't be any way of knowing."

Ruby also warned the Commission that "a whole new form of government is going to take over the country."

Chief Justice Warren denied Ruby's request to be moved, and Ruby was never questioned again. Whatever ~~it was~~ he wanted to say, he took ~~it~~ to his grave.

Then there's the strange case of Gary Underhill, a World War II veteran who was considered "one of the top U.S. experts on limited warfare," according to Crossfire. Underhill was performing "special assignments" for the CIA at the time Kennedy was assassinated. A few days after the assassination, he told friends that a "small group within the CIA" was responsible, and that Underhill feared for his life. Shortly thereafter, Underhill was found dead in his apartment. "His death was ruled suicide although he was shot in the left side of the head and a pistol was found in his left hand -- and it was well-known that Underhill was right-handed."

GREAT! A SMOKING GUN. THESE TYPES OF ANECDOTES SPOOK ME THE MOST. SUDDEN "SUICIDES" AND "OVERDOSES."

Suspicious suicides and outright murders have silenced dozens of key witnesses over the last 28 years. In Crossfire, Jim Marrs lists 103 key witnesses and

THIS WORD CHANGE STRENGTHENS YOUR POINT.

participants in the assassination drama whose deaths were suspiciously clustered around the ^{DATES} ~~times~~ of the Warren Commission investigation, the Jim Garrison investigation, and the 1977 House Select Committee investigation. A shocking proportion died violently, by gun, knife, or beating. Many "committed suicide," like George DeMohrenschildt, a CIA contract agent who was a close friend of Oswald and suspected of being his "handler." DeMohrenschildt supposedly blew his own brains out with a shotgun three hours after the House Select Committee asked him to testify.

Others on the list died of "heart attack," "natural causes" or "cancer." But Marrs points out that CIA testimony to the Church Committee in 1975 and declassified documents going back as far as 1952 indicate that intelligence agents have at their disposal many techniques for simulating natural death, among them inducing cancer by applying a few micrograms of beryllium.

In the three years following the assassination, 18 material witnesses died, "two by suicide, one from a cut throat, one from a karate chop to the neck, five from natural causes." An insurance actuary calculated that the odds against these witnesses being dead by February 1967 were one hundred ~~thousand trillion~~ ^{QUADRILLION} to one.

CAREFUL! THIS STATISTIC WAS RETRACTED BY THE LONDON SUNDAY TIMES. (SEE MARRS PG. 555-556) THE ODDS ACTUALLY ARE LOWER - I DON'T KNOW IF THAT MEANS A LARGER NUMBER OR SMALLER NUMBER.

Like so much about the JFK mystery, these facts "prove" nothing -- nothing except that the easy cliches of the media have once again diverted attention from truly important questions.

Lie #9 -- Americans are suckers for conspiracy theories.

Many commentators have tried to laugh off our 28 years of suspicion about the Lone Assassin theory as a charming and uniquely American eccentricity. ^{WELL PUT.}

"...Stone has revitalized an American obsession with conspiracies." (NYT, January 5, 1992).

"Stone... is tapping into a deep, almost paranoid distrust Americans have come to feel about all constituted authority..." (Vanity Fair, January 1992).

"Intellectually, Stone is... part of a long fringe tradition, the paranoid style in American politics, a style ravenous for conspiracy theories." (George Will, Newsweek, December 26, 1991)

Others suggest that we dream up conspiracies for much the same reason a child sucks its thumb.

"Conspiracy theories... are comforting in a way," explains Dan Rather on 48 Hours, "That is one reason why they thrive. They explain the unexplainable, neatly tie up the loose ends."

Such peculiar notions may provide anchormen and columnists with a

convenient excuse to poke fun at those 3 out of 4 Americans who smell a rat. But they do little to reassure the public that the national media shares its interests and concerns.

(ACCORDING TO A 1991 GALLUP POLL).

GOOD.

Anyone who thinks we Americans are just looking for an excuse to slander our military and intelligence forces must have been absent from the country during the Persian Gulf War. The national mood is precisely the opposite.

GOOD!

MORE THAN THE THAIS? THE SWISS? THE ICELANDERS?

Of all peoples, Americans are the most trusting of their government and the slowest to cry conspiracy. It's one of our great strengths. When Anwar Sadat was killed, every Egyptian assumed the Muslim extremists did it. Twenty-four hours after a Sikh guard gunned down Indira Gandhi, Hindus took to the streets murdering every Sikh in sight. When von Stauffenberg's bomb failed to kill Adolf Hitler in 1944, the Fuhrer never considered for a moment whether low self-esteem and a yearning for attention had motivated the "lone assassin." Hitler immediately slaughtered scores of high-ranking officers and government officials implicated in the plot.

I DON'T SEE HOW THIS RELATES TO YOUR POINT ABOUT THE U.S. PUBLIC.

Only in America do we listen patiently decade after decade to therapeutic doubletalk about "crazed loners" while an unending parade of "motiveless psychos" mows down our best leaders one by one. Only in America would we politely reserve judgment for 28 years on a case as full of holes as the Warren Commission's.

GOOD.

But trusting and tolerant as we are by nature, something about the JFK mystery has pushed us too far. America wants answers. And she will have them.

YOUR POINT IS MADE ELABORATELY, BUT THIS HAS FAR FEWER "HARD FACTS" TO TIE BACK AT RATHER, THE TIMES, ETC.

Lie #10 -- We're better off not knowing.

Droning relentlessly through newspapers, magazines and TV news programs is the ceaseless mantra that we would all somehow be better off if people would just stop talking about the Kennedy assassination.

Critic Michael Medved put it this way on Sneak Previews: "But I think the problem is it just fuels tremendous paranoia, it makes people unduly cynical... because none of these questions can be answered. It's like a fever swamp, the more you watch, the more questions you have, and I think it can be a little bit of a sickness if carried too far."

Richard B. Stolley, editorial director of Time Inc. Magazines, wrote in Entertainment Weekly (January 17, 1992), "Without (the Zapruder film)... we would have no precise way of timing the shots. There would... be no controversy about Oswald's ability to fire that often and that accurately... No Zapruder film; possibly no wild allegations, totally unproved, of dark crimes committed at the highest levels of American government and society.

As a country, ironically, we might be better off."

Why would we be better off?

The pundits never say.

Perhaps they should direct their attention to the First Law of Behavioral Psychology, which states that whatever behavior you reward, you get more of. Whatever behavior you punish, you get less of.

A successful assassination is one in which the perpetrators are never brought to justice. If we would like to see more and more political assassinations in the future, all we have to do is to reward our past assassins with success. **(GREAT!**

A Question of Character

"I won't give my money to an anti-American like Oliver Stone!" ranted my arch-conservative friend. "And don't tell me about Kennedy. Haven't you read A Question of Character?"

As everyone knows, this sordid expose of Kennedy's personal life by Thomas Reeves purports to shatter the "myth" that Kennedy was a great president.

There was a time when that old feminist banner actually seemed enlightening: "Politics begins in the bedroom." But in today's pseudo-puritannical climate, too many heroes have also met their end there.

In his Washington Post review of A Question of Character, Jonathan Yardley wrote:

"...the assassination of John F. Kennedy, however cruel and ghastly, may have spared the nation... Better that the handsome young president died... and that the true story of his character emerged so tentatively and gradually that we were given time to come to terms with it. Had we been forced to bear in a single blow the full import of the story... it would have shattered us."

Try as I might, I can't get half ^{as} worked up over John F. Kennedy's sex life as over the obscene spectacle of a respected journalist telling me our President was murdered for my own good.

RIGHT! LIKE HIS MURDER DIDN'T SHATTER US?
EXCELLENT POINT! I CAN'T BELIEVE THOMAS REEVES WOULD SUGGEST THAT JFK'S DEATH WAS JUSTIFIED AND YARDLEY WOULD APPROVE!

Like most New Yorkers, I both love and despise the Village Voice. I hate it for its kneejerk, leftist "politics." I love it for its movie reviews, and because it's never afraid to say something different or outrageous.

Until now, that is.

When I saw the skyline saying, "The Assassination of the Movie JFK," I breathed a sigh of relief. At least somebody had the guts to blow the whistle on

these press piranhas.

Expecting a full dissertation on CIA disinformation techniques, I opened to the review written by one "J. Hoberman" -- apparently one of those "persons" whose odd sense of gender pride compels (him or her) to conceal (his or her) first name from the sexist public.

"JFK" may not prove the most important movie of the year..." (he or she) began, "but it's certainly the most self-important."

For the next page and a half of dense type, this genderless scribe proceeded to wax indignant over Stone's overblown ego, his self-righteousness, lack of humor, "violent" and "obsessive" editing, and his apparently politically incorrect penchant for "romantic" hero worship (especially of John Kennedy and Jim Garrison).

FUNNY.

While chiding Stone for his lack of Marxist rigidity -- "Stone isn't big on dialectics; after all, without Vietnam there would have been no "Platoon" for him to make" -- Hoberman did reluctantly concede "support" for "JFK", about halfway through the article. But then (he or she) quickly made up for it by parroting one of the more mindless slanders that have animated "establishment" critiques of the movie:

HUH?

YOU USED THIS VERB ON Pg. 10.

"Critics of the Warren Commission..." (he or she) wrote, "delight in pointing out instances of retouched pictures and doctored evidence. Of course, in introducing composite characters, ascribing fictional dialogue to historical figures... Stone is scarcely more creative."

HOBERMAN

(HE/SHE IS A GOOD DEVIL. DON'T BREAK IT).

NEVER MIND THAT STONE IS AN ARTIST MAKING A MOVIE AND PRESUMABLY THE STATE FABRICATED EVIDENCE TO CONVICT A SUSPECT!

Oliver Stone -- Enemy of the Left

After the Village Voice experience, my paranoia reached a fever pitch. At night, I tossed and turned, tortured by nightmares about some futuristic police state in which cadres of "feminists," "artists" and other "radicals" signed secret pacts with the CIA, such as: "If you'll just leave us alone to perform innovative sexual acts and give us money to create works of 'art' out of urine and crucifixes, we promise we'll forget John F. Kennedy ever existed."

During a question-and-answer session on "Oprah Winfrey," one woman confronted Stone:

"As much as I've enjoyed most of your movies," she said, "I was a little disappointed with the heavy hand I thought was taken with... the sexuality (in JFK). I'm sure that a lot of American people consider it was extremely homophobic..."

Imagine consuming airtime this way in the one national televised forum where Stone had been permitted to speak about anything other than why his movie

HE'S BEEN ON "NIGHTLINE" AND "LETTERMAN" TOO.

THIS DOES NOT ADD MUCH IN MY VIEW.

listened with open minds. My patriotic older brother who'd lived and breathed

JFK Smear/ page 20

Non
This

wasn't a threat to the human race.

I THINK THE HOMOPHOBIC QUESTION IS A FAIR ONE.

I thought back to my colleague from work, the one who said: "Oliver Stone gives us liberals a bad name."

I hate to break it to you, guys, but your problem isn't Oliver Stone. Take a look in the mirror.

Thank God for America

My wife and I needed a break. I was tired of arguing, tired of browbeating people into seeing "JFK", when "Prince of Tides" or "Bugsy" was really more their cup of tea. The hatchet jobs were still coming fast and furious in the media. But I didn't care anymore. I was burned out. What could I do all by myself?

So we went to see Star Trek V at Loew's in the East Village. It was okay. Scotty's looking a bit plump these days, and the movie annoyed me with its now-fast-becoming-obligatory-in-Hollywood "Clarence Thomas" character (a very dark-skinned Federation admiral who turns out to be a racist bad guy, prejudiced against Klingons).

But hey, it was entertainment.

ARE YOU
ALONE AND
WITH YOUR
WIFE?

As Marie and I floated down the escalator through the vast, multiplex entertainment-drome, I felt an immense vacuum yawning inside me, as if I were Winston Smith strolling through Victory Square in the novel 1984. Everywhere I turned were mirrors, colored lights, hip East Villagers in black, weird, sculpted haircuts, androgynes with tinted glasses. It all seemed so normal, so humdrum. Maybe "JFK" was just a bad dream. Maybe Big Brother really loved me.

But no sooner had we reached the lobby, when a blonde young woman collared us. I saw lights, video cameras, people being interviewed.

"Did you see the movie "JFK"?" she asked.

In a daze, I heard her explain that Oliver Stone and Paramount were producing some sort of documentary about the public reaction to JFK. And she wanted us to be in it. **REALLY? THAT'S FASCINATING.**

"Did seeing JFK change your opinion about America?" she queried when my turn came up.

WANTS? THE SIDEWALK IS NOT A STAGE

I squinted uncertainly into the 1000K stage lights. Change my opinion about America? What did she mean? I suspected a trick. Maybe they were right about Stone. Maybe this woman was trying to milk some anti-American invective out of me. Suddenly, all the hatchet jobs came swimming back into my mind. I saw Stone spitting out words like "fascist police state" and "I hate America."

"No," I finally answered. "I love America, and everything it stands for. And from what I understand about Oliver Stone's political views, I don't agree with a

lot of them."

To my surprise, I found a catch coming into my throat --not unlike Kevin Costner in the closing scene of JFK !

"I love America," I continued, feeling a little embarrassed. "But Kennedy was our lawfully elected president. And the blood cries out when a man is murdered and his killers aren't found."

She nodded, but seemed suddenly eager to end the interview.

"And there's one more thing..." I added, while she scanned the line for a better prospect. "President Bush said on TV that people who question the Warren Commission are like people who think Elvis is coming back from the dead. Now, I don't know what he knows and what he doesn't know. But to have that kind of attitude, I think, is a shameful shirking of his responsibility as president." *GOOD.*

By now, she was obviously impatient with me. I surrendered the microphone, feeling a little silly, like I'd made an ass of myself.

As we walked home, I remembered suddenly gathering with my family for Christmas just a week before, and discussing JFK around the dinner table. For the first time, among parents, brothers, sisters, nieces, and in-laws, hundreds of miles from the cosmopolitan elites in New York, I was finally able to praise Stone's movie without someone jumping in, "warning" me to "be careful," because they'd "heard" or "read" somewhere that JFK contained "a lot of inaccuracies."

None of my relatives had yet seen the movie. But, wonder of wonders, they listened with open minds. My patriotic older brother who'd lived and breathed Army ROTC in college found Stone's theory disturbing but plausible. My mother, a staunch Nixon Republican to this day, said she'd always known the assassination was a plot, and it wouldn't surprise her a bit if LBJ and the CIA were behind it.

"It's about time someone did a real, thorough investigation," agreed my conservative Dad.

Two and half months after JFK's release, it's become clear that the smear campaign isn't ending. Over 19 million people have ^{now} seen the movie. And they didn't stop.

PAID \$65 MILLION TO

THE LATEST FIGURES?

Every Sunday my wife reads the latest scorecard from The New York Times bestseller list. Jim Garrison's *On the Trail of the Assassins* continues clocking in week after week as the number one nonfiction paperback. Four other assassination books are not far behind.

According to a CBS/ New York Times poll, 77 percent of the American public believes JFK was killed by a conspiracy, and --according to a poll by Time /CNN --

a whopping 50 percent think the CIA was involved!

Back in the '60s, people like my family were called The Silent Majority, and were considered "brainwashed" puppets of the "fascist police state." Even today, our avant-garde urban-dwellers -- obsessed with such life-or-death issues as the dispersion of NEA grant money to themselves and their friends -- love to paint middle America as a caldron of racist homophobes and Philistines.

But from such folk arose the Minutemen who won at Lexington and Concord. Their spirit loves liberty above life. It tolerates no tyrant. It senses instinctively when it's time to stop bickering over trifles and to take action.

Thank God for America. Thank God for Oliver Stone.

And thank God it's an election year.

NICE ENOUGH! I CAN HEAR
"THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER"
RISING IN THE BACKGROUND.

ALLIARD

GREAT PIECE! YOU DO A SERVICE IN COMPARING
THE PAK'S COMMENTS AND PREJUDICES WITH
THE FACTS. THIS IS QUITE AN INDICTMENT.
I HAVE LOTS OF PARTICULARS HERE AND
THERE, BUT OVERALL - YOU OCCASIONALLY ~~SEEM~~
GET BREATHELESS IN YOUR NUMBER. CALM IT DOWN
A NOTCH OR TWO (I'VE INDICATED WHERE YOU
SHOULD DO THIS). OTHERWISE, GREAT WORK.
THANKS FOR GIVING A DAMN!

Olga
3/4/92