

# ARTS

## I shot the sheriff, but I didn't shoot the president

BY BRUCE GILCHRIST

**P**ROPAGANDA. That's what JFK is from start to finish. But isn't that really what the movies have always been? And, O Captain my Captain, what propaganda!

FILM  
JFK  
Park Lane

Oliver Stone has written and directed in his own words "the beginning of the search for truth about the big lie known as JFK."

New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, played by Kevin Costner, is the focal point of Stone's movie. Garrison investigates the connection between the activity of a group of New Orleans radical homosexual/right-wing anti-Castro freedom fighters and the death of John F. Kennedy. He very quickly finds out this motley mob is somehow connected to much higher powers

including the CIA, the US Military Establishment, and war technology companies that could all profit from terminating the presidency of the 'soft on communism' JFK.

Stone makes it very clear that the assassination directly brought about the end of hope for his generation, and quickly culminated in Vietnam.

### The plot to turkey shoot JFK

The associations, interconnections, and ruses between characters is absolutely dizzying. But Stone manages to rivet his audience by stitching together staged footage purporting unsure events (always in



This man voted for Reagan — twice.

a ghostly black and white), and real footage that occur in a golden filtered colour. There is even some previously unseen footage of JFK's autopsy, which might move tender stomachs.

Garrison tries to make sense of all this but doesn't know quite what to do with the conflicting reports he's gathering. He knows something very, very wrong has transpired, and that the Warren Commission on JFK's murder is a complete fabrication.

But the movie takes on its most surreal stage when the mysterious Colonel X, played by Donald Sutherland, provides Garrison with enough reason for him to suspect everybody, right up to Vice-President Johnson. As Garrison and Col. X sit outside on the White House steps, discussing the army's rule over the U.S., Stone makes it quite clear what really frightens him.

Other than a meticulous re-creation of the events at Dealey Plaza in Dallas (where JFK was shot), Stone centers the film in New Orleans,

where Lee Harvey Oswald (played by a remarkably introverted Gary Oldham) is entangled in the plot to 'turkey shoot' JFK.

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Col. X convinces Garrison to proceed with the trial of Clay Shaw (played very creepily by Tommy Lee Jones). Garrison believes Shaw implicated Oswald JFK's assassination and then later directed Oswald's own murder. Then Stone blows out all the doors on the Warren Commission, and even the US Court system.

This film is dedicated to a search for some kind of truth and insight

into the conspiracy, that it barely gets to develop many of its characters. The various footages roll by spinning our minds, leaving us in complete doubt of just about everyone.

Col. X, at one point says "the public has always been suckers for the truth," and no doubt JFK is, so far, the main manifestation of this. The question is how many people are willing to take it seriously? All I know is that there is not a boring second over the three hours of this movie.

There are superb performances throughout (Joe Pesci, Walter Matthau, Jack Lemmon, Sissy Spacek, Ed Asner) and there is no excuse for anyone not to see it.

Stone doesn't pretend to present a definitive version of the events surrounding JFK's death. It isn't for him to find out the who's, what's and why's. His task is to say, 'what the hell is going on? I want some answers,' and he performs this task most admirably.

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Written material must be typed and double-spaced. Material other than news articles should be no longer than 700 words, or two pages, double-spaced.

**Submissions are due Wednesday, January 22.** Pass your submission(s) in to the *Gazette* office, third floor, SUB.

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