

Oliver Stone's *JFK* (1991)

Part 1 Conversation with Mr. X (1:45:00-2:01:28) (2,200 words)

The character Mr. X in *JFK* is based on Leroy Fletcher Prouty (1917 – 2001). He served as Chief of Special Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President Kennedy. Before that he was a colonel in the United States Air Force. He retired from military service to become a bank executive. He subsequently became a critic of US foreign policy, particularly the covert activities of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), about which he had considerable inside knowledge. He is the author of:

- *The Secret Team: The CIA and Its Allies in Control of the United States and the World* (Prentice-Hall, 1973).
- *JFK: The CIA, Vietnam, and the Plot to Assassinate John F. Kennedy* (Birch Lane Press, 1992).

Mr. X:

I'm not with the Agency, Mr. Garrison. If you've come this far, what I have to say interests you. I won't name names or tell you who or what I represent. Except to say you're close. Closer than you think. Everything I'll say is classified, top secret. I was a soldier, Mr. Garrison. Two wars. A secret Pentagon guy, supplying the hardware: Planes, bullets, rifles... ...for what we call "Black Operations." Black Ops. Assassinations. *Coups d'état*, rigging elections, propaganda, psych warfare. In World War II, I was in Romania, Greece, Yugoslavia. I helped evacuate part of Nazi intelligence at the end of the war. And we used those guys against the Communists. In Italy, '48, we stole the elections. France '49, we broke the strikes. Overthrew Quirino in the Philippines, Arbenz in Guatemala... ...Mossadegh in Iran. We were in Vietnam in '54... ...Indonesia, '58, Tibet, '59. Got the Dalai Lama out. We were good. Very good. Then we got into the Cuban thing. Not so good. Set up an invasion to take place in October, '62. Khrushchev sent missiles to resist. Kennedy didn't invade. We just had our dicks in the wind. A lot of pissed-off people, Mr. Garrison. Understand? I'll come to that later.

So, 1963: I spent much of September of '63 working on the Kennedy plan to get all US personnel out of Vietnam by the end of 1965. One of the strongest plans issued by the Kennedy White House National Security Memo 263 ordered home the first 1,000 troops. But in November, a week after the murder of Vietnamese President Diem and two weeks before Kennedy's assassination a strange thing happened to me. I was sent by my superior... We'll call him "Y". I was sent by General Y to the South Pole as military escort for a group of international VIPs. I was on my way back, in New Zealand, when the president was killed. Oswald was charged at 7:00 PM, Dallas time with Tippit's murder. That's 2:00 PM the next day in New Zealand. But already their papers had the entire history of this unknown, 24-year-old Oswald. Studio picture, detailed biography, Russian information and they were sure that he killed the president alone although it took them four more hours to charge him with that crime in Dallas. It felt to me as if a cover story was being put out, like we would in a Black Op. After I came back, I asked myself why was I, the chief of Special Ops sent to the South Pole to do a job many others could have done? I wondered if it could've been because a routine duty, if I'd been in Washington, would've been to order additional security in Texas. I checked it out and found that someone told the 112th Military Intelligence Group at Fort Sam Houston to stand down that day, over the protests of Colonel Reich. I believe it's a mistake. It's standard procedure, especially in a known hostile city like Dallas, to supplement the Secret Service. Even if we hadn't let him ride with the bubble-top off, we would've put 100 to 200 agents on the sidewalk without question. A month before, in Dallas, UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson was spit on and hit. There had been attempts on De Gaulle's life in France. We'd have arrived days ahead, studied the route checked all buildings. We never would've allowed open windows overlooking Dealey. Our own snipers would've covered the area. If a window went up, they'd have been on the radio! We'd be watching the crowd: packages, rolled-up newspapers, coats. Never would've let a man open an umbrella. Never would've let the car slow down to ten miles an hour. Or take that unusual curve at Houston and Elm. You'd have felt an Army presence in the streets that day. But none of this happened. It violated our most basic protection codes. And it is the best indication of a massive plot in Dallas. Who could have best done this? Black Ops. People in my business. My superior might call Colonel Reich and say: "We have another unit coming for security. You'll stand down." That day, some Army intelligence people were in Dallas. I don't know who or why. But they weren't protecting clients. And Oswald. Army Intel had a Lee Harvey Oswald on file. Those files have been destroyed.

Many strange things were happening. Oswald had nothing to do with them. The entire Cabinet was in the Far East. A third of a combat division was returning from Germany in the air above the United States, at the time of the shooting. At 12:34 PM, the Washington telephone system went out for an hour. On the plane back to Washington word was radioed from the Situation Room to Johnson that there was one assassin. Sound like coincidences to you? Not for one moment. The Cabinet was out of the way. Troops for riot control were in the air. Telephones were out to stop the wrong stories from spreading. Nothing was left to chance. He could not be allowed to escape alive.

Things were never the same after that. Vietnam started for real. There was an air of make-believe in the Pentagon and CIA. Those of us in Secret Ops knew the Warren Commission was fiction. But there was something deeper. Uglier. I knew Allen Dulles well. I often briefed him in his house. But why was he appointed to investigate Kennedy's death? The man who fired him. Dulles, by the way, was General Y's benefactor. I got out in '64. Resigned my commission.

I never realized Kennedy was so dangerous to the establishment. Is that why?

That's the real question, isn't it? Why? The how and the who is just scenery for the public. Oswald, Ruby, Cuba, the Mafia... keeps them guessing, like a game, prevents them from asking the most important question: Why? Why was Kennedy killed? Who benefited? Who has the power to cover it up? Who?

In 1961, right after the Bay of Pigs—very few people know this—I participated in drawing up National Security Action Memos 55, 56, 57. These are documents classified top secret. In them, Kennedy told Gen. Lemnitzer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs that from here on, the Joint Chiefs would be wholly responsible for all covert paramilitary action in peacetime. This ended the reign of the CIA. Splintered it into 1,000 pieces, as JFK promised he would. And now he was ordering the military to help him do it. Unprecedented! I can't tell you the shock waves this sent along the corridors of power. This and the firing of Allen Dulles, Richard Bissell and Gen. Charles Cabell. All were sacred cows in Intel since World War II. They got some very upset people. Kennedy's directives weren't implemented because of bureaucratic resistance. But one of the results was the Cuban operation was turned over to my department as Operation Mongoose.

Mongoose was pure Black Ops. It was secretly based at Miami University which has the largest domestic CIA station budgeted annually for hundreds of millions of dollars. Three hundred agents, 7,000 select Cubans. Fifty fake business fronts to launder money. They waged a non-stop war against Castro. Industrial sabotage, crop burning, etc. All under the control of General Y. He took the rules of covert warfare he'd used abroad and brought them to this country. Now he had the people, the equipment, the bases and the motivation.

Don't underestimate the budget cuts that Kennedy called for in March of 1963. Nearly 52 military installations in 25 states. Twenty-one overseas bases. Big money. You know how many helicopters have been lost in Vietnam? Nearly 3,000 so far. Who makes them? Bell Helicopter. Who owns Bell? Bell was nearly bankrupt when First National Bank of Boston asked the CIA to use the helicopter in Indochina. How about the F-111 fighter? General Dynamics of Fort Worth, Texas. Who owns that? Find out the defense budget since the war began. \$75 going on \$100 billion. Nearly \$200 billion will be spent before it's over. In 1949, it was \$10 billion. No war, no money. The organizing principle of any society, Mr. Garrison, is for war. The authority of the state over its people resides in its war powers.

Kennedy wanted to end the Cold War in his second term. He wanted to call off the moon race and cooperate with the Soviets. He signed a treaty to ban nuclear testing. He refused to invade Cuba in 1962. He set out to withdraw from Vietnam. But all that ended on the 22nd of November 1963. Since 1961, they knew Kennedy was not going to war in Southeast Asia. Like Caesar, he was surrounded by enemies. Something was underway, but it had no face. Yet, everybody in the loop knew.

Various voices: Forget about combat troops. He told McNamara he would pull out the goddamn advisors! He fucked us in Laos and now he will fuck us in Vietnam! He can't afford to implement it before the election. I hear the NSC meeting was a real barn burner. I wouldn't have missed it for the world. Heads will roll. Hear about Lemnitzer? What? Kennedy rubbed Lem's nose in shit. Said if we didn't go into Cuba, which was so close... why go into Vietnam which is so far away? There he goes again. Got his hand on the chicken switch. Lem said that the Chiefs still think we should go into Cuba.

Money is at stake. Big money. \$100 billion. Kennedy bred voting districts for defense dollars. He gave TFX fighter contracts only to those counties that will matter in '64. The people in the loop fight back. Their way.

Various voices: *We have to control the intelligence from Saigon. We just don't let McNamara stick his nose in this thing! Every time he goes over to Saigon for a fact-finding mission... ..he comes back and scares the shit out of Kennedy! Now I want Max Taylor on him night and day... ..like a fly on shit. You control McNamara, you control Kennedy.*

I think it started like that. In the wind. Defense contractors, oil, bankers. Just conversation. A call is made. Maybe to someone like my superior officer General Y.

We're going. We need your help.

When?

In the fall. Probably in the South. We want you to come up with a plan.

I can do that.

Everything is cellularized. No one said, "He must die." No vote. Nothing's on paper. There's no one to blame. It's as old as the crucifixion. Or the military firing squad. Five bullets, one blank. No one's guilty. Everybody in the power structure has a plausible deniability. No compromising connections except at the most secret point. But it must succeed. No matter how many die, or how much it costs the perpetrators must be on the winning side and never subject to prosecution for anything by anyone. That is a *coup d'état*.

Kennedy announces the Texas trip in September. At that moment, second Oswalds pop up all over Dallas... ..where they have the mayor and the cops in their pocket. General Y flies in the assassins. Maybe from the special camp we keep near Athens, Greece. Pros. Maybe be locals, Cubans, Mafia hire. Separate teams. Does it matter who shot from what rooftop? Part of the scenery. I keep thinking about that Tuesday the 26th of November. The day after they buried Kennedy.

President Johnson: *Gentlemen, I am not going to let Vietnam go like China did. I'm committed not to take our soldiers out of there till they know we mean business in Asia.*

Lyndon Johnson signs National Security Memo 273 which reverses Kennedy's withdrawal policy and approves covert action against North Vietnam provoking the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

President Johnson: *Just get me elected, I'll give you the damn war.*

In that document lay the Vietnam War.

I can't believe they killed him because he wanted to change things. In our time, in our country!

They've done it throughout history. Kings are killed. Politics is power, nothing more! Don't take my word for it. Do your own thinking.

The size of this is beyond me. Testify.

Me? Testify? No chance in hell. No, I'd be arrested and gagged. Maybe sent to an institution. Maybe worse. You too. I can give you the background. You find the foreground, the little things. Dig. You're the only one to bring a trial in Kennedy's murder. That's important. It's historic.

I haven't yet. I don't have much of a case.

You don't have a choice anymore. You're a significant threat to the national security structure. They'd have killed you already, but there's light on you. So they'll destroy your credibility. They already have in many circles. Be honest. Your only chance is to come up with a case. Something. Anything. Make arrests. Stir the shitstorm. Hope to start a chain reaction of people coming forward. Then the government will crack. Fundamentally, people are suckers for the truth. And the truth is on your side, bubba. I just hope you get a break.

Part 2 The Trial (02:43:21~03:16:60) (4,000 words, 32 minutes)

*Treason doth never prosper. What's the reason?
Why, if it prosper, none dare call it treason.*
- Sir John Harington (1560-1612)

Jim Garrison:

To prove there was a conspiracy involving Clay Shaw we must prove there was more than one man involved in the assassination. To do that we must look at the Zapruder film which my office subpoenaed. The American public has not seen has not seen the film. It's been locked in a vault the last five years in the Time-Life Building in New York. There's a reason for that. Watch. "The picture speaks 1,000 words." The Warren Commission thought they had an open-and-shut case. Three bullets, one assassin. Two unpredictable things happened that day to make it impossible. One, the film shot by Abraham Zapruder while standing near the grassy knoll. Two, the third wounded man, James Teague, nicked by a fragment while standing near the triple underpass. The time frame, 5.6 seconds, established by the Zapruder film left no possibility of a fourth shot, so the shot of fragment that left a superficial wound on Teague's cheek came from one of the three bullets fired from the Depository's sixth floor. That leaves just two bullets. We know one was the fatal head shot that killed Kennedy, so a single bullet remains. A single bullet must account for the seven wounds in Kennedy and Connally. Rather than admit to a conspiracy or investigate further, the Warren Commission endorsed the theory put forth by an ambitious attorney, Arlen Specter. One of the grossest lies ever forced on the American people. It's known as the "magic bullet" theory.

The magic bullet enters the president's back, headed downward at a 17-degree angle. It then moves upwards to leave Kennedy's body from the front of his neck wound #2 where it waits 1.6 seconds presumably in midair, where it turns right, then left right, then left and continues into Connally's right armpit. Wound #3. The bullet then heads down at an angle of 27 degrees, shattering his rib and exiting from the right side of his chest. Wound #4. The bullet turns right, reentering Connally's body at his right wrist. Wound #5. Shattering the radius bone, the bullet exits Connally's wrist, wound #6 makes a dramatic U-turn, then buries itself in Connally's left thigh. Wound #7, from which it later falls out and is found in almost pristine condition on a stretcher in a corridor of Parkland Hospital. Some bullet. Any combat vet can tell you never in the history of gunfire has there been a bullet this ridiculous. The government says it can prove it with some fancy physics in a nuclear lab. Of course they can. Theoretical physics can prove an elephant can hang from a cliff with his tail tied to a daisy. But use your eyes, your common sense.

The Army wound ballistics experts fired some comparison bullets. Not one of them looked anything like this. Take a look at CE-856. An identical bullet fired through the wrist of a human cadaver, just one of the bones smashed by the magic bullet. Seven wounds, gentlemen. Tough skin dense bones. This single-bullet explanation is the foundation of the Warren Commission's claim of one assassin. And once you conclude the magic bullet couldn't create all seven wounds you must conclude there was a fourth shot and a second rifleman. And if there was a second rifleman then by definition there had to be a conspiracy which we believe involves the accused, Clay Shaw.

Fifty-one witnesses thought they heard shots from the grassy knoll which is to the right, in front of the president. Key witnesses that day? Charles Brehm, a combat vet. Right behind, Jean Hill and Mary Moorman. S.M. Holland, Richard Dodd, James Simmons standing on the overpass. J.C. Price overlooking the plaza. William Newman, father of two children. He hit the deck on the north side of Elm. Abraham Zapruder. Each of these key witnesses has no doubt whatsoever one or more shots came from behind the picket fence. Twenty-six trained medical personnel at Parkland Hospital saw the back of the president's head blasted out!

Doctors at Parkland Hospital:

There was a large 7 cm opening at the right occipital parietal area. A considerable portion of the brain was missing. A fifth or possibly a quarter of the back of the head had been blasted out along with the underlying brain tissue.

When's the proper time to declare one dead?

There was also a large fragment of skull attached to a flap of the scalp. The exit hole in the rear of his head measured about 120 mm or five inches, across.

Garrison: Not one of the civilian doctors who examined the president regarded his throat wound as anything but an entry wound. But then the body was illegally moved to Washington for the autopsy. Because when a *coup d'état* has occurred there's a big difference between an autopsy performed by civilian doctors and one that is performed by military doctors under orders. The departure of Air Force One, Friday afternoon was not so much a takeoff as it was a getaway, with the newly sworn in president.

On the plane, the White House Situation Room announced Oswald's guilt to all passengers before any kind of investigation had begun. The "angry lone nut" solution is beginning to take shape.

The three Bethesda doctors picked by the military left something to be desired. None of them had experience with combat-gunfire wounds. Through their autopsy, we've been able to justify eight wounds from two bullets. Three to Kennedy, five to Connally. One of them being the "magic bullet."

Here. Col. Finck, are you saying someone told you not to dissect the neck?

I was told the family wanted the examination of the head.

Voice in the autopsy room in Bethesda: Oh, Christ. Looks like half his brain is gone. Weigh it. 653 grams.

Garrison: As a pathologist, it was your obligation to explore all possible causes of death.

Finck: I had the cause of death.

Garrison: Your Honor, please direct the witness to answer my question. Why did Col. Finck not dissect the tract of the bullet wound?

Finck: I heard Dr. Humes stating...

Humes: That's enough. That's enough. It's duly noted.

Finck: Let's check the back. I can feel the end of the wound with my finger.

Humes: That won't be necessary.

Watch the ear! Shot in the back. Cheap crime.

Finck: He said, "Who's in charge here?"

Finck: I am.

Finck: I don't remember his name. It was quite crowded. And when you are called to look at the wounds of the dead president you don't ask people for their names and who they are.

Garrison: But you were a qualified pathologist. Was the Army General?

Finck: No.

Garrison: But you took his orders?

Finck: Yes.

Garrison: So he was directing the autopsy?

Finck: No. There were others. There were admirals. When you're a Lieutenant Colonel, you follow orders.

Humes: It is not our business to discuss this with anyone outside this room.

Finck: As I recall, Admiral Kenney, Navy Surgeon General specifically told us not to discuss the case.

Garrison: A lot of people were deciding what was private, none of the American people's business. The chief pathologist, Commander Humes, by his own admission, voluntarily burned his autopsy notes.

President Johnson orders the blood-soaked limousine filled with bullet holes and clues to be washed and rebuilt. He sends Connally's bloody suit to the cleaners. The Justice Department denied this office access to the autopsy photos. When we finally get a court order to examine Kennedy's brain in the hopes of finding from which direction the bullet came, we're told by your government that the president's brain has disappeared. That's not all that's disappeared. With it, the concept of justice.

So, what really happened that day? Let's just for a moment speculate, shall we? We have the epileptic seizure distracting the police and allowing the shooters to get into place. The epileptic later vanished, never checking into the hospital. The A-team goes to the sixth floor of the Depository. They were refurbishing the floors of the Depository that week allowing unknown workmen in the building. They move quickly into position, minutes before the shooting. The second spotter, talking by radio to the other teams, has the best overall view. The God spot. B- team, one rifleman and one spotter with access to the building moves into a low floor of the Dal-Tex building. The third team, C-team, moves in behind the fence above the grassy knoll where the shooter and the spotter are first seen by the late Lee Bowers. They have the best position. Kennedy is close and on a flat, low trajectory. Part of this team is a coordinator who flashed security credentials at people, chasing them from the area. Probably two to three more men are in the crowd. Ten to twelve men. Three teams. Three shooters. The triangulation of fire Clay Shaw and David Ferrie discussed two months before. They blocked the plaza. They know every inch. They've calibrated their sights. Practiced on moving targets. They're ready.

Kennedy's motorcade makes a turn from Main onto Houston. It's going to be a turkey shoot. They don't shoot him on Houston, the easiest shot for a single shooter in the Depository. They wait till he gets to the killing zone between three rifles. Kennedy makes the turn from Houston onto Elm. Slowing down to some 11 miles an hour. The shooters across Dealey Plaza tighten, taking their aim. Waiting for the radio to say, "Green! Green!" or, "Abort! Abort!" The first shot rings out. Sounding like a backfire, it misses the car completely. Frame 161, Kennedy stops waving as he hears something. Connally's head turns slightly to the right. Frame 193, the second shot hits Kennedy in the throat from the front. Frame 225, Kennedy emerges from behind the road sign. He's been hit, raising his hands to his throat. The third shot, frame 232 hits Kennedy in the back, pulling him downward and forward. Connally, you will notice, shows no sign of being hit. He is holding his Stetson, which is impossible if his wrist is shattered. Connally is turning now. Frame 238. The fourth shot. It misses Kennedy and takes Connally in the back. This is the shot that proves there were two rifles. Connally yells, "My God! They're going to kill us all! "Around this time, another shot misses the car completely striking James Teague by the underpass. The car brakes. The sixth and fatal shot, frame 313, takes Kennedy in the head from the front. This is the key shot, the president going back and to his left shot from the front and right. Totally inconsistent with the shot from the Depository. Again, back, and to the left. Back, and to the left. Back, and to the left.

So what happens then? Pandemonium. The shooters quickly disassemble their various weapons, except the Oswald rifle. Patrolman Smith rushes to the parking lot behind the fence. He smells gunpowder.

He produced credentials showing him to be Secret Service.

Police officer: Let's see your ID. See anyone else up here?

Police officer: I accepted that and let him go. I regretted it. He looked like a mechanic. He had on a sports shirt and pants, but he had dirty fingernails. Afterward, it didn't ring true. But at the time we were so pressed for time.

All Secret Servicemen in Dallas are accounted for. None were on foot in Dealey Plaza before or after the shooting till the Dallas Secret Service chief returned at 12:55. The Dallas police took at least 12 people into custody. No record of their arrest. Men acting like hoboes were pulled off trains, marched through Dealey Plaza, photographed. Yet there's no record of their arrest. Men identifying themselves as Secret Service agents were everywhere. But who was impersonating them? Where was Oswald?

Around 12:15, leaving the building to see the motorcade, Carolyn Arnold sees Oswald in the second-floor snack room where he said he went for a Coke. He was in a booth on the right side of the room. He was by himself as usual, appeared to be having lunch.

At the same time, Bonnie Ray Williams is supposedly eating lunch in the sixth floor. He's there until 12:15, maybe 12:20. He sees nobody. Arnold Rowlands, on the street, looks up, sees two men in the sixth-floor windows presumably after Williams finished his lunch and left. John Powell, a prisoner on the sixth floor of the county jail, sees them.

If Oswald was the assassin, he was nonchalant about moving into position. Later, he told police he was in the second-floor snack room. Probably told to wait there by his handler for a call. But the phone call never came. Maximum 90 seconds after Kennedy is shot Patrolman Marrion Baker sees Oswald in that second-floor lunchroom.

The Commission would have us believe that after firing three bolt-action shots in 5.6 seconds Oswald then leaves three cartridges neatly side-by-side in the firing nest wipes fingerprints off the rifle, stashes it on the other side of the loft sprints down five flights of stairs past Victoria Adams and Sandra Styles who never see him then shows up, cool and calm, on the second floor in front of Patrolman Baker. All this within a maximum of 90 seconds of the shooting.

Is he out of breath? According to Baker, absolutely not. Assuming he is the sole assassin, Oswald is free to leave the building. The longer he delays, the more chance the building will be sealed by police. Is he guilty? Does he walk out the nearest staircase? He buys a Coke and at a slow pace, spotted by Mrs. Reid on the second floor, he strolls out the more distant front exit where cops have gathered. Odd, since three shots were fired from there nobody seals the Depository for ten more minutes.

Oswald slips out, as do several other employees. When he realized something had gone wrong and Kennedy had been killed, he knew there was a problem. Maybe even that he was the patsy. An intuition, maybe, the president killed in spite of his warning. The phone call that never came. Perhaps fear now came to Oswald for the very first time. Oswald returns to his rooming house around 1:00 PM, a half hour after the assassination.

He puts on his jacket, grabs his .38 revolver and leaves at 1:04. Earlene Roberts, the housekeeper, heard two beeps on a car horn. Two uniformed cops pulled up while Oswald was in his room. Like it was a signal. Officer Tippit is shot between 1:10 and 1:15, a mile away. And though no one saw him walking, the government says Oswald covered that distance. Giving the government the benefit of the doubt, Oswald would've had to jog a mile in six to eleven minutes then commit the murder, reverse his direction and walk

three-fifths of a mile to the Texas Theater and arrive sometime before 1:30. It's also a useful conclusion. After all, why would Oswald kill Officer Tippit unless he just shot the president and feared arrest?

Domingo Benevides the closest witness to the shooting refused to identify Oswald as the killer and was never taken to a lineup. Acquilla Clemons saw the killer and another man go off in separate directions. Mrs. Clemons was never taken to a lineup or to the Warren Commission. At the scene, Officer Poe marks his initials on the shells to record the chain of evidence. Those initials are not on the three cartridge cases which the Warren Commission show him.

As early as 12:44, only 14 minutes after the assassination the police put out a description matching Oswald's size and build. Oswald is next seen by a shoe salesman, Johnny Brewer, on Jefferson Avenue. Oswald is scared. He begins to realize the full implications of this thing. He goes to the Texas Theater, possibly a prearranged meeting point. Though he has \$14 in his pocket, he doesn't buy the \$0.75 ticket. Brewer has the cashier call the police. In response to that call at least 30 officers in patrol cars descend on the movie theater. This is the most remarkable example of police intuition since the Reichstag fire. I don't buy it! They knew. Someone knew Oswald would be there. Brewer leads the cops into the theater and from the stage, points Oswald out.

They have their man. It's already been decided in Washington. When he is brought from the theater a crowd is waiting to scream at him. Lee Oswald must have felt like Joseph K. in Kafka's *The Trial*. He's never given reasons for his arrest. He doesn't know the unseen forces ranging against him. At police headquarters, he was booked for murdering Tippit. No legal counsel was provided. No record made of the questioning. When the sun rises the next morning, he is booked for murdering the president. The whole country, fueled by the media, assumes he is guilty. Under the guise of a patriotic club owner out to spare Jackie Kennedy from testifying at a trial, Jack Ruby is let into a garage by one of his inside men on the police force. Oswald is brought out like a sacrificial lamb and nicely disposed of as an enemy of the people.

Who grieves for Lee Harvey Oswald buried in a cheap grave under the name Oswald? Nobody. False statements and press leaks about Oswald circulate the globe. The official legend is created, and the media takes it from there. The glitter of official lies and the epic splendor of JFK's funeral confuse the eye and confound the understanding. Hitler said: "The bigger the lie, the more people will believe it." Lee Harvey Oswald, "a crazed, lonely man who wanted attention and got it by killing a president" was only the first in a long line of patsies. In later years, Bobby Kennedy, Martin Luther King men whose commitment to change and peace made them dangerous to men committed to war, would follow also, killed by such "lonely, crazed men." Men who remove all guilt by making murder a meaningless act of a loner.

We've all become Hamlets in our country, children of a slain father-leader whose killers still possess the throne. The ghost of John F. Kennedy confronts us with the secret murder at the heart of the American Dream. He forces on us the appalling questions: Of what is our Constitution made? What are our lives worth? What is the future of a democracy where a president can be assassinated under suspicious circumstances while the machinery of legal action scarcely trembles? How many more political murders disguised as heart attacks, suicides, cancers, drug overdoses? How many plane and car crashes will occur before they are exposed for what they are? "Treason doth never prosper," wrote an English poet [John Harington]. "What's the reason? For if it prosper, none dare call it treason."

The American public has yet to see the Zapruder film. Why? The American public has yet to see the real X-rays and autopsy photographs. Why? Hundreds of documents could help prove this conspiracy. Why are they being withheld or burned by the government? When my office or you, the people, asked those questions, demanded evidence, the answer from on high has always been: national security. What kind of national security do we have when we're robbed of our leaders? What national security permits the removal of fundamental power from the people and validates the ascendancy of an invisible government in the US? That kind of national security, when it smells like it, feels like it, and looks like it, you call it what it is: Fascism!

I submit to you that what took place on November 22, 1963 was a *coup d'état*. Its most direct and tragic result was the reversal of Kennedy's decision to withdraw from Vietnam. The war is the biggest business in America worth \$80 billion a year. President Kennedy was murdered by a conspiracy planned at the highest levels of our government carried out by fanatical and disciplined cold warriors in the Pentagon and CIA's covert-operation apparatus. Among them, Clay Shaw, here before you.

It was a public execution, and it was covered up by like-minded people in the Dallas Police, the Secret Service, the FBI, and the White House up to and including J. Edgar Hoover, and Lyndon Johnson who were accomplices after the fact.

The assassination reduced the president to a transient official. His job is to speak as often as possible of the nation's desire for peace while he acts as a business agent in the Congress for the military and their contractors. Some people say I'm crazy. Southern caricature seeking higher office. There's a simple way to determine if I am paranoid. Ask the two men who profited most from the assassination, former President Johnson and your new President Nixon, to release the 51 CIA documents pertaining to Lee Oswald and Jack Ruby. Or the secret CIA memo on Oswald's activities in Russia that was destroyed while being photocopied. These documents are yours. The people's property. You pay for it. But as the government sees you as children who might be too disturbed to face this reality or because you might lynch those involved, you cannot see these documents for another 75 years.

I'm in my 40s so I'll have "shuffled off this mortal coil" by then. But I'm telling my eight-year-old son to keep himself physically fit so that one glorious September morning, in 2038, he can go to the National Archives and learn what the CIA and FBI knew. They may push it back then. It may become a generational affair. Questions passed from parent to child. But someday, somewhere, someone may find out the damn truth. We had better, or we might just as well build ourselves another government like the Declaration of Independence says to, when the old one doesn't work. Just a bit farther out West, an American naturalist wrote: "A patriot must always be ready to defend his country against its government."

I'd hate to be in your shoes today. You have a lot to think about. You've seen evidence the public hasn't seen. Going back to when we were children, I think most of us in this courtroom thought justice came automatically. That virtue was its own reward. That good triumphs over evil. But as we get older, we know this isn't true. Individual human beings have to create justice, and this is not easy because the truth often poses a threat to power and one often has to fight power at great risk to oneself. People like S.M. Holland, Lee Bowers, Jean Hill, Willie O'Keefe, have all taken that risk and they've all come forward. I have here some \$8,000 in these letters sent from all over the country. Quarters, dimes, dollars from housewives, plumbers, car salesmen, teachers, invalids. These are people who cannot afford to send money but do, people who drive cabs, who nurse in hospitals, who see their kids go to Vietnam. Why? Because they care. Because they want to know the truth. Because they want their country back. Because it still belongs to us as long as the people have the guts to fight for what they believe in. The truth is the most important value we have because if it doesn't endure, if the government murders truth, if we cannot respect these people, then this is not the country I was born in, or the country I want to die in.

Tennyson wrote: "Authority forgets a dying king." This was never more true than for John F. Kennedy whose murder was probably one of the most terrible moments in the history of our country. We, the people, the jury system sitting in judgment on Clay Shaw, represent the hope of humanity against government power. In discharging your duty to bring a first conviction in this house of cards against Clay Shaw, ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country. Do not forget your dying king. Show this world this is still a government "of the people, for the people and by the people." Nothing as long as you live will ever be more important. It's up to you.

Juror, after the trial:

We believe there was a conspiracy. Whether Shaw was a part of it is another kettle of fish.

Endnotes appearing before the credits

In 1979, Richard Helms, Director of Covert Operations in 1963, admitted under oath that Clay Shaw had worked for the CIA.

Clay Shaw died in 1974 of lung cancer. No autopsy was allowed.

In 1978, Jim Garrison was elected Judge of the Louisiana State Court of Appeal in New Orleans. He was re-elected in 1988. To this date, he has brought the only public prosecution in the Kennedy killing.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: 2 million Asian lives lost, 58,000 American lives lost, \$220 billion spent, 10 million Americans air-lifted there by commercial aircraft, more than 5,000 helicopters lost, 612 million tons of bombs dropped.

A Congressional Investigation from 1976-1979 found a “probable conspiracy” in the assassination of John F. Kennedy and recommended the Justice Department investigate further. As of 1991, the Justice Department has done nothing. The files of the House Select Committee on Assassinations are locked away until the year 2029.

WHAT IS PAST IS PROLOGUE

DEDICATED TO THE YOUNG
IN WHOSE SPIRIT THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH MARCHES ON

As a result of this film, Congress in 1992 passed legislation to appoint a panel to review all files and determine which ones would be made available to the American public.